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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal God, we praise You for Your goodness; Your faithful love endures forever. You are the protector of Your people.

Today, recapture the minds of our lawmakers and galvanize their wills. May they live blameless lives, doing what is right and speaking the truth from sincere hearts. Lord, infuse them with the spirit of humility so that they will seek to be guided by Your wisdom. May they keep their priorities straight, remembering that You are the only constituent they absolutely must please. Help them to make it their primary goal to please You in what they think, say, and accomplish.

We praise You and pray in Your Holy Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SASSE). Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

The assistant Democratic leader.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

DACA

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, we are facing a deadline of March 5, 2018. It

was a deadline created by President Trump on September 5. That was the day he announced, through the Attorney General, that he was ending the DACA Program.

The DACA Program was created by President Obama to give young people who were brought to this country as infants and toddlers and young children and who grew up in America and are currently undocumented a chance to earn their way to legalization and citizenship. That was the original Dream Act. When President Obama passed his Executive order, he protected them from deportation until Congress responded with a law. I asked for that designation and was thankful President Obama did it.

As a result of his Executive order, 780,000 young people came forward, paid a filing fee of over \$500, went through an extensive criminal background check, and were cleared to be given temporary protection from deportation and temporary opportunities to work in America, renewable every 2 years.

President Trump came into office and ended it. He challenged Congress and said: Now pass a law to take care of this issue. It is a legitimate challenge for the President to issue. I wish he had done it differently, but it is certainly worthy of him to call on us to do our job.

Well, here we are 3 months after that challenge from President Trump and what has the Republican majority done in the Senate or the House to respond to that challenge? Absolutely nothing—nothing, not one thing—to provide these 780,000, as well as others who are eligible for this protection, an opportunity under law, not one thing.

Is it because we have been overwhelmed with business? Well, I defy those who have followed the business of the U.S. Senate over the course of the last year to say that. It is seldom that we have ever come to the floor and debated anything of substance. Most of the time we are an empty Chamber

lurching from one cloture vote to another cloture vote, to a motion to proceed to this nomination and that nomination. The exceptions, of course, were on healthcare and the Trump tax reform bill, and those were done by reconciliation; in other words, strictly partisan efforts.

So we have not done much this year. We certainly haven't done much since September 5 of this year, and now what we hear from the other side of the aisle, from the senior Senator from Texas is, What is the hurry? We have plenty of time here. We will take care of these young people perhaps in January, perhaps in February. The deadline is March 5.

It is pretty easy for any Member of the U.S. Senate to say: What is the hurry, let's go slow, until they sit down and talk to the young people who are affected. I have done that many times, and I did it over this weekend.

I went to Benito Juarez High School in the city of Chicago. A group of about 20 young people came forward, all of them protected by DACA. These young people started telling their stories of being brought to the United States at the age of 1 or 2, watching as some of their relatives have been deported, trying to grow up in America, uncertain of their future—really uncertain today as to what they are going to be doing—and many of them are extraordinarily talented young people. It is not uncommon for them to break down in tears as they tell their story.

One was a 24-year-old graduate of college who received no Federal assistance because she is one of the Dreamers and undocumented. She finished college. She is now teaching in the Chicago Public School System. If she loses DACA protection, she loses her job as a teacher. There are tens of thousands just like her across America.

The senior Senator from Texas asks: What is the hurry? Why do we need to address this issue?

I wish that Senator could have been there and watched her and spoken to

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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her, as I did, and realized she is living in fear, in terror; that her life as she knows it could end tomorrow—and it could—because of the decision by President Trump to end this protection.

All we have asked for—and many of us on a bipartisan basis—is to call up the Dream Act for a vote in the U.S. Senate, to give these young people a chance of the protection of law so they can continue in this country.

Some Republicans have said we need to sit down and talk about border security. I said I would be happy to do that. When I was part of the Gang of 8, we came up with comprehensive immigration reform, and we had an extensive border security plan. Some of the Republican Senators who offered it told me later: We went overboard and you accepted it. We did. We are serious about border security. That is not an issue, but for the senior Senator from Texas, that is not good enough.

I handed him a sheet of paper last week, and I have a copy of it right here, showing him the proposals we are making on border security. I pointed out to him that 12 of the proposals I handed to him were proposals from his own bill for border security. We are serious about this. This is a genuine effort to give border security provisions the enactment of law along with the Dream Act.

So what we hear is that the senior Senator from Texas came to the floor and said: Well, they are just not negotiating in good faith. Well, I have handed him this provision, this proposal. It was a good-faith gesture and a good-faith effort to move us forward, and the only response we had yesterday from the senior Senator from Texas is: What is the hurry? Why should we get it done this year? Why don't we wait until next year?

Well, next year, as we know, means waiting 2 months when it comes to this issue, and that, to me, is the real fear I have—that we will put this off. The uncertainty, the worry, the stress for these young people will continue while we do nothing—nothing.

We don't enact laws here. We do nothing. We give speeches to an empty Chamber and say: Gosh, I wish we had a little more time here to really do some substantive work. We have all the time we need.

I would commend to my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, for goodness' sake, when 76 percent of the American people agree with the Dream Act, when 61 percent of Trump voters agree with the Dream Act, there is no excuse. We need to make it the law of the land.

NATIONAL MONUMENTS DESIGNATION

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, it was 20 years ago when I was first elected to the Senate. I was asked to consider a bill called the Red Rocks Wilderness Act. I didn't know anything about it. It was a bill that had been offered by Sen-

ator Bill Bradley of New Jersey. He was retiring. I was asked to consider sponsoring this wilderness proposal in the State of Utah. Of course, I said, I am from Illinois, not Utah, and I have never seen this. Well, they asked me to come out and take a look, and I did.

My wife and I went out to take a look at what was known as the Red Rocks Wilderness Area. It is in the southeastern corner of Utah. I had never been there, nor had I ever heard of it before I visited. What an eye-opener, to go there and see this magnificent vista, this incredible landscape that was being proposed for wilderness protection and status.

So over the years, I have reintroduced the bill, the conversation continued, and it wasn't until President Obama took a major share of this area, which is in San Juan County in the southeastern corner of Utah, and designated it in the name of the Bears Ears Monument that we finally achieved protection for this beautiful piece of real estate.

I have been there. It is breathtaking. There are incredible cultural sites there by Native Americans, and it is a great place to visit, to hike, and to enjoy a special piece of America. It is filled with magnificent red rock formations, deep, carved canyons, long mesas, and rock arches. Some of the photos just don't do it justice. We can take a look at some of these, and we can get an idea of the vastness of the area that is affected here.

Then you might take a look at some of the others and realize it includes a lot of cultural and prehistoric settings that were utilized by the Native American people when they called these caves their homes. It has special meaning to the Native American Tribes that are there. Many of them trace their origins to the very people who dwelled in these caves and the structures they built with the loose rocks that we can still see today.

We look at it and think, Well, if you didn't use this, if you didn't preserve it, if you didn't protect it, what would you do with it?

I have spoken with some of the Senators from Utah, and they have readily conceded there is no oil or gas there to be drilled. There may be some uranium processing but very little. I asked them: Why wouldn't you want this area protected? It doesn't have economic value other than the fact that people will come, tourists will come to Utah to see this beautiful place.

I was troubled when President Trump announced he was going to follow Secretary Zinke's recommendation and shrink the proposed Bears Ears Monument as well as another nearby called the Grand Staircase-Escalante. They would reduce the size of the Bears Ears Monument by 85 percent and Grand Staircase-Escalante by 50 percent.

In April, President Trump issued an Executive order requiring the Department of the Interior to preview and review the previous national monument

designations of President Obama. Although Bears Ears and Grand Staircase are the first two targets to be hit by President Trump, this attack on what is known as the Antiquities Act and our national monuments goes far beyond these two sites.

As part of the review, the President and Secretary of the Interior Zinke considered changing every national monument that had been created since 1996, which is more than 50 nationwide. These are areas that have been protected by Presidents of both political parties. It goes back, in fact, to a Republican President, Teddy Roosevelt, who realized it was worth fighting off some of the parochial and economic interests to preserve pieces of America for future generations.

The list that was subject to the Trump order spans the country. It includes the Cascade-Siskiyou in Oregon, Gold Butte in Nevada, Katahdin Woods and Waters in Maine, Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks and Rio Grande in New Mexico, and several marine monuments.

The administration's decisions to shrink Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante goes against continued support for these sites. The Bears Ears Monument was the first monument to be proposed and advocated by the five sovereign Tribal nations: The Hopi, Navajo Nation, Ute Mountain Ute, Pueblo of Zuni, and Ute Indians.

The Tribes sought protection because of the important place Bears Ears has in their cultures. The artifacts within Bears Ears range from 700 to 12,000 years old, providing Tribes with an incredible insight into the sacred history of their ancestral homeland and bolstering their deep spiritual connection to the landscape itself. In total, 30 Native-American Tribes with ancestral, historical, and contemporary ties to the Bears Ears region supported the designation—30.

I might recall, for those who are not students of history—and I am learning—treatment of Native Americans in this region has again raised some serious questions about America's past. It wasn't until 1920 that Native Americans were recognized as citizens of the United States in many of these areas. It wasn't until 1957 that Native Americans were given the right to vote in the State of Utah even though Native Americans had served our country in World War II, such as the Code Talkers, who were honored by President Trump last week. It wasn't until the 1970s that the State of Utah built its first public school on a Tribal area reservation—and only did that after being ordered by the Federal court. The history of our relationship with these Native-American Tribes is one that raises questions about our respect for what they meant to the earliest founding of America and what they mean to us today.

Mr. President, I see the majority leader has taken the floor. I know that under the rules he has priority when it

comes to speaking. I wish to finish my remarks, but if I can have the permission of the Chair by unanimous consent and allow the majority leader to speak and then resume my statement after he is finished.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. McCONNELL. I thank my friend from Illinois.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

NOMINATION OF KIRSTJEN NIELSEN

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, yesterday, the Senate voted to advance the nomination of Kirstjen Nielsen to be Secretary of Homeland Security. Now it is time for us to vote to confirm her so she can get to work for the American people. By confirming Ms. Nielsen's nomination to lead the DHS, this Senate will take a serious step toward strengthening our Nation's security.

Ms. Nielsen will be charged with leading the Department at a critical time. With her understanding of the challenges facing our Nation and her experience in prevention and preparedness, I believe she will excel as the next Secretary of Homeland Security. Her leadership will also help in providing continued assistance to the men and women still suffering from the effects of the recent natural disasters in our country. Our Nation faces a myriad of threats, and I look forward to working with Ms. Nielsen to address each of them.

FUNDING THE GOVERNMENT

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, as we all know, we must pass legislation to fund the government before the end of the week. By approving a short-term bill, we can continue the crucial functions of the Federal Government while we work with our colleagues in the House and the Trump administration to finalize a long-term plan.

The temporary funding measure will come before the House soon, and I expect the Senate to consider it shortly thereafter. It is a clean bill, free from any sort of objectionable policy riders. In addition, it includes a provision to assure States of the future of the Children's Health Insurance Program while a bipartisan reauthorization agreement is completed. All Members should be able to support this noncontroversial, short-term legislation.

We will continue working to pass a funding agreement that advances a number of American priorities—something we will be discussing with the President on Thursday, along with Democratic leaders of the House and Senate.

Yesterday, the Senate Democratic leader expressed his opposition to a government shutdown. I certainly agree with him. So I hope he and his fellow Democrats will continue to work with us in good faith to pass this short-term funding bill and maintain the critical functions of the Federal Government.

TAX REFORM BILL

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, one final matter. Last night, our colleagues in the House voted to send the tax reform legislation to a conference committee. There, Members from both Chambers will work to resolve the differences in our bills and eventually enable us to send a final product to the President for his signature.

The House's action last night is more progress in our years-long effort to deliver real relief to the men and women we represent. I am grateful to our friends in the House for their willingness to continue working with us to help shift our economy into high gear. I look forward to the Senate voting to join the conference later this week.

In the end, both Chambers will have an opportunity to pass the final legislation to help families keep more of their hard-earned money, to create good jobs, and to jump-start economic growth. I look forward to working with all of our colleagues to get this done.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The assistant Democratic leader.

NATIONAL MONUMENTS DESIGNATION

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, resuming my earlier remarks, the Native-American Tribes almost unanimously opposed the action that was announced yesterday by President Trump and Secretary Zinke to shrink the Bears Ears Monument. They have passed resolutions in support of that monument.

Navajo Nation's president said that the President's efforts to shrink the monument "demonstrates their failure to listen to the concerns of our people who have lobbied and fought for over 80 years for this designation." Even worse, the Navajo Nation made several requests to meet with President Trump on the issue, to no avail. Those requests fell on deaf ears, and the administration never met with the leadership of the Navajo Nation or any of the other Tribes who worked to protect this area.

The administration took these actions under the guise of protecting this area for future generations. During President Trump's speech in Utah, he said:

I don't think it is controversial, actually. I think it's so sensible.

From the folks he was speaking to, it must have seemed that his comment was correct, but the group the President was speaking to was a closed-door group of selected supporters of his ad-

ministration who do not reflect the feelings of local residents when it comes to the future of this monument. It reflected the same closed-door process this administration had used to shrink these monuments.

The administration ignored that more than 2.8 million Americans weighed in when there was an open public comment period at the Department of the Interior. Ninety-eight percent of them asked the President to protect the monuments and to maintain their borders—98 percent. So to say that shrinking these monuments dramatically is not controversial is to ignore 2.8 million Americans and the Tribes with whom the President never took the time to meet.

With these reductions, it is clear that Secretary Zinke and President Trump are choosing politics over science and choosing economic and political local concerns over the reality of what this particular monument means to the future of America. They are ignoring Utah's State Historic Preservation Office and the Interior Department's own staff, both confirming that there are artifacts throughout Bears Ears that will now lose their protection because of the decision by President Trump yesterday. The administration's proposed cuts closely follow the desires of Utah politicians to shrink the monument.

I had the opportunity to meet with Secretary Zinke and some of my colleagues a few weeks ago to discuss this reduction in the size of the monuments. In that meeting, he assured me that any potential cuts to Bears Ears would continue to protect the actual site's antiquities, including archeological sites, but according to the internal documents from the Department of the Interior, there are more than 8,400 archeological sites in the monument, 70 percent of which are prehistoric. Even more interesting, according to the Department of the Interior staff, less than 10 percent of the monument has truly been surveyed. That means we have only scratched the surface of the antiquities that could be present there.

What value is it to the people of Utah, what value is it to San Juan County, UT, what value is it to the United States to allow spectators and tourists to roam over these areas without acknowledging their sacred status and historic importance? We only get one chance to preserve our history, and now the President is walking away from that chance for the largest part of the Bears Ears Monument. Taking away protections from these precious places is something that could lead to permanent damage.

During the time that I visited Bears Ears, I stopped near Fry Canyon for a little lunch. I hiked around and saw some amazing artifacts, which I showed in the earlier photograph. These amazing artifacts are outside the new boundaries President Trump decided to draw yesterday. These impressive artifacts are worth preserving, but

President Trump and Secretary Zinke don't agree. They have left Fry Canyon unprotected.

