

My friends, tonight I will be brief but I will speak about something that is very important. You may have seen my topic on Twitter or Facebook: “Help Israel—Pick Up Your Phone.” There is nothing more important I can do than help you help Israel.

First, let me share some good news with you about the United States and Israel. When sequestration kicked in, many entities were hurt, and Israel was one of them. In fiscal 2014, things are much brighter for Israel. The United States will be back to fulfilling the obligation made so many years ago regarding foreign aid to Israel (and please remember that the entire foreign aid package, not just to Israel but the entire package to every country helped financially by the United States is less than 1% of our annual budget), but again, we are back to keeping our long-standing promise in our foreign aid bill, as well as additional support for the Iron Dome missile defense system.

Now on to the heart of my talk. Last December, the Senate introduced a bill called The Nuclear Weapon Free Iran Act of 2013. It is a controversial bill, but the controversy is, in my opinion, based on distortions of fact. There is a six month window in place for an agreement to be reached by the so called P5+1¹ and Iran. Opponents of The Nuclear Weapon Free Iran Act say it is imposing sanctions during that six month window. No. It calls for new sanctions to be implemented if there is no agreement, not six months from now, but a full year from now.

The bill also says that if Israel decides to strike Iran’s nuclear infrastructure in self defense, the United States will “support Israel.” Opponents of the bill have twisted that into saying the bill has obligated us to another war in the Middle East. It does

¹ The five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council (the United States, Russia, China, the United Kingdom, and France) plus Germany.

no such thing. It does not say we will send troops, advisors, or any personnel whatsoever. It says we will support Israel, which means we will stand with Israel and not condemn her, and in all probability provide other means of support such as financial support or sales of military equipment, which is good for our own economy. By the way, already 70% of the money we give to Israel in foreign aid is spent by Israel here in the United States buying military equipment. It's a true win-win.

So ends my grossly oversimplified summary of the The Nuclear Weapon Free Iran Act of 2013. Here is where picking up the phone to help Israel comes in. Despite the controversy, and despite this bill having been introduced by Senate Republicans, it has the support of many Senate Democrats. Some of those anti-nuclear Iran, pro-Israel Democrats have gone beyond saying they support it and have become co-sponsors of the legislation. That our staunchly pro-Israel Republican Senator Dan Coats is a co-sponsor is no surprise. But it took a great deal of fortitude for our pro-Israel Democrat Senator Joe Donnelly to be a co-sponsor, and Senator Donnelly is a co-sponsor.

Now the plot thickens. President Obama has said that if this bill reaches his desk, he will veto it. If he vetoes it, Congress will try to override the veto. This is how the real life game called legislating is played. In the Senate, overriding the veto will require sixty-seven votes. So President Obama will do exactly what I am asking you to do. He will pick up his telephone, and he will call Democrats who co-sponsored or voted in favor of The Nuclear Weapon Free Iran Act of 2013 and ask them to withdraw their support and vote not to override the veto.

He has two advantages. The biggest is that he is the POTUS. The second is that he will speak directly to the Senators and the House members. All we have going for us is that we vote to retain or fire our legislators, and he does not. Also, there are more of us. And so, my friends, I do not care if you love Senator Donnelly, hate Senator Donnelly, never heard of Senator Donnelly, I don't care if deep inside you are thinking Senator Schmenator or Donnelly Schmonnelly, all I care about is that you take a step to help Israel. If you want to call Senator Coats as well, *gai gezundt*, but his vote is in the bag. Senator Donnelly will face enormous pressure if the President vetoes this bill. So give his Washington office a call. Tell them this:

His constituents are aware and informed—we know he is a co-sponsor of The Nuclear Weapon Free Iran Act of 2013, and we are happy about it.

Say we understand the politics—we admire his courage and fortitude for doing what he believes is the right thing and signing on as a co-sponsor of The Nuclear Weapon Free Iran Act of 2013.

Say that Hoosiers are proud to be an example to the rest of the nation in that our two Senators, one from each party, are standing together on The Nuclear Weapon Free Iran Act of 2013.

Say we know that should President Obama veto The Nuclear Weapon Free Iran Act of 2013, there will be great pressure on the Senator to change his vote, but we, the people of Indiana whom he represents, urge him to remain strong in the face of partisan politics and do what he already demonstrated he knew was the right thing, and join together with his colleagues on both sides of the aisle to make The Nuclear Weapon Free Iran Act of 2013 the law of the land.

You, my friends, can help the embattled State of Israel. All you have to do is pick up your phone.