I went to some of the areas where, centuries ago, Native Americans drew artwork on the sides of these canyons, in the walls. It is still very visible, and it should be protected. Some of it has been desecrated and obliterated by graffiti. How can we possibly justify that? How can we say to future generations: We just didn't care enough to keep this intact so that you and your children and grandchildren could appreciate it.

I know there are many more areas like Fry Canyon throughout the original Bears Ears Monument that are no longer protected because President Trump and Secretary Zinke decided to draw new boundary lines.

While I was visiting in Moab, UT, in one of the tourist shops there, I heard a group of about 12 speaking on the other side of the shop, and I drew a little closer just to hear what they might be saying. They were speaking in French. They had traveled all the way from Europe to see this unique area, so critically important to them, so unimportant to this administration. These tourists' willingness to travel halfway around the world tells us that we have something special here. I really wish the President could have met with them and so many others who create a bustling tourist economy in this area, people who come halfway around the world to see it. They believe it is something worth seeing. We should believe it is something worth preserving.

The residents of Moab, just outside the monument, must recognize this. Once a mining town with a dubious future, Moab saw its economy decline as the industry left during the 1980s. But the town has experienced a new rebirth, an economic growth of tourism that now provides up to 40 percent of the jobs in the area.

Last year, National Geographic named Moab, UT, one of the best outdoor towns in the world. Ely, MN, is the other U.S. town to receive that honor. The people of Moab will tell you that the protection of public lands has been good for their economy, creating good-paying jobs, new hotels, and new opportunities, and that they support the Bears Ears Monument. But President Trump didn't pay attention to them, and neither did Secretary Zinke.

According to the Department of the Interior, the number of visitors to Utah increased 20 percent between 2011 and 2015 and is projected to continue increasing. But that didn't impress the Secretary of the Interior when it came to literally obliterating 80 percent of the original Bears Ears Monument that President Obama designated.

It was the University of Utah that found that tourists spent more than \$8 billion in their State in 2015, resulting in more than \$1 billion in State and local tax revenue and more than 142,000 jobs.

When the State is benefiting so much from tourism, why would they give

away the protection of an area that attracts so many people and creates so many businesses and jobs in their own State? With public lands providing such a boon for tourism and economic growth, it is hard to believe that the Utah congressional delegation has ignored this and pushed so hard to destroy these monuments.

The dispute has roots in debate over federally controlled land and Utah's Enabling Act, which was signed more than 100 years ago. When it became a State, Utahns passed a bill to "agree and declare that they forever disclaimed all right and title to the unappropriated public lands . . . and to all lands lying within said limits owned or held by any Indian or Indian tribes." This provision gave all lands not specifically claimed by the State of Utah to the Federal Government. Utah signed up for that. That is how they became a State.

As a result, Utah now has the second most Federal land of any State, with Federal lands making up about 65 percent of their State, including five national parks and eight national monuments. These lands are a source of pride and economic opportunity for so many people. Yet the politicians of Utah don't appreciate that.

Last year, 15 million people visited national parks and monuments in Utah, hiking, camping, and learning the traditions and history of the Native people in that State. Let me say that again. Fifteen million people from around the world visited public lands in Utah in 2016—an 82 percent increase in visitors over the past decade. This is not only the right thing to do; it is the economically sensible thing to do to protect these monuments and these areas. Despite this growth, there is a push by some of Utah's politicians to force the Federal Government to give up these lands and remove the protections for the cultural and archeological resources they contain.

When I met with Secretary Zinke to discuss his recommendations, he confirmed to me that this decision was not based on protecting some of the most extraordinary natural resources in our Nation but, rather, on protecting political alliances.

Every monument designation has had some opposition. Even Roosevelt faced opposition when he worked to protect many of America's iconic places, but despite the opposition, President Theodore Roosevelt, a Republican, protected the Grand Canyon—a controversial decision in his time—and other special places. Thank goodness he did. Thank goodness he had the vision to look forward to future generations instead of looking backward to political promises and political buddies.

Teddy Roosevelt is remembered for his conservation record, preserving many of the places that make America a great nation, but what this administration is doing is just the opposite of Teddy Roosevelt's courage and vision. Repealing protections for Bears Ears

and Grand Staircase-Escalante will not make America great again. It will give up America's greatness for selfish interest.

I urge President Trump and Secretary Zinke to reconsider their decision that rescinds our national monument protection. It will be challenged in court, and it may take a long time to resolve, but I hope ultimately the courts of this land stand up for the right of a President of either political party to make these designations, as they have so many times before. We owe it to America, but we owe it especially to the Native American Tribes and people who have forever called this land home to preserve the sites that are so sacred to them, and we owe it to those in the scientific community and to future generations.

I am hopeful that future generations will be able to visit Bears Ears—as my wife and I have—and learn about the people and culture that made America long before we arrived. It is worth the respect of this generation and future generations, and it is certainly worth it for us to step forward and to say with vision and with courage that we stand behind preserving these sites.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

REPUBLICAN TAX BILL

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, even as my Republican friends move to reconcile their two tax bills in a conference committee, their problems are far from over.

At the heart of their bill is a toxically unpopular idea—giant tax breaks on big corporations and the very wealthy, paid for by cutting care and raising taxes on millions of middle-class families. The new Republican Party is the party of tax hikes on the middle class to subsidize corporate welfare. That menacing idea at the core of its bill is a problem that, like Hydra, spouts many heads.

Slashing the State and local deduction remains a massive problem for House Republicans from suburban districts like Virginia, New York, Illinois, Washington, and, of course, California. Multiple analyses have shown that, despite the so-called compromise that allows families to deduct up to \$10,000 in property taxes, the pain inflicted on suburban families will not be much mitigated. States like California and

New York will still experience an exodus of taxpayers, which will drain local resources and impact services. For those House Republicans, voting for the conference report is a poisonous vote, substantively and politically, not to mention that home values will fall in those districts of those House Republicans. If they are voting to decrease home values by 10 or 8 percent for every homeowner in their districts, that is political suicide. Why would they do it? That is what will happen, and the homeowners will start seeing that right away.

Another problem: The last-minute inclusion of a corporate AMT has Republicans and corporate leaders scrambling to figure out if it will have the unintended consequence of functionally eliminating the value of the R&D tax credit. Remember, the corporate AMT was added at the last minute because Republicans needed more revenue to offset a generous rate on passthroughs.

That is what Republicans were working on in the waning hours of last week, not trying to figure out how we could help middle-class families with kids in college, with kids who have serious medical expenses, and not reducing the impact that it would have on our deficit. Oh, no. They were busy figuring out how to make tax cuts for the wealthy even more generous as 70 percent of our passthrough income already flows to the top 1 percent, not the top 20 percent, not the top 10 percent—the top 1 percent. There is 70 percent of passthrough income that goes to the top 1 percent of earners. The Republican tax bill already slashed the rate on passthroughs, but several Republican Senators withheld their votes until that loophole was widened further.

I understand that they wanted to help smaller businesses, but take the time and figure out how to help the small businesses without helping the hedge funds, corporate law firms, the big lobbying firms, and other wealthy individuals. Take the time to figure it out—but no. In the rush to get a crumb for small business owners, they are giving a whole, big, nice chocolate layer cake to the wealthy. It is wrong, very wrong.

The inclusion of the corporate AMT is another reminder that Republicans cannot have it both ways. You cannot cut every conceivable tax on big corporations and the wealthy without blowing up the deficit. If Republicans are forced to go back and look at the corporate AMT, they will have to find revenue elsewhere. Will they slightly lessen another corporate tax break or will they ask working Americans to pay more, which they have done in previous iterations on this bill?

Yesterday, we learned the Republican leadership circulated talking points that questioned the legitimacy of the Joint Committee on Taxation—the nonpartisan, independent scorekeepers of tax legislation. Rather than con-

front the awful truth that their bill will not pay for itself as it, instead, costs about \$1 trillion even with dynamic growth estimates, the Republican leadership asked its Members to shoot the messenger. The JCT, which is widely respected and always accepted by both parties, is, all of a sudden, a pariah in Republican circles because it told the truth—that this bill would not cause the growth they projected, that this bill will increase the deficit far more than the Republicans had hoped.

The Republican leadership tried to discredit the nonpartisan umpire it had long praised and had appointed. What a disgrace. It brings up that what has happened in the last week or two here has been one of the most disgraceful episodes in the history of the Senate—a major bill done behind closed doors, rushed through. Then, adding insult to injury, the truth-tellers—the independent, appointed-by-Republican monitors—were discredited because our Republican colleagues didn't like hearing the answer.

There is still time to avert this awful bill. If my Republican friends vote no on the conference bill, we can do a bipartisan tax reform bill. We can pursue a much better process and get a much better product and go so far as to heal a Senate that has been wounded by partisanship and strife, greatly aggravated by the majority's actions on this tax bill.

ISSUES BEFORE THE SENATE

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, instead of rushing a bad tax bill through the conference, the Senate should focus on the bevy of year-end issues confronting us. First and foremost, we must reach a spending bill that would have us meet our commitments to support the military and also urgent priorities here at home, such as combating the opioid crisis, shoring up pension plans, supporting veterans' healthcare, relieving student loan debt, and building rural infrastructure.

In previous budget agreements, Democrats have always strived to achieve parity between our investments in defense and jobs and economic development here at home. It has continually been a sticking point with Republicans as we go through these negotiations. They want to increase the spending for defense, the military, but shortchange important domestic programs such as infrastructure, education, scientific research—measures that create jobs and help the middle class. We Democrats support an increase for our military, but we want to make sure other crucial programs don't get left behind. So we will fight just as hard in this budget agreement to ensure that for each dollar we add for defense, a dollar is added for domestic economic development, 50-50.

We care about our soldiers. They are the greatest. They are risking their lives for us, but we also care about a pensioner who spent his whole life

working in the steel mills, working driving a truck, working building buildings. They religiously put money away every month so they would have something when they retire, and if it is not there—they are important too.

General Mattis came to see me and told me how badly our Defense Department needs help. I agree, but I told him to go back to the White House and tell the White House the domestic side of the ledger needs help as well. Spending on the domestic side of the ledger is lower than it was in 2010, despite increased costs.

We also need to provide funding for Community Health Centers, the Children's Health Insurance Program, relief for millions of Americans still recovering from national disasters, and we must come together on a bipartisan bill to support the Dream Act along with tougher border security measures. So it is a lengthy to-do list. It will require hard work, steady cooperation, and compromise on both sides.

Last night, however, there was a concerning spectacle on the House floor. The freedom caucus held up an unrelated vote on the tax bill—who could figure—because they were unsatisfied with the Republican leadership's plan to keep the government open. If we are going to solve all the problems that confront us before the end of the year, House leaders cannot let the Freedom Caucus—a small band of hard-right reactionary conservatives—run the show. If they cooperate with Democrats, they can accomplish something. To just let the Freedom Caucus dictate is a recipe for chaos.

Once again, negotiations broke off because we were at an impasse on the 50-50 parity for defense and nondefense. That has been very important to Democrats for years. We have settled our budget agreements, our spending policy, omnibus agreements always with 50-50, and we believe it is still important today—parity, parity, parity.

As we continue to negotiate with our Republican counterparts, we hope the Republican leadership can avert more of this unnecessary hostage-taking like we saw on the House floor last night that can only impede a serious, ongoing bipartisan negotiation.

I yield the floor.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. STRANGE). Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the Nielsen nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Kirstjen

Nielsen, of Virginia, to be Secretary of Homeland Security.

The majority whip.

TAX REFORM BILL

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, we know last Friday night, into the wee hours of Saturday morning, this body did something remarkable, something people said would never happen. We actually got some very important work done and passed a very important piece of legislation—the first overhaul of our Nation's Tax Code in over 30 years.

People said it couldn't be done. It is too hard. With Democrats opposing us at every step on the committee and on the floor, people said there were just too many obstacles in our way, and it was impossible to accomplish. People said there were too many special interests down on K Street that would make it impossible for us to figure out this Rubik's Cube of a tax code, there were too many moving pieces in this giant tome of our tax law. People warned us, if we did this, we would take political flak from all sides.

Well, to the cynics and skeptics and doubters, I will say: You were wrong. We did get it done. Families and job creators woke up the next day after the final vote feeling a little bit more confident about our Nation's fiscal future. Now that the bill has passed the Senate, they will be less weighed down by the yoke of government. They can breathe a little sigh of relief knowing we are doing our job. We are doing what we said we would do when they gave us control of the government.

Of course, it took no time for our major victory to be mocked, denigrated, or simply misrepresented. Sometimes the false rumor spreading was done deliberately by our friends on the other side of the aisle, which is ironic because Democrats used to support many aspects of this plan, such as lowering taxes for the middle class and eliminating incentives for corporations to ship jobs overseas. I guess we must conclude that they were happy with the status quo, a slow-growing economy, stagnant wages, jobs being shipped overseas because of our self-destructive Tax Code. I guess we would have to conclude they thought that was a good thing. Well, they know it was not a good thing, but they just couldn't stand the possibility that we were going to be able to make this major accomplishment on behalf of the American people. Because they were so mired down in the politics of the day, they lost sight of the forest for the trees.

We all know it is easier to criticize than to contribute, such as when many on the other side feigned outrage about small tweaks that needed to be made to the bill. It is interesting. Back in 2010, there was an amendment called the Durbin amendment No. 3989 where, during the course of the debate, it was necessary to make some changes in the bill by handwriting those changes in the bill text. No one thought that was an outrage. Everyone understood this

is sometimes what happens when you are making last-minute changes to legislation. Yet our Democratic colleagues acted like this was the first time this had ever been done, and 46 Senate Democrats voted for Senator DURBIN's amendment, which included these handwritten changes in the text.

Don't forget the tax bill was passed last week through regular order. "Regular order" is part of the jargon we use around here, but it means the normal legislative process. Unlike the Affordable Care Act that was written in Majority Leader Harry Reid's office and brought to the Senate floor without going through the Senate Finance Committee. Unlike that process, this tax bill originated in the Senate Finance Committee, was the product of multiyear studies, working groups, white papers, a lot of proposals like the Camp draft, for example, that helped inform our debate.

From the bill that had been introduced by the ranking member, Senator WYDEN, along with Senator Coats, we were able to glean some of the best elements of all of those prior efforts. Using regular order, giving Democrats and Republicans a chance to contribute to the legislation in the Finance Committee and on the Senate floor, we gave Democrats and Republicans a chance to offer amendments and to get votes on those amendments. That is what we mean by regular order, and that is what our friend from Arizona, the senior Senator from Arizona, Mr. MCCAIN, rightly called for earlier this fall.

There were hearings after hearings. Democrats went to them. Democrats had their opportunities to offer amendments during the committee markup and to offer amendments on the floor. So one simply cannot say, honestly or truthfully, as many Democrats have, that the bill was negotiated in darkness, behind their backs, without their participation. It simply is a false claim, it is not true, and the facts show that.

It is not just our Democratic colleagues who have fueled misperceptions about the tax bill we passed late last Friday night, early Saturday morning. There was a big stir raised with the scoring done by the Joint Committee on Taxation. Some of the critics of the tax bill have latched onto the Joint Taxation report, finding that the bill would increase the economy by 0.8 percent over 10 years, not enough for the cuts to pay for themselves, thus adding to the national deficit. That was the claim.

I take concerns about fiscal responsibility very seriously, but we have to acknowledge that economic modeling is notoriously difficult and can be done in a number of different ways. Each of these models has its strengths and weaknesses, each provides a range of estimates, and none is perfect. We have not yet been given the gift of perfect knowledge of the future. In the case of the Joint Committee on Taxation, the

estimate was that the tax bill would generate enough growth to offset its pricetag from \$1.4 trillion to about \$1 trillion—a net \$400 billion feedback effect. This is pretty interesting listening to our colleagues across the aisle. They make the audacious claim that tax cuts generate no economic growth—none. So when the original Budget Committee budget came out, giving the tax writers \$1.5 trillion of deficit spending on a static basis, they claimed that would result in a \$1.5 trillion deficit. Well, the Joint Committee on Taxation concluded that was not true. In fact, tax cuts can have a stimulative effect on the economy. Incentives can change human behavior, but it is notoriously difficult to estimate with any precision.

In any giant complex system like the American economy, the effect of changes is not easy to predict, but even small changes can produce large, far-reaching benefits. In our case, that means changes in our Tax Code can fuel major economic growth, which ought to be our collective goal.

Why should we have to settle for anemic economic growth? Why should we have to settle for flat wages? Why should we have to settle for jobs being created overseas because our Tax Code incentivizes that rather than incentivizing investment and job creation in the United States?

Well, the fact is, we don't have to settle for that, and we haven't. This tax bill represents our best effort to try to make sure our economy does grow, that wages do go up, and that jobs do come home to the United States because businesses are incentivized to bring that money back home and invest it in jobs and wages back here.

I am optimistic that with the reforms we have enacted, the economy could grow by as much as 3 percent, as the Heritage Foundation and the Tax Foundation have said. The President's Council of Economic Advisers and influential economists agree. I am aware of the old saying that if we were to stretch all the economists in the world end to end, we would never reach a conclusion. They call it the dismal science for a reason. It is not rocket science; it is modeling that tries to predict the future, which is notoriously difficult to do. In fact, you can't do it, but we try to come up with the best guesstimate we can.

I think it is wrong to just look at the Tax Code when you are looking at our economic future. Coupled with the regulatory relief we have seen under the new administration, along with the Congressional Review Act where we repealed back some of the onerous regulations on the economy, and with consumer confidence at a 16-year high, I think we all have the sense that America is coming back as a leading economic engine in the world, and we need to do that because we need to lead the way for the world economy. We need to make sure that the standard of living

in America continues to be something that we can achieve—a better standard of living for our children and grandchildren than the one we ourselves have enjoyed. That is the legacy we have inherited from our parents and grandparents.

Yes, we are in a dangerous world. The former Director of National Intelligence, James Clapper, said that in his 50 years in the intelligence community, he had never seen a more diverse array of threats than he did today. We can't ignore that, which means that we have to use some of that prosperity for our common defense. That is another important thing we are going to have to do before the end of this year; that is, to agree on a top-line spending number for national defense spending, because we have been trying to cash the peace dividend, again, when there is no peace or at least peace is threatened in places around the world, whether it is in the South China Sea, Syria, North Korea, or in Europe, with Russia on the march threatening NATO and our European allies. We need a strong economy so the standard of living can go up, wages can increase, and so we can do the things that we know we need to do as a country.

Now, I realize that these positive analyses by groups like the Heritage Foundation, the Tax Foundation, and the President's Council of Economic Advisers don't entirely pacify some of the deficit hawks. I count myself among them. We worry about whether tax reform will add to our debt through cuts in decreased revenue. But even based on conservative estimates, this tax reform could result in \$130 billion in new revenue—revenue we would not otherwise have.

Here is the problem. Here is the elephant in the room that people simply choose to ignore or have given up on: Revenue isn't our biggest problem. It is our spending addiction. It is the 70 percent of Federal spending that is on autopilot, going up on average about 5.5 percent per year. Now, we have tried to do what we could through the Budget Control Act in 2011 and put a cap on discretionary spending, including defense spending. That has been relatively flat since 2011, but all the while, entitlement spending has gone up because we don't have the political courage to deal with it. The deficit can't be eliminated with tax increases. We can't tax America's producers enough to fill the hole. We have to address mandatory spending, which keeps growing year after year after year. It nearly doubled during the Obama administration, during which time our friends across the aisle never really said much about deficits and debt. But it is real. We ought to go to the root cause of it and not claim that it is making tax cuts to help make our economy more vibrant and improve the quality of life for more Americans.

Putting aside the macroeconomic concerns over the tax bill for a moment, it is easy to see how, on a more

personal level, families and workers will benefit. Sometimes in accounts about tax reform, this more human focus is simply left out and that is a mistake.

For example, in our bill, rates are reduced for everybody. Every tax bracket sees a reduction in their tax rate. The standard deduction for families is doubled. So if you are a married couple filing a joint return, for the first \$24,000 you earn, there is zero tax—zero. Then we double the child tax credit. I think that is something we should do because we need to help those families that have children to make sure that their families prosper, and the child tax credit is one way we can do that.

The ObamaCare mandate to buy government-approved insurance, which is just a tax on low- and middle-income Americans, is repealed, and I think that is another form of tax relief. There are 6.7 million Americans who had to pay a penalty to their own government because they couldn't afford to buy the government-mandated insurance because of the way that program was structured. Well, we eliminate that entirely. So, hopefully, those families can then use their own resources to buy insurance policies that meet their needs rather than what the government mandates.

We also soften the blow of the death tax, something I will continue to work to completely eliminate because I think it is simply a moral issue. Why should we tax income when earned and, then, when families want to pass it on to their children—whether it is the family farm, ranch, or a small business—we tax them again and make that sometimes impossible to do? Usually, if you want to reduce something, you tax it and that doesn't apply to the death tax because death will come no matter what. But it is immoral, I believe—double taxation. That is no reason for Washington to prevent families from passing on the fruit of their labor to their loved ones.

The likely result of all of these changes will be that wages will increase by as much as \$4,000 for the average family. That is the estimate of the Council of Economic Advisers. Think about that—if we can get the economy growing faster than the 1.9 percent anemic growth of the Obama years. Just think about that. The economy has grown on average at 3.2 percent since World War II. Yet we are being asked to settle for the new normal of the Obama years when the economy grew at 2 percent or less. So if we can get the economy growing faster, we will see wages improve and we will see family income improve. If we can cut their tax burden and relieve them of onerous things like the poverty tax, known as the Obama individual mandate tax, families will be better off.

A median family of four will see their tax burden cut by \$2,200. Now, I know that in Washington, DC, when we talk about millions and billions and trillions of dollars, \$2,200 doesn't seem like

a lot of money, but for many families struggling to meet their obligations paycheck after paycheck, \$2,200 can make a big difference. It can help them pay off their mortgage or pay college tuition for their children or replace a water heater or get their car fixed or finally take a long-delayed family vacation.

Now, the last heedless claim I have heard about our tax bill is that it mainly benefits corporations at the expense of normal, hard-working men and women. Once again, this is a false claim. Some portion of our high corporate tax rates are always borne by labor—by American workers, in other words. Our friends across the aisle and the critics sometimes claim that if you do something for a business, whether it is a passthrough business or a corporation, it has no effect on the people who work for it. Well, that is just demonstrably wrong, because the better off those businesses are, the more people they can hire, the better the wages are that they can pay, and those help hard-working American families.

So higher business taxes mean fewer jobs and smaller paychecks, and it means that we are less competitive in a global economy. That is why businesses are moving their headquarters overseas to low-tax countries like Ireland or the United Kingdom. This situation will change under our new bill.

In a recent survey of corporate chief executive officers, 82 percent said they would increase capital spending if our bill passed and 76 percent said they would increase hiring. So, yes, it is true that business will benefit, but we want them to because the end result will be less tax dodging and more jobs coming back home and, as I mentioned earlier, apart from businesses, families and individuals benefit too.

What is so bizarre about the debate is that this is a concept that former President Obama championed; that the Democratic leader, Senator SCHUMER, has championed; and that the ranking member of the Senate Finance Committee, Senator WYDEN, has championed—lower corporate taxes—because they realize this is a self-inflicted wound because it forces businesses overseas and prevents them from bringing their income back and investing it in the United States in jobs and wages. My question to them is this: Have you forgotten? Well, I don't think they have forgotten.

Throughout the tax reform process, Members of this Republican Conference on this side of the aisle worked together, and I am grateful for the contribution that each and every one of them made. With the strong headwinds from our opponents on the other side of the aisle who wanted failure, presumably because they liked the status quo rather than success, we knew this was going to be difficult, and it was. We got it done, but we are not finished yet.

As we head into a conference with the House of Representatives, the focus has to be on how we can maintain support here in the Senate. I hope our

friends across the Capitol understand that the Senate bill was a very fragile compromise and that one or two—well, two or more—Senators who would not support that bill could jeopardize the House-Senate conference. So we have to be very careful. We have to continue to communicate and work together with each other, and we can't undermine our own victory. It is not just our victory. It is a victory for American families and for our country and for our standing in the world. So when we begin our conversations with the House, let's take care to work closely together and continue to communicate. Let's prove that passing tax reform wasn't just a dream or an aberration. It was real. Now with the ball on the 5-yard line, we just have to punch this into the end zone.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

DACA

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. President, I rise today with increasing concern about the uncertain future facing DACA recipients. There are nearly 800,000 DACA recipients. They are children who were brought across the border, through no fault of their own, years and years ago. There are nearly 800,000 across the country and nearly 50,000 just in Arizona alone. They have protections now from deportation, but those protections will run out around the first of March.

Despite the sense of urgency to solve the problem by the end of the year, there is very little legislative progress to show for it. The time has come for us to work together to deliver a real solution. We don't need partisan bills that send a message; we need bipartisan solutions that can pass the Senate.

We have spent so much time operating under reconciliation that it is worth reminding people that this measure will need 60 votes in order to succeed. So much of the legislation we have been considering has been under reconciliation, with just a 51-vote margin being sufficient. That will not be the case with a fix for DACA. We need to get 60 votes. That means if we hope to protect DACA recipients, both sides will need to compromise.

These individuals whom we seek to help are students, employees, colleagues, and friends. They don't know any other home but the United States. They have embraced the values of hard work and perseverance, and, in turn, their communities have embraced them as their own. Some of the most compelling pleas on behalf of these young people have come from those who know them best. These kids are

not just Americans in their own eyes; they are Americans in the eyes of their friends, their classmates, their teachers, and their coworkers.

We all recognize that these kids were brought here, as I mentioned, through no fault of their own. No one wants to see them deported. As leaders of a nation of immigrants, we need to work together and deliver a chance for them to have a bright future. We need workable legislation that can realistically be passed and signed into law. We don't need to make a statement; we need to make a law.

There are many challenges facing us with regard to immigration, but protecting these young people should not be one of those challenges. This should be the easy lift.

I hope we can all work together in a bipartisan way to find a solution for these kids who deserve a solution.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Dakota.

TAX CUTS AND JOBS BILL

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, relief for American families is on the way.

Last week, the Senate passed our version of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, a tax reform bill that will provide immediate, direct relief to hard-working Americans.

Our legislation doubles the standard deduction, it doubles the child tax credit, and it lowers rates. Under our bill, a family of four making \$73,000 a year will see a \$2,200 tax cut, or a reduction in taxes of about 60 percent over what they are paying under current law. A single parent with one child making \$41,000 will see his or her taxes drop from around \$1,865 today to just \$488 under our bill, a reduction of nearly 75 percent over what they are paying today.

That is just the beginning. The tax bill before us today is going to provide immediate relief to hard-working families. It is going to immediately lower their tax bills. It is going to immediately mean more money in their pockets.

But this bill is about much more than that. This bill isn't just about helping Americans today—although it is most certainly going to do that—the bill is about helping Americans for the long term. It is about giving Americans access to the kinds of wages, jobs, and opportunities that will set them up for a secure and prosperous future.

The way we do that is by improving the playing field for American businesses. In order for individual Americans to thrive economically, we need American businesses to thrive. Thriving businesses create jobs, they provide opportunities, and they increase wages and invest in their workers.

But our current Tax Code hasn't been helping businesses thrive. For years now, our tax laws have left businesses of all sizes struggling under the burden of high tax rates and an outdated tax system that has left American businesses at a disadvantage in the global economy.

Small businesses employ nearly half of American workers and create a majority of the new jobs in this country. But right now, small businesses face high tax rates that can make it difficult for these businesses to even survive, much less thrive and expand their operations. Our bill will fix this.

To start with, our bill implements a new deduction for passthrough businesses like partnerships, LLCs, and S corporations. This deduction will allow them to keep more of their money, which will allow them to reinvest in their operations, increase wages, and hire new workers.

Our bill also reforms current provisions in the Tax Code that frequently leave small businesses with very little cash on hand. Under our legislation, small businesses will be able to recover the capital they have invested in things like inventory and machinery much more quickly and, in certain cases, immediately. This, in turn, will free up capital that small businesses can use to expand and to create jobs.

Our legislation also includes provisions that I helped develop that will simplify accounting rules for small businesses, which will also help reduce their tax burden, leaving more of their earnings to reinvest in their businesses and their workers.

In addition to providing relief to small businesses, another thing our bill will do to boost Americans' wages is lower our massive corporate tax rate. Our Nation's corporate tax rate today is the highest in the industrialized world, which puts the United States at a major disadvantage next to our international competitors. Reducing the corporate tax rate will enable American businesses to compete on a more level playing field, which will, in turn, free up money that U.S. businesses can use to create jobs and increase wages.

The White House Council of Economic Advisers estimates that reducing the corporate tax rate to 20 percent, as our bill does, will increase wages for U.S. households by \$4,000 annually. That is money that families can use to save for retirement, help pay for a child's education, replace an aging vehicle, or invest in a new home.

Our bill will also boost wages and increase opportunities for Americans by ending the outdated tax framework that is driving American companies to keep jobs and profits overseas. Our Nation currently operates under a so-called worldwide tax system. That means that American companies pay U.S. taxes on the profits they make here at home, as well as on part of the profits they make abroad once they bring that money back to the United States. The problem with this is that American companies are already paying taxes to foreign governments on the money they make abroad. Then, when they bring that money home, they could end up having to pay taxes again on part of those profits and at the highest tax rate in the industrialized world. It is no surprise that this

discourages businesses from bringing their profits back to the United States to invest in their domestic operations and new jobs and increased wages.

Our bill replaces our outdated worldwide tax system with a territorial tax system. Under our legislation, American companies will no longer face the double taxation that has encouraged them to send their investments and their operations overseas. Instead, U.S. companies will have a strong incentive to invest their profits at home in American jobs and in American workers.

All in all, the Tax Foundation estimates that in addition to increasing wages, our bill will create nearly 1 million new jobs for American workers and boost the size of the economy by 3.7 percent.

I don't need to tell anybody that American families have had a tough time in recent years or that our economy as a whole has stagnated, with weak economic growth, almost nonexistent wage growth, and a lack of opportunity that has become the norm for way too many families. But this tax bill marks the beginning of the end of the Obama-era economy.

The tax bill we just passed will usher in a new era of dynamism in this country. It will let Americans keep more of their earnings right now, and it will improve Americans' economic situation for the long term. It will send a message to the world that America is serious about competing and succeeding and winning in the 21st century economy.

Under this bill, American companies will compete and win globally, and American businesses, large and small, and the American people will thrive as a result.

I look forward to going to conference with the House of Representatives and getting a final, comprehensive tax reform bill to the President. We have a once-in-a-generation opportunity—literally, a once-in-a-lifetime chance—to make a real difference in the lives of literally millions of Americans. It is time to get this bill across the finish line. It can't happen soon enough for the American people.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, President Trump and the Republican leadership, as we just heard, are talking every day on television, at news conferences, telling the American people how this tax bill that was passed here at 2 o'clock in the morning on Saturday—without any hearings, with no serious debate—how this tax bill is designed to help the middle class and how it was written for the middle class.

Unfortunately, I suspect that I will not shock too many Americans by suggesting that what President Trump has been saying is not truthful. This legislation, according to numerous independent studies, will provide 62 percent of the benefits to the top 1 percent—62

percent of the benefits will go to the top 1 percent—while increasing taxes on 83 million middle-class households by the end of the decade. Why? The reason is that the tax cuts for middle-class families expire by the end of 2025, while the tax breaks for large corporations are made permanent.

We are living in a moment in American history where we have an unprecedented level of income and wealth inequality, where the top one-tenth of 1 percent now owns almost as much wealth as the bottom 90 percent, where the top 1 percent owns almost twice as much wealth as the bottom 90 percent, and, if you can believe it, where three of the wealthiest people in this country—Mr. Gates, Mr. Bezos, and Mr. Buffett—three people own more wealth than the bottom half of the American population. That is where we are right now.

Yet, in the midst of this incredible level of income and wealth inequality, my Republican colleagues believe that this is a moment when 62 percent of the benefits of so-called tax reform should go to the top 1 percent and 42 percent of the benefits should go to the top one-tenth of 1 percent, while at the same time tens of millions of middle-class families will end up paying more in taxes. How crazy is that? So we have a situation in which the wealthy, who need tax breaks the least, will benefit the most, and the working class and middle class of this country, who need the most help, will benefit the least.

The President of the United States and my Republican colleagues tell the American people that trickle-down economics—giving huge tax breaks to the wealthy and large corporations—will expand the economy. We just heard Senator THUNE talking about that. They will create new jobs and will bring in so much revenue that it will pay for the deficit it creates.

Every independent expert who has taken a look at this tax bill has said it will substantially increase the deficit, even after accounting for the possibility of increased economic growth. The Joint Committee on Taxation has told us that this bill will increase the deficit by \$1.4 trillion over the next decade. Why is that important?

First of all, it shows, if I may say, the hypocrisy of my Republican colleagues who, year after year after year on this floor, lectured us about the dangers of a \$20 trillion national debt and growing deficits. We heard this time and time again. But somehow, when it comes to the need to provide tax breaks to billionaires, that concern about the deficit seems to have disappeared.

Secondly and more immediately, there is no doubt in my mind that if the Republicans are able to pass this bill, which will soon go to a conference committee—this bill that gives huge tax breaks to the top 1 percent and raises the deficit by \$1.4 trillion—there is no doubt in my mind that they will suddenly rediscover their great concern

about deficits and the debt and move directly within the next few months to begin the process of cutting programs desperately needed by the working families of this country—the elderly, the children, the sick, and the poor.

This is not just BERNIE SANDERS speculating. This is what the New York Times said in a front-page article a few days ago:

As the tax cut legislation passed by the Senate early Saturday hurtles toward final approval, Republicans are preparing to use the swelling deficits made worse by the package as a rationale to pursue their long-held vision: undoing the entitlements of the New Deal and Great Society, leaving government leaner and the safety net skimpier for millions of Americans.

Speaker Paul D. Ryan and other Republicans are beginning to express their big dreams publicly, vowing that next year they will move on to changes in Medicare and Social Security. President Trump told a Missouri rally last week, 'We're going to go into welfare reform.'

Let me take this opportunity to translate into English what phrases like "entitlement reform" or "welfare reform" really mean. What they mean in reality are massive cuts to Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, education, nutrition programs, affordable housing, and other programs desperately needed by a declining middle class. It means that after they pass this so-called tax reform bill, which would provide a \$200,000 tax break to CEOs who make over \$16 million a year, they will come back to the floor of the Senate and fight for cuts to Social Security for senior citizens trying to survive on \$12,000 or \$13,000 a year. So there are massive cuts for millionaires and billionaires in their taxes at the same time as they want to cut Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid for struggling seniors.

"Entitlement reform" means that at a time when millions of seniors are splitting their pills in half because they cannot afford the outrageously high cost of prescription drugs, Republicans want massive cuts to Medicare. It means that when two out of every three nursing home residents in this country rely on Medicaid to pay for their long-term care, the Republicans want to make massive cuts to Medicaid.

We do not know exactly what form these cuts will take. I think that is not yet clear. There has been discussion among Republicans about raising the retirement age for Social Security to 70 years of age, forcing older workers to work years more before they can get their earned retirement benefits.

Maybe they will cut back on cost-of-living increases through a so-called Chained CPI—a new formulation that means lower benefits not only for seniors but for millions of disabled veterans. They apparently believe, for those of you on Social Security now, that the COLAs you have been getting in recent years are just too high. That zero percent increase you got a couple years ago? It is much too high; we have

to change the formula and lower benefit increases.

Maybe they will go back to their long-term dream of privatizing Medicare and converting it into a voucher program, which will say to the elderly in this country: Here is a check for \$8,000. You go out and find private insurance on your own. I would say good luck to any elderly person in this country who is struggling with heart disease or cancer. You see what kind of insurance program you are going to get with a check for \$8,000.

I would remind my colleagues that many of these proposals were included in the budget resolution the Republicans voted for right here on the floor of the Senate. This is not speculation; these are issues and items that Republicans already voted for. They already voted for a \$1 trillion cut to Medicaid, which would throw some 15 million Americans off of health insurance. They have already voted in the budget to cut Medicare by \$473 billion. In my view, the last thing we should be doing is giving tax breaks to billionaires while cutting programs for the most vulnerable people in our country.

During the campaign, Donald Trump, as a candidate, promised he would not cut Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid. He made that promise over and over again. I have some charts. Let me quote some of the tweets and some of the things Donald Trump said on the campaign trail.

This is what he said: "I was the first & only potential GOP candidate to state there will be no cuts to Social Security, Medicare & Medicaid."

On another occasion, he said:

I'm not a cutter. I'll probably be the only Republican that doesn't want to cut Social Security.

That was January 24, 2015.

It's my absolute intention to leave Social Security the way it is. Not increase the age and to leave it as is.

That was Donald Trump on March 10, 2016.

Here is another quote:

You know, Paul [Ryan] wants to knock out Social Security, knock it down, way down. He wants to knock Medicare way down. And, frankly—well, two things. Number one, you're going to lose the election if you're going to do that. . . . Now, I want to get rid of waste, fraud, and abuse. I want to do a lot of things to it that are going to make it much better, actually. But I'm not going to cut it, and I'm not going to raise ages, and I'm not going to do all of the things that they want to do. But they want to really cut it, and they want to cut it very substantially, the Republicans, and I'm not going to do that.

Before I go on to the next quote, I want to tell Donald Trump that, as a candidate, man, he was exactly right. This is what he said on March 29, 2016. He said that the Republicans wanted to cut Social Security and Medicare and Medicaid.

Well, Candidate Trump, you were exactly right, because that is now what we will see in a few weeks or a few months.

Another quote from Donald Trump as a candidate:

Social Security faces a problem: 77 million baby boomers set to retire. Now, I know there are some Republicans who would be just fine with allowing these programs to wither and die on the vine. The way they see it, Social Security and Medicare are wasteful 'entitlement programs.' But people who think this way need to rethink their position. It's not unreasonable for people who paid into a system for decades to expect to get their money's worth—that's not an 'entitlement,' that's honoring a deal.

Well, there it is. Candidate Donald Trump said over and over again that he would not cut Social Security, that he would not cut Medicare, that he would not cut Medicaid. In fact, quite correctly, he predicted that the Republicans would try to do exactly that.

Now I would like to talk directly, if I might, to the President of the United States.

Mr. President, on the campaign trail, over and over again, you said that you would not cut Social Security, Medicare, or Medicaid. Today, I am asking you nothing more than to keep your word. Don't lie to the American people.

Millions of people voted for you because you said you would not cut Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid. Keep your word. Tell Senate Leader MCCONNELL and tell House Speaker PAUL RYAN that you will veto any legislation that cuts these programs.

With that, I yield the floor.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CRUZ). The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding rule XXII, the postcloture time on Executive Calendar No. 495 expire at 4 p.m. today, December 5; and that if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECESS SUBJECT TO THE CALL OF THE CHAIR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:40 p.m., recessed subject to the call of the Chair and reassembled at 2:36 p.m. when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. ENZI).

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. SCOTT. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PORTMAN). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HOEVEN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

SECURE ACT

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I want to make a few brief remarks regarding the introduction of the Security, Enforcement, and Compassion United in Reform Efforts, and we have selected the acronym SECURE for this piece of legislation we are introducing today. This bill promotes and protects the interests of the American people in a lawful immigration system and provides a fair and equitable solution on Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, and everyone in the Senate knows that by the acronym DACA. It is the product of several months of hard work between this Senator and Senators CORNYN, GRAHAM, TILLIS, LANKFORD, PERDUE, and COTTON. I think, before the day is out and the Senate closes down, you will hear from almost all of those folks on their approach to this legislation and their support for it.

Before I discuss what the bill does, I want to explain the process we used to reach this point. On September 5, 2017, Attorney General Sessions announced that President Trump had decided to rescind former President Obama's unlawful Executive amnesty program. Because almost 700,000 young people relied on President Obama's false promise, the Trump administration called upon Congress to do what the President doesn't have the legal authority to do and to find the only real type of long-term solution to this issue. Obviously, we are here because that is a legislative solution and not something the executive branch thinks up and tries to put in place.

Starting in September, I have held multiple meetings with Senators CORNYN, GRAHAM, TILLIS, LANKFORD, PERDUE, and COTTON to determine how best to fix DACA. Our aim was to find a solution that not only is fair for DACA recipients but also promotes the interests of the American people. The immigration policies of the previous administration carried consequences that weren't always in our best interest. For example, President Obama allowed thousands of people to illegally cross our borders and to stay in our country, including dangerous gang members, sex offenders, and violent criminals. So robust border security is crucial to bring integrity back to our Nation's immigration enforcement.

The enforcement policies of the previous administration enabled dangerous, unauthorized criminals, individuals like Kate Steinle's killer, to have free rein in our country, risking the safety of innocent Americans. The

flagrant disregard of so-called sanctuary jurisdictions unfairly takes tax dollars from hard-working Americans, only to ignore the rule of law and their own people's public safety.

In crafting our bill, we also considered the inherent unfairness in our Nation's immigration court and asylum adjudication systems and how hundreds of thousands of aliens wait in backlogs for years at a time. That is wrong. It hurts the people who are stuck in the backlog, and it is unfair to ask the American people and legal immigrants to bear the burden of supporting these people while they wait.

Finally, thanks to the leadership of Senators GRAHAM, PERDUE, and COTTON, we discussed in our small group of Senators the need for a merit-based immigration system, one where we bring people to this country based on what they can contribute and not simply because they have some attenuated family relationship to a legal immigrant who is already here.

So after having these discussions and after meeting with the President to get his input and his support, we have come up with a plan. This plan is fair to all parties. It is pro-American, and it is a solution to DACA.

Our plan, as I said, which goes by an acronym, the SECURE Act of 2017, provides a solution to all of the issues we discussed. First, building off of the hard work and leadership of Senator CORNYN, we are putting days of porous, uncontrolled borders behind us. We are doing this by mandating the construction of tactical and technological infrastructure at the border. We are also beefing up our law enforcement and judicial resources, and we are putting more boots on the ground in the border States so that we can better apprehend and prosecute those who enter our country illegally.

Our plan takes meaningful steps to end the lawlessness and tragedies at the hands of dangerous criminal aliens throughout our country. We do this by cracking down on sanctuary cities, ending the misguided catch-and-release policies of the previous administration, and finally taking real steps to address intentional visa overstays.

In recognition of the many Americans who have lost their lives to criminal aliens, we included Kate's law, named after the person murdered by a criminal felon who came back into our country five times—Kate Steinle. So it is Kate's law. This legislation enhances penalties for repeat illegal border crossers and expands the inaccessibility and expedited removal of terrorists, gang members, aggravated felons, and drunk drivers. We also provide a fix to the disastrous Zadvydas decision so that the government doesn't keep releasing dangerous criminals onto our streets just because of the refusal of their home countries to take responsibility.

Our bill takes steps to eliminate many of the "pull" factors that encourage people to immigrate illegally.

We do this by permanently authorizing the E-Verify Program and providing immunity and other incentives to encourage small businesses to participate in that E-Verify Program. We also take meaningful steps to reduce immigration court and asylum adjudication backlogs by hiring more judges and personnel, limiting the number of continuances an immigrant can receive, and imposing new safeguards to combat well-documented fraud and abuse.

Again, thanks to the leadership and advocacy of Senators GRAHAM, PERDUE, and COTTON, our bill eliminates the phenomenon known as chain migration. From the day this bill becomes law, immigrants will be able to bring only their spouses and minor children into the country. This bipartisan, pro-American worker reform, which the President strongly supports, is an important first step toward creating the merit-based, economically productive immigration system that both Democrats and Republicans want.

Finally and most importantly, we provide a bipartisan solution to protect undocumented young people brought to the United States as children by adopting a bill that goes by the acronym BRIDGE, Bar Removal of Individuals who Dream and Grow our Economy. Senator DURBIN called the BRIDGE Act "an opportunity for supporters and critics of DACA to come together and address a compelling humanitarian issue on a bipartisan basis."

We agree with Senator DURBIN. The BRIDGE Act is supported by Senators GRAHAM, DURBIN, GILLIBRAND, HELLER, MURKOWSKI, FEINSTEIN, NELSON, FLAKE, SCHUMER, and HARRIS. It would provide relief from deportation and work authorization to DACA recipients, allowing them to continue to fulfill their dreams, and they will continue to contribute to our economy.

As you can see, Mr. President, our plan has fair, bipartisan, and serious provisions. By listening to colleagues and adopting solutions that both sides can agree on, we are providing a real solution to the immigration issues our country is facing. Our plan protects the DACA kids, it cracks down on criminal illegal aliens, and it provides real long-term reforms to our Nation's immigration system that benefit the American people. It does so through the proper legislative process, in other words, by a constitutional way—unlike a previous President tried to do this—providing greater certainty for Americans and immigrants alike.

Importantly, it is also supported by the President. That is all the more reason to pass this bill and fulfill our promises to the American people and the DACA recipients.

Again, I want to thank the hard work of Senators CORNYN, GRAHAM, TILLIS, LANKFORD, PERDUE, and COTTON, and their staffs, especially, in developing the solution. I am looking forward to considering this measure in the new year and seeing President Trump sign it into law, as he asked us to do.

I see that two of my colleagues, Senator LANKFORD and Senator TILLIS, are here. I am giving up the floor, if you would like to speak.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I want to thank Chairman GRASSLEY for his leadership on this issue and for his willingness to sit down and talk to a diverse group of people who think we have a problem that we should solve and that we must solve.

Senator GRASSLEY just did such a good job of describing some of the technical aspects of the SECURE Act and the BRIDGE Act and other legislation that actually came together to create the SECURE Act.

I want to back up and talk a little bit about what we are actually trying to do here. There are two key components to this bill and to efforts that have gone before the point at which we have introduced this bill that I think are very important.

The first one is the DACA Program. That is Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals. The DACA Program is something that was implemented in 2012 by President Obama. What President Obama sought to do was to provide some certainty for young adults and children who were brought across the border—not through their own decisions but through the decisions of their parents or a guardian to cross the border illegally—and find themselves illegally present in the United States. Today, they are still protected because they are still protected under DACA, but the President announced on September 5 that on March 5 that program would end.

Now, you can imagine that there are hundreds of thousands of young men and women who are uncertain about their future status in this country. It is a problem we need to solve. The other side of the equation is something that is also equally important to me and to a number of people in this body. It has to do with our border security and interior enforcement.

Back in late winter, I spent a week down on the southern border. I went to the Rio Grande Sector and the West Texas Sector. I spoke with a lot of people at the land ports that hundreds of thousands of people cross every day. We listened to their concerns about things we need to do to better secure the border.

There are two debates in Congress right now. I don't actually embrace either of the two extremes. There is the one extreme that says build a big, beautiful wall that is 2,000 miles long. It is impractical and not necessary.

There is the other extreme that says we don't need borders; we need bridges. That is impractical and unsafe.

What we need is a solution to border security so that we know who is in this country and so that we have an orderly way to move between countries for someone who is in our country who

wants to come to work or visit the United States and return back in a legal fashion.

The other thing we have to look at in border security that I think is oftentimes overlooked is the humanitarian crisis with an insecure border. There is one of the numbers that stuck with me. There were so many that we covered when we were down with border security, but this stuck with me—actually, two numbers. This one is most heart-breaking: Over a 20-year period, 10,000 people have died crossing the border unsuccessfully. Ten thousand bodies have been recovered as a result of crossing the border and not finding their way to a safe place. About 1,000 of them were children. Unless we have the people, technology, and infrastructure on the border to know who is trying to cross, we can't protect them. Even if it means we are going to take them into custody and potentially deport them, at least they will be alive.

Another statistic was very important to me, too. It was in a discussion I had with border security agents down in Laredo, one of the big land ports where people cross every day. I am not going to get into a lot of the details, except to say that they confiscate about 400,000 doses of methamphetamine about every 48 hours in this one land port. That is where they confiscate it. By most estimates, it is only a minor percentage of all of the illegal drugs crossing the border. So we obviously need more people, technology, and infrastructure to be able to capture people who are crossing the border in various trucks and cars. They are finding ways to hide these drugs that are poisoning our Nation's youth and, really, people of all ages.

So there is a reason for border security. There is a reason to invest in people, technology, and infrastructure. There is a reason for us to have a productive discussion about how we can provide a compassionate, sustainable solution to the children and young adults who came to this country through not their decision but the decisions of their adult guardians.

That is what this bill, the SECURE Act, is setting forth. We are trying to get a productive discussion going with Democrats and Republicans who will come together and recognize that a balanced bill provides for border security, provides a sustainable solution for the DACA population, and get it done before March 5.

There are some people that want to, I think, play a little bit of brinkmanship. They have already set in their mind how they want this bill to look. What worries me about a bill where you use timing, maybe a year-end budget agreement, or some other device to get the bill done, is that that doesn't necessarily produce a bipartisan outcome that you can be sure of is always going to be on the books. Those types of bills—those types of quick “gotcha” sort of actions—are oftentimes the bills somebody will try to come back to and repeal or revise.

We want a sustainable solution. We want a solution that is going to work and give certainty to this DACA population for the rest of their lives. I think the provisions of the BRIDGE Act that are now in the SUCCEED Act do that.

I want to thank Senator LANKFORD. Senator LANKFORD and I filed another bill. We are full of acronyms here. I don't know, but sometimes they say we are full of other things, but we are full of acronyms. The SUCCEED Act is another bill, and I think that many of its provisions will be considered as we go through the negotiation process to get a bill to the President's desk. The bill that we sponsored is the called SUCCEED Act. It is the Solution for Undocumented Children through Careers, Employment, Education, and Defending our Nation Act. It is a lot like the BRIDGE Act, in that we go to the DACA population, and we know something about the DACA population that I think is oftentimes overlooked. It is a great group of people. There are a little bit less than 2 million. Many of them are working hard, going to school, and serving in our military. They deserve an opportunity and to be provided a way to be able to recognize they are legally present in this country.

That is what I think we are going to accomplish with this SECURE Act. This is what I hope my Democrat colleagues will do, those who actually endorse the BRIDGE Act. There are many of them. Senator GRASSLEY ran through the list. I will not do it again. Let's sit down and solve this problem. Let's accept that there are people at the far left who are going to stand on one issue at the expense of letting March 5 pass and have the DACA population at risk. Let's also tell the people at the far right who want nothing less than full deportation, that that is not going to happen.

Let the people in the center who want to come up with a sustainable, respectful, compassionate solution that is paired up with solid border security measures and interior enforcement, provide a solution for this population. I think my colleagues who have worked together in the working group that Chairman GRASSLEY has led are committed to working with Democrats to come up with a reasonable solution. I know that I am. I know my colleague, Senator LANKFORD, is.

I hope that everybody will sit down and recognize that, at the end of the day, this is for our Nation's security and the security and the certainty of the DACA population. If we set out about accomplishing those two goals, then I think we will be very successful. Then we can start building on that dialogue for so many other things we need to talk about when it comes to interior enforcement and immigration reform.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, I am honored to be here with several other Members to talk about the issue of im-

migration. This has become a very contentious issue. As soon as you say the word “immigration,” there is a whole group of people who immediately start screaming amnesty on every part of the conversation. Another whole group starts screaming “jack-hooded thugs” trying to take grandmothers out of their homes, and the whole conversation diminishes, and we lose the policy issues that are in place.

There are obvious problems with immigration. We have not taken those obvious issues on in decades. They need to be resolved, and every year they are not resolved, this issue gets harder and it gets more complicated. We should address the issue of immigration. For years, the conversation has been out there, and for years, it has remained unresolved. I would challenge this body in the next 3 months: Let's resolve some of the big issues in immigration.

Almost 4 years ago, I was in Central America with a group of other Senators and House Members. We were meeting with Central American leaders, and we were meeting with them to talk about immigration and about some of those individuals leaving those countries who were coming to the United States illegally. But also, we met with them in Central America to determine what they should do for immigration. Multiple countries that were there in the conversation were talking about how they were increasing their border requirements at their borders, how they were managing their workforce within their country, and how individuals from other Central American countries were traveling to their countries and changing the job structure and changing the pay structure.

We somehow get this belief that the immigration issue is only an American issue. Every country in the world deals with immigration because every country in the world has the right and the responsibility to know who is in their country. Are they citizens? Are they noncitizens? I should have the ability, in my country, to be able to know who is coming in as a guest and to be able to say yes or no. That is a basic right. For some reason, that becomes lost in all of this conversation.

When we fly anywhere else in the world, we have a visa or we have a passport because when we enter that country, that country requires it. That country, when we land, wants to know who is in their country and where they are. That seems normal to us when we talk about travel, but for some reason, it gets lost in this issue of immigration. This should be a normal conversation—that our country would know who is in the country, that we would know where they are, if they are a guest, and that we would know when they are leaving.

After the 9/11 Commission finished, they challenged our Nation to resolve one of the issues of immigration that sat out there that is still unresolved to this day. It is entry-exit visas. Why can

we not know if a person comes in under a legal visa? We know when they come in, but we don't know when they leave. That is still unresolved a decade and a half later. Year after year, when I talk to Homeland Security, they say: We are doing a pilot project. We are close.

Year after year, that is unresolved. The vast majority of the people who are in our country illegally didn't cross a border illegally. They came with a visa, they overstayed it, and they never left. We are never asking the questions: Who is here, who is not here, and where do those connections come from?

What I would like to find is a way to establish a group of foundational issues that are commonsense solutions to the obvious immigration issues that we face—and find common ground. We will have disagreement in this body, but we should be able to find common ground on immigration issues that we can all look at and say: That is a reasonable way to do it. Probably, every Member of this body would do it a little bit different, and we would have a different set of preferences, but we should all agree it should be done. We have to solve the obvious issues, and there are areas of common ground to be able to do it.

Quite frankly, the President of the United States gave us quite a gift about 3½ months ago when he said to the DACA Program: That is an administrative program. It should be a legislative issue. I am not going to renew that any more as an administrative issue. That needs to be done in Congress.

For the first time in a long time, Congress has a deadline to be able to deal with immigration. That is actually a very good gift because this Congress has punted the immigration issue year after year without a deadline to get it resolved. Now we do have one. That deadline is in early March. I would suggest to this body: Let's get it resolved. Let's find the areas where we can actually find common ground in this area. Some should be pretty obvious.

Immigration courts, right now, have over half a million cases backlogged and pending. Currently, if you are going to hire a new judge to be able to be in the immigration courts, it will take 742 days to hire one immigration judge. That is not right. That is ridiculous. We should be able to get that resolved, to be able to add new judges to our immigration courts, and to be able to help deal with the backlog of over half a million people. The E-Verify system has been renewed in a bipartisan way year after year. Let's take it beyond the temporary program that it is right now. Some people don't know it is a temporary program. Let's move it from a temporary program to a permanent program. Let's do a permanent reauthorization. And let's make the tweaks and changes that are needed, whether it is to be able to move E-Verify into the hiring system, whether

it is to be able to encourage individuals in their hiring—for more companies to be able to use it, for it to be a faster system that is more reliable. At times it can take up to 6 months to get a final answer from E-Verify. Again, that is absurd. That is a fixable issue that we should be able to do.

We should be able to resolve the issue of chain migration. We somehow believe that chain migration is an issue that has existed forever. It has not. It has been around only since 1965. Prior to 1965, our immigration issues were tighter than they are now. But now it has formed into this system where you can have initially your nuclear family, and then as you gain citizenship, you can add parents, and you can eventually add siblings, and you can add other individuals, and it continues to accelerate.

I am always frustrated when I hear people talk about our legal immigration system in the United States and say that we should be more open. We admit 1 million people a year through legal immigration—1 million a year. We are a very open country to legal immigration.

We need to be more precise. We need to base our immigration not just on chains of family connections but actually what our Nation needs to grow economically. I am not anti-family—far from it—but we should have a reasonable system. Canada doesn't do it this way. Australia doesn't do it this way. The UK doesn't do it this way. We still do. We should be able to resolve this.

We should deal with the issue of border security. There has been a lot of conversation about a wall. I don't think we should have a 2,000-mile-long wall on our southern border and a multithousand-mile-long wall on our northern border, but I do think we should be able to monitor our border and know who is coming in and out. Not everyone is coming just to work. There are individuals who are trafficking drugs and people. We do need to be able to monitor them.

I have heard folks say that we don't need a wall anywhere. I totally disagree. This whole adage of a 20-foot wall just begs for a 21-foot ladder—if you talk to the homeland security folks and the border security folks, they would say: Fine, put a 21-foot ladder there because it slows you down in the process. A wall is not designed to prevent you entirely; it is designed to slow you so we can actually interdict you, prevent you from coming in.

Yuma, AZ, can tell us the story about when they put up a wall, how it dramatically slowed down crime in Yuma, AZ, rather than just having an open border. There are areas where we desperately need a wall. There are other areas where we just need vehicular barriers. There are other areas where we need drones, and we need greater technology. But we certainly need more personnel in that area. It is one of the other challenges we face.

The President said: Let's add 5,000 new people. Great. Do you know how long it takes to hire one Border Patrol person? It takes 450 days—450 days to hire one person on the Border Patrol. It is a broken system of hiring. We need to fix that.

We need to do more rapid screening.

We certainly need to take care of the issue of sanctuary cities. All of the Nation last week did a giant sigh for Kate Steinle's family. Kate was murdered in San Francisco—a sanctuary city—by someone who had seven felonies and who had been deported five times. Then a jury said that because the bullet ricocheted off the ground, it wasn't really murder. He can go free. We have to resolve the issue of sanctuary cities. That is unjust. We are better than that as a nation.

We certainly should resolve the issue of DACA. We have kids who have been in this country and have grown up in this country. They get up every day, and they say the Pledge of Allegiance to this country. They speak perfect English. They have great grades and no criminal history. I asked people in my State: Who would you like to come into the country and be free to join this country? If they say the pledge every day, if they speak perfect English, if they are passionate about entrepreneurship and starting companies and getting engaged, if they have joined the military—that is exactly whom the people of my State would like to see immigrate to this country to be a part of it.

Well, guess what. We have almost a million of them already living here, but they have no legal status. They were brought here as a child by their parents under no decision of their own. We should have a long-term legislative solution. This particular bill that is under discussion now has a short-term solution to that, something called the BRIDGE Act. It is a 3-year legislative solution. It cries out for a longer solution, but it at least gives additional certainty more so than what DACA has.

I would challenge this body to look at all of these reasonable solutions and to say: If we can't decide on these, let's start the conversation. What can we decide on? How far can we get? How much can we resolve in immigration?

Let's do it, and let's do it right. Let's start the conversation, but let's finish it this time. We should negotiate with the House. They have some great ideas. We should negotiate here. There are some tremendous ideas on both sides of the aisle. But let's certainly get it done. I look forward to that ongoing conversation. Let's get this resolved in the days ahead.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I know the Senator from Arkansas has some remarks to make, so I will keep mine brief. I want to speak on the introduction of the Security, Enforcement, and

Compassion United in Reform Efforts Act, or the SECURE Act, which we will, under the provisions of rule XIV, put on the Senate calendar following the vote on the nomination at 4 o'clock. This bill is a product of a working group formed by Chairman GRASSLEY of the Senate Judiciary Committee—the committee with jurisdiction over immigration matters. I have been a part of that, as have Senators Graham, Tillis, Lankford, Perdue, and Cotton.

I would say to our friend from Illinois, we are all united in the desire to actually come up with a solution to this problem.

Our working group had two assignments. The first was to adopt reforms to secure America's borders and enforce our immigration laws. The second was to find a compassionate solution for those individuals who received deferred action under the DACA Program created by President Obama in 2012.

When I introduced a border security bill—the Building America's Trust Act—in August, I made clear that the main purpose for that was to create solutions that we could put in place to deal with our porous borders and that throwing money at the problem is not the answer, but it was also contemplating that at some point in the not too distant future, we would need to combine border security and enforcement measures with a solution for the recipients of the deferred action under President Obama, which now President Trump has appropriately sent back to Congress for us to address.

Coming from the State with the longest border with a foreign country—the State of Texas—I can tell my colleagues that my understanding and appreciation for border security are multifaceted. It requires boots on the ground, it requires technology, and it requires improvements in aging infrastructure at our ports of entry. But it also requires new authorities and enhancements to existing immigration laws to close loopholes that incentivize people who repeatedly violate our laws.

We can all agree that we need to protect America's international borders, whether they be to the north or south. Each day that we fail to put the needed resources and laws in place for border security and interior enforcement, we strengthen the resolve of drug cartels, gangs, and transnational criminal organizations to encroach on our sovereignty with impunity.

If we are going to act to help folks who were brought here by their parents, for whom we all have compassion—and thanks to President Obama's insistence on going around Congress in violation of the law, they now find themselves in limbo—prioritizing the resources needed to secure the border is the first step. It is not the last step, it is the first step. If we can demonstrate our ability to deal with a compassionate solution for the DACA recipients and combine that with real border security and interior enforce-

ment, I would propose that we don't need to stop there, but we do need to regain the public's confidence that we are capable of dealing with these issues in a responsible way.

The DACA Program was designed to help those who were brought here illegally, but it was not created lawfully. President Trump, as I said, did the right thing when he kicked it back to Congress. So we have now introduced a bill that will address the very issues that our friends across the aisle say they care about the most: a solution for the DACA recipients. This bill provides a framework for a legislative proposal that we can support and that will regain America's trust.

I have told both Senator SCHUMER, the Democratic leader, and my friend Senator DURBIN from Illinois that I stand ready to work with them on a proposal that includes the four pillars of the GOP framework: border security, interior enforcement, improvements to the E-Verify system, and some limits on chain migration. I hope they will come back to the table and respond to this proposal. I hope they will also quit threatening to shut down the government, which won't solve the problem but, indeed, will make it worse.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, I want to associate myself with much of what my Republican colleagues have said about the immigration bill we are working on—or perhaps I should say, to be more accurate, the immigration bill we should be working on, because the Democrats at this point simply will not take yes for an answer. We are offering a package that they should support, and in return, they are threatening to shut down the government.

So let me just dispense off the top with their argument, such as it is, about the so-called DACA recipients.

No one is eager to deport 690,000 illegal immigrants who are here mostly through no fault of their own. They were left in legal limbo by President Obama, and everyone wants to find a good, durable, long-term solution.

But if we are going to give legal status to these illegal immigrants in their twenties and their thirties, we have to recognize that there are going to be negative side effects.

First, we are going to encourage parents from around the world who live in poverty and oppression and war to illegally immigrate to our country with small children. What could be more dangerous and even immoral than that?

Second, we are going to create a whole new category of Americans who could get legal status for their extended family, to include the very parents who brought them here in violation of our laws. We often hear that children ought not pay for the crimes of their parents. That may be so, but surely parents can pay for the crimes of the parents. They are the ones who created the situation in the first place.

I offered legislation with Senator PERDUE earlier this year called the RAISE Act. It had many features in it to replace unskilled and low-skilled immigration with high-skilled immigration, to limit chain migration, to reform our refugee program, and to eliminate our diversity lottery. This Congress needs to take up our legislation and pass it. But today I want to focus on chain migration in particular because chain migration is one of the biggest categories of immigration that bring unskilled and low-skilled workers to this country to compete for jobs and drive down the wages of working Americans.

Did you know that once you have legal status in this country, once you have a green card and become a citizen, you can bring to this country not only your spouse and your unmarried minor children but your adult children and their spouses and their children and your adult brother and your adult sister and your parents and their siblings—and it goes on and on and on. That is why it is called chain migration.

Our legislation would put a halt to chain migration. It is a kind of downpayment on long-lasting legal immigration reform, in addition to things like strengthening E-Verify, improving security at our border, and Kate's Law, named in honor of Kate Steinle, as we heard Chairman GRASSLEY outline earlier today.

We are also pairing those provisions with a bill that Democrats and Republicans should support, the BRIDGE Act. The idea of this bill is simple enough—that everyone who has a DACA card gets 3-year provisional status. That gives them certainty without giving them permanent residency or citizenship, which I think sounds pretty reasonable. I know the Democrats agree with me, too, because earlier this year they were calling for passage of the BRIDGE Act. The BRIDGE Act is supported by Members of both parties, as Chairman GRASSLEY outlined, including many prominent Democratic Senators—both Senators from California, the senior Senator from Florida, the junior Senator from New York, even the minor leader and the minority whip. In fact, the minority whip called the BRIDGE Act a bipartisan breakthrough.

If the Democrats were to oppose our legislation today, the SECURE Act, the question would be, Why? Well, I think I know what they might say. They might say: Oh, those terrible Republicans have added a bunch of terrible Republican ideas to this bill. Let me just ask, which of these provisions are so terrible? That we secure our border? Countries have borders, and those borders have to be secure. Is it terrible that we stop unscrupulous employers from hiring illegal immigrants by strengthening E-Verify? When people say that E-Verify doesn't work, what they mean is—E-Verify works. What they mean is that they want employers

to be able to hire illegal immigrants, to take jobs away from Americans and pay them submarket wages.

What about discouraging illegal and highly dangerous border crossings?

To get back to chain migration, do we really want a system in which green cards are given out by random chance? Because that is what we have not just in the diversity lottery but through chain migration. Today, you can get a green card in this country simply because someone in your extended family happened to immigrate to this country 20 or 30 or 40 years ago, irrespective of your ability to stand on your own two feet in our economy, to get a job and pay taxes and not take welfare, to assimilate into our culture.

Shouldn't we have an immigration system that focuses on the needs of America's workers and the American economy, not one that gives out green cards by random chance the way we have today? Shouldn't we be focused on the jobs and the wages of American citizens? After all, they are who elected us to come here to represent their interests.

I don't think this is unreasonable, and, frankly, I don't think the Democrats do either. They have supported the BRIDGE Act. They have supported reform of other immigration programs—temporary visas—because they worry about the impact of immigration on lower wage, blue-collar workers.

Now, the Republicans have stepped up and done exactly what the Democrats have said they wanted: We have offered a real, long-term solution for persons who have received a DACA work permit. All we are asking for in exchange are commonsense reforms to prevent another situation, like the one happening now, in the future. So it is time for Democrats and Republicans to come together and support this bill.

If you are serious about helping these DACA permit recipients, you should vote for this bill now. It is good for those DACA recipients, it is good for American workers, it is good for our communities, and it will be a good first step toward lasting pro-American, pro-worker immigration reform.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that all time be yielded back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Nielsen nomination?

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER) would have voted "yea."

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. STRANGE). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 62, nays 37, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 305 Leg.]

YEAS—62

Barrasso	Gardner	Paul
Blunt	Graham	Perdue
Boozman	Grassley	Portman
Burr	Hatch	Reed
Capito	Heitkamp	Risch
Carper	Heller	Roberts
Cassidy	Hoeven	Rounds
Cochran	Inhofe	Rubio
Collins	Isakson	Sasse
Coons	Johnson	Scott
Corker	Kennedy	Shelby
Cornyn	King	Strange
Cotton	Lankford	Sullivan
Crapo	Lee	Tester
Cruz	Manchin	Thune
Daines	McCain	Tillis
Donnelly	McCaskill	Toomey
Enzi	McConnell	Warner
Ernst	Moran	Wicker
Fischer	Murkowski	Young
Flake	Nelson	

NAYS—37

Baldwin	Gillibrand	Peters
Bennet	Harris	Sanders
Blumenthal	Hassan	Schatz
Booker	Heinrich	Schumer
Brown	Hirono	Shaheen
Cantwell	Kaine	Stabenow
Cardin	Klobuchar	Udall
Casey	Leahy	Van Hollen
Cortez Masto	Markey	Warren
Duckworth	Menendez	Whitehouse
Durbin	Merkley	Wyden
Feinstein	Murphy	
Franken	Murray	

NOT VOTING—1

Alexander

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. JOHNSON). Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The Senator from Alabama.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. STRANGE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session for a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. STRANGE. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session for the consideration of the following nomination: Executive Calendar No. 455.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Emily Webster Murphy, of Missouri, to be Administrator of General Services.

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the nomination.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate vote on the nomination with no intervening action or debate; that if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action; that no further motions be in order; and that any statements relating to the nomination be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Murphy nomination?

The nomination was confirmed.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of the following nomination: Executive Calendar No. 501.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Glen R. Smith, of Iowa, to be a Member of the Farm Credit Administration Board, Farm Credit Administration, for a term expiring May 21, 2022.

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the nomination.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate vote on the nomination with no intervening action or debate; that if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action; that no further motions be in order; and that any statements relating to the nomination be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Smith nomination?

The nomination was confirmed.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREE-
MENT—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at a time to be determined by the majority leader, in consultation with the Democratic leader, the Senate proceed to executive session for consideration of Calendar No. 321, the nomination of Joseph Balash to be an Assistant Secretary of the Interior. I further ask that there be 1 hour of debate on the nomination, equally divided in the usual form; and that following the use or yielding back of time, the Senate vote on confirmation with no intervening action or debate; and that if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session for a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

NET NEUTRALITY

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, next week, the Federal Communications Commission, FCC, will consider a proposed rule, that, if approved, will end net neutrality as we know it and will threaten the foundation of a free and open internet. Net neutrality is the simple proposition that internet service providers should treat all internet traffic the same; they should not be able to exploit their power to charge for preferred treatment, allowing big corporations to dominate the internet.

The Chairman of the FCC, Ajit Pai, wants the FCC to undo its protections for net neutrality. His proposed ruling is perversely styled as "Restoring Internet Freedom," when in fact it would do the opposite. It would allow internet service providers to decide which websites will be privileged and which will be throttled or even blocked. Make no mistake: This will mean that the big firms that can afford the "fast lane" will be protected, while harming consumers, startups, and potentially even freedom of speech online.

Alarming, Chairman Pai has decided to ignore millions of comments submitted by individuals across the country, citing concerns that they are not "unique." As a Member of Congress accountable to my constituents, this is a particularly offensive posture. Unique or not, comments and concerns submitted to my office by Vermonters

are treated with the same weight and value as any other. Until the FCC fully and meaningfully considers the more than 21.7 million comments it has received about this proposed rule, it should not proceed with this vote.

A recent New York Times article by Farhad Manjoo, entitled, "The Internet Is Dying. Repealing Net Neutrality Hastens That Death," lays out clearly why the FCC's proposed repeal of net neutrality will bring the open internet one giant leap closer to becoming a corporate playground. If, as expected, Chairman Pai jams through his proposed rule change next week, it will be clear that he has done so to the benefit of a few deep-pocketed corporations and to the detriment of everyone else who relies on the internet to support commerce, communication, and community. I ask unanimous consent that the article by Mr. Manjoo be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the New York Times, Nov. 29, 2017]

THE INTERNET IS DYING, REPEALING NET
NEUTRALITY HASTENS THAT DEATH

(By Farhad Manjoo)

Sure, technically, the internet still works. Pull up Facebook on your phone and you will still see your second cousin's baby pictures. But that isn't really the internet. It's not the open, anyone-can-build-it network of the 1990s and early 2000s, the product of technologies created over decades through government funding and academic research, the network that helped undo Microsoft's stranglehold on the tech business and gave us upstarts like Amazon, Google, Facebook and Netflix.

Nope, that freewheeling internet has been dying a slow death—and a vote next month by the Federal Communications Commission to undo net neutrality would be the final pillow in its face.

Net neutrality is intended to prevent companies that provide internet service from offering preferential treatment to certain content over their lines. The rules prevent, for instance, AT&T from charging a fee to companies that want to stream high-definition videos to people.

Because net neutrality shelters start-ups—which can't easily pay for fast-line access—from internet giants that can pay, the rules are just about the last bulwark against the complete corporate takeover of much of online life. When the rules go, the internet will still work, but it will look like and feel like something else altogether—a network in which business development deals, rather than innovation, determine what you experience, a network that feels much more like cable TV than the technological Wild West that gave you Napster and Netflix.

If this sounds alarmist, consider that the state of digital competition is already pretty sorry. As I've argued regularly, much of the tech industry is at risk of getting swallowed by giants. Today's internet is lousy with gatekeepers, tollbooths and monopolists.

The five most valuable American companies—Amazon, Apple, Facebook, Google and Microsoft—control much of the online infrastructure, from app stores to operating systems to cloud storage to nearly all of the online ad business. A handful of broadband companies—AT&T, Charter, Comcast and Verizon, many of which are also aiming to become content companies, because why

not—provide virtually all the internet connections to American homes and smartphones.

Together these giants have carved the internet into a historically profitable system of fiefs. They have turned a network whose very promise was endless innovation into one stuck in mud, where every start-up is at the tender mercy of some of the largest corporations on the planet.

Many companies feel this shift. In a letter to Ajit Pai, the F.C.C. chairman, who drafted the net neutrality repeal order, more than 200 start-ups argued this week that the order "would put small and medium-sized businesses at a disadvantage and prevent innovative new ones from even getting off the ground." This, they said, was "the opposite of the open market, with a few powerful cable and phone companies picking winners and losers instead of consumers."

This was not the way the internet was supposed to go. At its deepest technical level, the Internet was designed to avoid the central points of control that now command it. The technical scheme arose from an even deeper philosophy. The designers of the internet understood that communications networks gain new powers through their end nodes—that is, through the new devices and services that plug into the network, rather than the computers that manage traffic on the network. This is known as the "end-to-end" principle of network design, and it basically explains why the internet led to so many more innovations than the centralized networks that came before it, such as the old telephone network.

The internet's singular power, in its early gold-rush days, was its flexibility. People could imagine a dazzling array of new uses for the network, and as quick as that, they could build and deploy them—a site that sold you books, a site that cataloged the world's information, an application that let you "borrow" other people's music, a social network that could connect you to anyone.

You didn't need permission for any of this stuff; some of these innovations ruined traditional industries, some fundamentally altered society, and many were legally dubious. But the internet meant you could just put it up, and if it worked, the rest of the world would quickly adopt it.

But if flexibility was the early internet's promise, it was soon imperiled. In 2003, Tim Wu, a law professor now at Columbia Law School (he's also a contributor to *The New York Times*), saw signs of impending corporate control over the growing internet. Broadband companies that were investing great sums to roll out faster and faster internet service to Americans were becoming wary of running an anything-goes network.

Some of the new uses of the internet threatened their bottom line. People were using online services as an alternative to paying for cable TV or long-distance phone service. They were connecting devices like Wi-Fi routers, which allowed them to share their connections with multiple devices. At the time, there were persistent reports of broadband companies seeking to block or otherwise frustrate these new services; in a few years, some broadband providers would begin blocking new services outright.

To Mr. Wu, the broadband monopolies looked like a threat to the end-to-end idea that had powered the internet. In a legal journal, he outlined an idea for regulation to preserve the internet's equal-opportunity design—and hence was born "net neutrality."

Though it has been through a barrage of legal challenges and resurrections, some form of net neutrality has been the governing regime on the internet since 2005. The new F.C.C. order would undo the idea completely; companies would be allowed to block

or demand payment for certain traffic as they liked, as long as they disclosed the arrangements.

At the moment, broadband companies are promising not to act unfairly, and they argue that undoing the rules would give them further incentive to invest in their broadband capacity, ultimately improving the internet.

Brian Hart, an F.C.C. spokesman, said broadband companies would still be covered by antitrust laws and other rules meant to prevent anticompetitive behavior. He noted that Mr. Pai's proposals would simply return the network to an earlier, pre-network-neutrality regulatory era.

"The internet flourished under this framework before, and it will again," he said.

Broadband companies are taking a similar line. When I pointed out to a Comcast spokeswoman that the company's promises were only voluntary—that nothing will prevent Comcast from one day creating special tiers of internet service with bundled content, much like the way it now sells cable TV she suggested I was jumping the gun.

After all, people have been predicting the end of the internet for years. In 2003, Michael Copps, a Democratically appointed commissioner on the F.C.C. who was alarmed by the central choke points then taking command of the internet, argued that "we could be witnessing the beginning of the end of the internet as we know it."

It's been a recurrent theme among worriers ever since. In 2014, the last time it looked like net neutrality would get gutted, Nilay Patel, editor of the Verge, declared the internet dead (he used another word for "dead"). And he did it again this year, anticipating Mr. Pai's proposal.

But look, you might say: Despite the hand-wringing, the internet has kept on trucking. Start-ups are still getting funded and going public. Crazy new things still sometimes get invented and defy all expectations; Bitcoin, which is as Wild West as they come, just hit \$10,000 on some exchanges.

Well, O.K. But a vibrant network doesn't die all at once. It takes time and neglect; it grows weaker by the day, but imperceptibly, so that one day we are living in a digital world controlled by giants and we come to regard the whole thing as normal.

It's not normal. It wasn't always this way. The internet doesn't have to be a corporate playground. That's just the path we've chosen.

HONDURAS

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I want to alert all Senators to the situation in Honduras. Those of us who care about Central America have watched the election for Honduras's next President with increasing alarm. It has been more than a week since November 26, when the people of Honduras cast their votes. Since then, repeated delays and suspicious behavior, which suggests either incompetence or fraud, by the Supreme Electoral Tribunal, TSE, that has been tallying the ballots, have incited large public demonstrations.

Late last week, the government of President Juan Orlando Hernandez suspended constitutional rights and imposed a 10-day, 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. curfew. Several protesters, including a 19-year-old girl, have reportedly been shot and killed by Honduran troops, and hundreds more have been arrested. Salvador Nasralla, the main opposition

candidate, called for a new election and reportedly urged the Honduran police and military to disobey orders of their commanders to fire on demonstrators.

Even before the Honduran people went to the polls, the prospects for a free, fair, and peaceful election faced many challenges. The most obvious point of contention is that President Hernandez is seeking a second term, since until recently the Honduran Constitution had been interpreted to strictly limit Presidents to a single 4-year term.

Ironically, in 2009 former President Manuel Zelaya was forced from power by a coalition of military officers, businessowners, and conservative politicians, including Hernandez, after they accused Zelaya of using a popular referendum on a proposed constitutional convention to extend his own rule.

Zelaya's ouster was initially labeled a coup by the U.S. State Department, but it was not long before the United States accepted the result and resumed sending economic and military aid to the government of President Porfirio Lobo. During the next 3 years, the influx of illicit drugs and the incidence of violence, including assassinations of journalists and other civil society leaders, increased dramatically, and Honduras became among the most violent countries in the world.

After Hernandez became president of the National Congress, he and his National Party replaced the Supreme Court with justices intended to support their political agenda. In 2013, Hernandez was declared President of Honduras after an election fraught with reports of vote buying and threats and assassinations of political opponents.

Two years later, the same Supreme Court ruled that he could run for a second term, paving the way for last week's election. Just 8 years after former President Zelaya was pushed out for allegedly proposing that the Honduran people vote on the question of a second term, President Hernandez had consolidated his control by replacing the justices of the Supreme Court, appointing the TSE, maintaining a majority in the Congress, and using the state media to drown out his critics. It was widely predicted that he would coast to victory.

President Hernandez's government, in addition to becoming increasingly autocratic, has been dogged by accusations of pervasive corruption.

For these reasons and because of the opaque and bizarre conduct of the TSE during the vote tallying process, it is perhaps not surprising that the situation has deteriorated to the point of becoming a national crisis of confidence in the integrity of Honduras's democracy.

Contrary to past practice, the TSE did not issue early results until the day after the polls closed. At that time, it announced that, with 57 percent of the vote counted, Mr. Nasralla, a former TV sports journalist, was leading by 5

percentage points. This indicated the possibility of an historic upset, and while based on past practice the final count was expected the next day, the process of tallying the votes dragged on behind closed doors with no further announcements.

While Nasralla and his supporters celebrated and the third-placed candidate, Luis Zelaya of the Liberal party, conceded, President Hernandez and his allies in the press insisted that he would come out on top once the rural votes were counted.

The TSE also said the rural vote count was delayed, and on Wednesday, after a long silence, the TSE indicated that Nasralla's lead had started to shrink, but the press reported that no technical reason was apparent to explain the delay as the results from all polling stations were reportedly transmitted electronically as soon as the polls closed.

As time dragged on, suspicions of fraud escalated among Nasralla's supporters, and last Wednesday afternoon, the TSE said its computer system had inexplicably ceased functioning for 5 hours. Then on Wednesday night, the TSE reported that President Hernandez was ahead by several thousand votes, which triggered protests by Nasralla's supporters, some of them reportedly throwing rocks and lighting fires in the streets, who were met by troops firing tear gas and live bullets.

According to press reports, the opposition is questioning ballots from 5,300 polling places and has called for a recount of ballots from three rural departments. Yesterday morning, after only a partial recount, the TSE announced its final tally in favor of President Hernandez by just 1.49 percent, a gap of 52,333 votes.

The process has been so lacking in transparency, so fraught with irregularities and inexplicable delays, and coupled with reports of excessive force by the Honduran police and military against peaceful protesters, it is increasingly obvious that the TSE's announcement made a bad situation worse. There is too much suspicion of fraud and too much distrust.

On Saturday, I asked the U.S. Embassy in Tegucigalpa three simple but important questions about the delays, the TSE's tally of the votes, and the reports of shootings of protesters. It is late Tuesday afternoon, and I have yet to receive answers. This lack of responsiveness in such a time of crisis is troubling, and I hope it is not a new standard.

Yesterday evening, the OAS issued a statement that "the tight margin of the results, and the irregularities, errors and systemic problems that have surrounded this election do not allow the Mission to hold certainty about the results." There were also reports that large numbers of Honduran police officers, many of whom have longstanding grievances, are refusing orders to use force against the protesters. Earlier today, I was informed that there may

be at least 15 fatalities and many people injured from gunshot wounds. There are reports that the police and military fired many shots, sometimes in the air and other times at the crowds.

The importance of this election, which will determine who leads Honduras for the next 4 years, cannot be overstated. This is especially so because of the way it came about in the first place. There was already resentment toward President Hernandez for the double standard of participating in the coup against Zelaya and then orchestrating his own path to reelection. As one Honduran was quoted saying, they "are reliving the entire crisis from the coup of 2009, and the majority of people don't really like that because it brings back some ugly memories."

President Hernandez and Mr. Nasralla offer significantly different approaches to tackling the country's problems. Given the debacle of the past week and the growing popular outcry, it is apparent that establishing the credibility of the electoral process and the integrity of Honduras's democracy requires either recounting the contested ballots from each of the 5,300 polling places in the presence of representatives of the political parties, representatives of civil society, and international observers or holding a new election.

In the meantime, it is the responsibility of the Honduran Government, particularly the police and the military, to respect and defend the right of the Honduran people to freely and peacefully express their opinions.

Honduras faces a defining moment in its modern history. How the government resolves this crisis will determine the path of the country for the foreseeable future. It will also determine the extent of validity and support the next government receives from the United States because only a credible election, accepted widely by the Honduran people as free and fair, coupled with a demonstrable commitment to transparency, to freedom of expression and association, and to the rule of law, will justify that validity and support.

TRIBUTE TO SEAN J. STACKLEY

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I would like to make a few remarks to honor a great American.

Sean J. Stackley served as the Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Research, Development and Acquisition from July 28, 2008, to August 3, 2017. He also served as the Acting Secretary of the Navy from January 20 to August 3, 2017. By virtue of the length of his Navy service, Secretary Stackley has become the longest serving Assistant Secretary of the Navy in history. Until Sean's service, Franklin Delano Roosevelt held the record for the longest serving Assistant Secretary of the Navy, but Sean has eclipsed that record by almost 2 years.

I first came to know Secretary Stackley as a staff member of the Sen-

ate Armed Services Committee from 2005 until the time he was sworn in as Assistant Secretary of the Navy. Before that, Sean graduated from the Naval Academy in 1979 and served on Active Duty in the Navy until 2005, when he retired after having been program manager for the LPD-17 Program.

It would be hard to find a more dedicated public servant who brought so much to the table and continued to give his best even after he could justifiably have moved on to an easier job. There was hardly any area of building the Navy of the future where Secretary Stackley's good judgment and broad experience has not improved the outcome. During his tenure, he was responsible for placing 90 ships, nearly 1,700 aircraft, and over 20,000 weapons under contract. He was a staunch advocate for making every dollar count and worked to employ competitive techniques on every contract where possible. He championed multiyear contracts on mature programs, including the *Arleigh Burke* class destroyer, *Virginia* class attack submarine, MV-22 tiltrotor, and the F/A-18 Super Hornet Programs which collectively saved the taxpayer over \$6 billion. He drove direct competition on many programs, including the Presidential helicopter, air and missile defense radar, ship-to-shore connector, and amphibious combat vehicle. He also introduced many creative forms of competition, including combining two different ship classes in one solicitation and introducing competition on the Aegis weapon system for the first time in 40 years.

Secretary Stackley's creativity in acquisition contributed to ensuring a strong industrial base. He promoted open architecture standards for all Navy programs to provide competitive opportunities for large, medium, and small businesses. He ensured the Department synchronized contract awards on major weapons programs so that industry could be more efficient by combining commodity and sub-vendor buys. He also challenged the Department's purchases of contractor services which saved the Department over \$2 billion. He was also an advocate for small business and proactively assigned every deputy program manager to be the small business advocate in every program office.

Secretary Stackley did not shy away from difficult problems. He commissioned an end-to-end review of CVN-78 program to keep the ship under the congressional cost cap. He was a champion for the Navy's cybersafe efforts. He implemented a settlement for the A-12 litigation, the longest running government contract case in history, by working diligently with General Dynamics and Boeing to find a win-win solution for the government and the contractors. He was always mindful of the warfighter ensuring the Urgent Needs Process was agile and responsive. He recognized the strength of working with our international part-

ners and forged strong ties on a myriad of programs, including the Joint Strike Fighter and *Columbia* class submarine.

Secretary Stackley was a staunch advocate for the acquisition workforce. He successfully argued for tools and funding that would provide necessary training and certification for the workforce. In addition, he was passionate about promoting diversity. His dedication to the workforce was most evident during the Washington Navy Yard shooting and the days and weeks that followed where he was most concerned with the well-being of the individuals impacted.

I am very sorry to see Secretary Stackley leave government service, but he has more than earned time to pursue other goals. However, I am confident that his legacy will continue with the strong team that he built and nurtured.

With that, I want to wish Sean and his wife, Terri, "fair winds and following seas."

TRIBUTE TO BONNIE KIND

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I am pleased to commend Bonnie Kind, who has dedicated her professional career to serving the American people since starting her career with the Social Security Administration, SSA, as a student trainee more than 40 years ago. Bonnie currently serves as the Associate Commissioner for Budget and principal adviser to the SSA Chief Financial Officer. In her current role, she has provided vigilance and stewardship of the agency's approximately \$1 trillion program budget and nearly \$12 billion administrative budget.

Bonnie has earned the respect and gratitude of many on Capitol Hill for her diligence and assistance in making sure Members and staff have reliable information on which to make budget and appropriations decisions. She has excelled at developing relationships over the decades as she educated congressional staff about the Social Security budget. Those dealings, combined with her understanding of the Federal budget process and political knowledge, have helped Congress understand the SSA budget and the service the agency provides.

As importantly, Bonnie provides executive leadership and direction to SSA in administering a comprehensive program of budget policy, formulation, presentation, and execution. She secures and manages the financial resources needed by the agency and its employees to serve the public and to ensure stewardship of Social Security programs and resources.

Prior to her tenure as Associate Commissioner for Budget, Bonnie served as the comptroller and chief financial officer for the National Security Agency where she oversaw financial management, accounting, and budgeting activities. Before that, she served as the deputy associate commissioner of the SAA Office of Financial

Policy and Operations. Bonnie earned a bachelor's degree in accounting from the University of Maryland and a masters of business administration from Loyola University of Maryland. She also holds a number of professional certifications, including certified public accountant, certified government financial manager, certified defense financial manager, and certified acquisition professional.

Congress depends on the extensive expertise of dedicated public servants like Bonnie Kind. I extend my appreciation and congratulations to her for 40 years of dedicated service to the American people. I wish her the best in her retirement.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO MAJOR REGINA RUSH-KITTLE

• Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize Maj. Regina Rush-Kittle, a dedicated veteran and law enforcement officer whose strength and commitment to her community, her State, and her Nation merited her induction into the Connecticut Women's Hall of Fame this November.

Her life and career have been a series of firsts. She is an amazing, tenacious, goal-oriented person who sets high standards for herself and for others. She is well-regarded by her peers and recognized for her willingness to always give more than 100 percent.

Major Rush-Kittle moved with her family to Middletown, CT, as a young girl. She attended Middletown High School, after which she pursued a political science degree at the University of Connecticut. She subsequently obtained a master's in criminal justice at Western New England College.

While at college, Major Rush-Kittle joined the U.S. Marine Corps Reserves, where she served for 3 years. She then transferred to the Army Reserves, where she continued to serve her country for more than two decades. During that time, she was mobilized during Operation Iraqi Freedom. Impressively, Major Rush-Kittle earned the Bronze Star Medal during her tour of duty for Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan, where she served as the command sergeant major of the 321st Military Intelligence Battalion of Texas. She retired from the Reserves after 30 years of dedicated service.

As amazing and stellar as her career serving our country, it is her law enforcement career where Major Rush-Kittle truly made her mark.

Her interest in law enforcement arose when she began working as a corrections officer at the the York Correctional Institution, a high-security women prison in Niantic, CT. Her passion for public safety and determination to knock down barriers to female advancement would lead Major Rush-Kittle to become the first Black female patrol officer for the Middletown Po-

lice Department, as well as the first Black female drill sergeant and command sergeant major in that organization.

Continuing to shatter barriers, Major Rush-Kittle transferred to the Connecticut State Police, where she was the first African-American woman to become a State police sergeant, then a State police lieutenant, and then a major in the history of this proud and storied department. She also was the first to command a police barracks.

Her devotion to serving the Connecticut State Police led her to enroll in the 244th Session of the the FBI National Academy in Quantico, VA. She also headed the Connecticut State Police Academy. Her studies, experiences, and devotion to law enforcement have made her a role model for her peers.

Now retired from military service and law enforcement, Major Rush-Kittle is a credit to the State of Connecticut and the country thanks to her unfailing sense of duty and readiness to break barriers. I am pleased that she is an integral part of a team of military and veteran volunteers who assist me in reviewing candidates to our military academies.

I applaud her many accomplishments and hope my colleagues will join me in congratulating Major Rush-Kittle for her well-earned induction into the Connecticut Women's Hall of Fame.●

RECOGNIZING KINDRED ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

• Ms. HEITKAMP. Mr. President, I want to congratulate the students, faculty, and parents of Kindred Elementary School, located in Kindred, ND, on being awarded the 2017 National Blue Ribbon School Award.

Founded in 1982, the National Blue Ribbon Schools Program recognizes public and private elementary, middle, and high schools where students perform at very high levels or where significant improvements are being made in students' academic achievement. A National Blue Ribbon Schools flag overhead has become a mark of excellence in education recognized by everyone from parents to policymakers in thousands of communities. Since the program's founding, the U.S. Department of Education has bestowed this coveted award to more than 8,500 of America's best schools.

Kindred Elementary School serves nearly 460 students and was one of three schools in North Dakota to be designated as an Exemplary High Performing School under this award. Receiving recognition as a National Blue Ribbon School signifies the hard work and dedication of the educators, students, and parents involved, and I have no doubt the students at Kindred Elementary are on a path to success. Kindred Elementary hires and retains highly effective teachers that operate using professional learning communities. This allows school staff to collaborate on a daily basis and develop

methods for continuous improvement based on student data and progress. To support its students, the school uses a multitiered approach called response-to-intervention, RtI, that offers timely support to students' academic and behavioral needs. The RtI team consists of classroom teachers, special education teachers, speech and occupational therapy staff, and other key staff. Kindred's innovative approach and commitment to developing student potential has resulted in high student outcomes that we can all be proud of.

School leadership states the "school district thrives because of the strong relationship between students, their families, community members, and the school district staff." To further the communal relationship, the school offers enrichment opportunities through lyceums, field trips, and guest presenters and performers. It is through this dedication that the school provides a tailored education that allows student, staff, and faculty to succeed.

The Kindred Public School District's mission statement reads, "Improving tomorrow, by learning today." This mission embodies all that Kindred Elementary is working to accomplish by looking at the needs of each individual student, as well as providing a safe and respectful learning environment that breeds success. I wish the very best to the community of Kindred and congratulations to all engaged at Kindred Elementary for achieving this high honor. Thank you for your commitment to our children and leaders of tomorrow.●

RECOGNIZING LEGACY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

• Ms. HEITKAMP. Mr. President, I want to congratulate the students, faculty, and parents of Legacy Elementary School, located in West Fargo, ND, on being awarded the 2017 National Blue Ribbon School Award.

Founded in 1982, the National Blue Ribbon Schools Program recognizes public and private elementary, middle, and high schools where students perform at very high levels or where significant improvements are being made in students' academic achievement. A National Blue Ribbon Schools flag overhead has become a mark of excellence in education recognized by everyone from parents to policymakers in thousands of communities. Since the program's founding, the U.S. Department of Education has bestowed this coveted award to more than 8,500 of America's best schools.

Legacy Elementary School serves nearly 540 students and was one of three schools in North Dakota to be designated as an Exemplary High Performing School under this award. Receiving recognition as a National Blue Ribbon School signifies the hard work and dedication of the educators, students, and parents involved, and I have no doubt the students at Legacy are on a path to success. The school has received the Let's Move Active Schools

National Award and the Star Award from their local Dakota Medical Foundation. These awards show Legacy's dedication towards promoting health and wellness among students and staff. Such health strategies include building wide flexible seating and personalized learning spaces, movement built into their curriculum, along with multiple health snack and food options and initiatives, which work to build both short- and long-term healthy habits for students.

As school leadership states, "At Legacy, our school Mission is: Educate. Our school Vision is: Everyone Learns." It is through this dedication that Legacy helps students excel academically, physically, emotionally, socially, and culturally. The school does so by often writing their own curricula to ensure they teach what fits students' needs and implementing programs that grow skills such as critical thinking, perseverance, problem solving, and sportsmanship. The innovation shown by the faculty at Legacy serves as a model that all schools can look towards when finding new ways to promote student growth and development.

The West Fargo Public Schools' mission statement reads, "Educating today's learners for tomorrow's world." This mission embodies all that Legacy Elementary is working to accomplish by looking at the needs of each individual student, as well as providing a healthy and respectful learning environment that breeds success. I wish the very best to the community of West Fargo and congratulations to all engaged at Legacy Elementary for achieving this high honor. Thank you for your commitment to our children and leaders of tomorrow.●

RECOGNIZING LONGFELLOW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

● Ms. HEITKAMP. Mr. President, I want to congratulate the students, faculty, and parents of Longfellow Elementary School, located in Fargo, ND, on being awarded the 2017 National Blue Ribbon School Award.

Founded in 1982, the National Blue Ribbon Schools Program recognizes public and private elementary, middle, and high schools where students perform at very high levels or where significant improvements are being made in students' academic achievement. A National Blue Ribbon Schools flag overhead has become a mark of excellence in education recognized by everyone from parents to policymakers in thousands of communities. Since the program's founding, the U.S. Department of Education has bestowed this coveted award to more than 8,500 of America's best schools.

Longfellow Elementary School serves nearly 370 students and was one of three schools in North Dakota to be designated as an Exemplary High Performing School under this award. Receiving recognition as a National Blue

Ribbon School signifies the hard work and dedication of the educators, students, and parents involved, and I have no doubt students at Longfellow are on a path to success. At Longfellow Elementary, every educator serves multiple roles in their students' day-to-day activities. To best support its students, families are heavily involved in the school and its functions. Unlike many schools in the Nation, Longfellow Elementary enjoys strong engagement and support from their students' parents, making them a shining example of how our public schools can thrive through robust community support.

Longfellow is one of two elementary schools in the Fargo Public School District that provides an educational setting for students with a wide range of impairments that require extra attention. The multiple impairments magnet program provides speech, occupational, and physical therapy services to students. Cass County Public Health supports the program with regular visits by a nurse, and a music therapist visits with the class two times a week. It is through the Longfellow community that the school has been able tailor the teaching to their students' needs.

The Longfellow's vision includes, "Equitable opportunities will ensure a quality educational experience to stimulate and support all students in their intellectual, social, and personal growth." This vision statement embodies all that Longfellow Elementary is working to accomplish by including parents and family in their discussions. I wish the very best to the community of Fargo and congratulations to all engaged at Longfellow Elementary for achieving this high honor. Thank you for your commitment to our children and leaders of tomorrow.●

TRIBUTE TO VIRGIL BERNERO

● Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, today I wish to pay special tribute to my friend, Virgil Bernero, who will be ending his service as mayor of Lansing, MI, at the end of this year.

This is a special opportunity for me to recognize Virg's outstanding service to the people of Lansing. I have represented Lansing throughout my years in public service, so I have had the opportunity to work closely with Virg.

Virg and I share something in common: We both began our public service careers as an Ingham County commissioner, State representative, and State senator. He was first elected mayor of Lansing in 2005. He has served with a unique passion and energy for public service. He is devoted to his family and has worked on behalf of families he has represented with the same devotion and commitment.

While mayor, Virg led Lansing through the recession and, despite facing major budget shortfalls, was able to maintain 12 consecutive balanced budgets and produce a budget surplus during each of the last 3 years.

He led efforts to attract new business investments in the city, including a \$182 million repurposing of a former electric powerplant into the headquarters of a major national insurance company. He worked to foster regional cooperation and economic development efforts and led the creation of the Lansing Economic Area Partnership, the Lansing area's first regional economic development public-private partnership.

During the automotive crisis, Virg organized Michigan mayors and led a passionate and aggressive defense of the American auto industry, which is one of Lansing and mid-Michigan's backbone industries. He founded and led the Manufacturing Alliance of Communities, a national coalition of mayors that worked to secure Federal support for our automobile industry. Since that time, General Motors has invested more than \$1 billion in their Lansing facilities and recently moved production of the Chevrolet Camaro from Canada to the Lansing Grand River assembly plant.

I am grateful for Virg's friendship and congratulate him on his years of extraordinary service. I wish him and his family all the best as he begins this new chapter in his life.●

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 10:02 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House disagreed to the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 1) to provide for reconciliation pursuant to titles II and V of the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2018, and asks a conference with the Senate on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses thereon, and that the following Members be the managers of the conference on the part of the House:

From the Committee on Ways and Means, for consideration of the House bill and the Senate amendment, and modifications committed to conference: Mr. BRADY of Texas, Mr. NUNES, Mr. ROSKAM, Mrs. BLACK, Mrs. NOEM, Mr. NEAL, Mr. LEVIN, and Mr. DOGGETT.

From the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for consideration of section 20003 of the Senate amendment, and modifications committed to conference: Mr. WALDEN, Mr. SHIMKUS, and Ms. CASTOR of Florida.

From the Committee on Natural Resources, for consideration of sections 20001 and 20002 of the Senate amendment and modifications committed to conference: Mr. BISHOP of Utah, Mr. YOUNG of Alaska, and Mr. GRIJALVA.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

At 2:40 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bill:

S. 371. An act to make technical changes and other improvements to the Department of State Authorities Act, Fiscal Year 2017.

The enrolled bill was subsequently signed by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

MEASURES READ THE FIRST TIME

The following bill was read the first time:

S. 2192. A bill to strengthen border security, increase resources for enforcement of immigration laws, and for other purposes.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC-3593. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Bacillus thuringiensis Cry14Ab-1 Protein in or on Soybean; Temporary Exemption from the Requirement of a Tolerance" (FRL No. 9970-43) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 1, 2017; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-3594. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Prometryn; Pesticide Tolerances" (FRL No. 9970-01) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 1, 2017; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-3595. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "pseudomonas fluorescens 4-hydroxyphenylpyruvate dioxygenase (HPPD-4); Exemption from the Requirement of a Tolerance" (FRL No. 9969-94) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 1, 2017; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-3596. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Quinclorac; Pesticide Tolerances" (FRL No. 9970-05) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 1, 2017; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-3597. A communication from the Chief of the Planning and Regulatory Affairs Branch, Food and Nutrition Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Child Nutrition Programs: Flexibilities for Milk, Whole Grains, and Sodium Requirements" (RIN0584-AW53) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 1, 2017; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-3598. A communication from the Congressional Review Coordinator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Importation of Fresh Mango Fruit From Vietnam Into the Continental United States" (RIN0579-AE25) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 29, 2017; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-3599. A communication from the Program Specialist (Paperwork Reduction Act), Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, Department of the Treasury, transmitting,

pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Regulatory Capital Rules: Retention of Certain Existing Transition Provisions for Banking Organizations That Are Not Subject to the Advanced Approaches Capital Rules" (RIN1557-AE23) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 30, 2017; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-3600. A communication from the Program Specialist (Paperwork Reduction Act), Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Community Reinvestment Act Regulations" (RIN3064-AE58) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 30, 2017; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-3601. A communication from the Program Specialist (Paperwork Reduction Act), Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Mandatory Contractual Stay Requirements for Qualified Financial Contracts" (RIN1557-AE05) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 30, 2017; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-3602. A communication from the Deputy General Counsel for Operations, Department of Housing and Urban Development, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy in the position of Inspector General, Department of Housing and Urban Development, received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 4, 2017; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-3603. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Protection of Stratospheric Ozone: Revision to References for Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Sector to Incorporate Latest Edition of Certain Industry, Consensus-Based Standards" (FRL No. 9968-24-OAR) (RIN2060-AT53) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 1, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-3604. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Approval of Air Quality Implementation Plans; New York; Cross-State Air Pollution Rule; NOx Annual and SO2 Group 1 Trading Programs" (FRL No. 9971-25-Region 2) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 1, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-3605. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; West Virginia; 2015 Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standards; Withdrawal of Direct Final Rule" (FRL No. 9971-40-Region 3) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 1, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-3606. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Air Plan Approval; AK; Updates to Materials Incorporated by Reference" (FRL No. 9970-27-Region 10) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 1, 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-3607. A communication from the Acting Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Depart-

ment of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "The Money Follows the Person (MFP) Rebalancing Demonstration"; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-3608. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "2018 Cost-of-Living Adjustments to the Internal Revenue Code Tax Tables and Other Items" (Rev. Proc. 2017-58) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 1, 2017; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-3609. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 22-184, "Dining with Dogs Temporary Act of 2017"; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3610. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 22-185, "Credit Protection Fee Waiver Temporary Amendment Act of 2017"; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3611. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 22-186, "Ethic Board Quorum Temporary Amendment Act of 2017"; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3612. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Safe Harbor for Deteriorating Concrete Foundations Caused by the Mineral Pyrrhotite" (Rev. Proc. 2017-60) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 1, 2017; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-3613. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 22-187, "Southwest Waterfront Parking Enforcement Temporary Amendment Act of 2017"; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3614. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 22-188, "Campaign Finance Reform and Transparency Temporary Amendment Act of 2017"; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3615. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 22-189, "Washington Metrorail Safety Commission Board of Directors Appointment Temporary Amendment Act of 2017"; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3616. A communication from the Acting Chief Executive Officer, Corporation for National and Community Service, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Semiannual Report of the Inspector General and the Corporation for National and Community Service's Response and Report on Final Action for the period from April 1, 2017 through September 30, 2017; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3617. A communication from the Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Semi-Annual Report of the Inspector General for the period from April 1, 2017 through September 30, 2017 and the Semi-Annual Report of the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration (TIGTA); to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3618. A communication from the Secretary of Education, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Department's Semiannual Report of the Office of the Inspector General for the period from April 1, 2017 through September 30, 2017; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3619. A communication from the Vice Chairman, Merit Systems Protection Board, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Board's Agency Financial Report for fiscal year 2017; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3620. A communication from the Board Members of the Railroad Retirement Board, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Semiannual Report of the Inspector General for the period from April 1, 2017 through September 30, 2017; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3621. A communication from the Acting Assistant Secretary, Employee Benefits Security Administration, Department of Labor, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Claims Procedure for Plans Providing Disability Benefits; 90-Day Delay of Applicability Date" (RIN1210-AB39) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 29, 2017; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-3622. A communication from the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Department of Veterans Affairs' Semiannual Report of the Inspector General for the period from April 1, 2017 through September 30, 2017; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3623. A communication from the Acting Chairman of the Federal Trade Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Semiannual Report of the Inspector General for the period from April 1, 2017 through September 30, 2017 and the Uniform Resource Locator (URL) for the report; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3624. A communication from the Acting Commissioner of the Social Security Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Semiannual Report of the Inspector General for the period from April 1, 2016 through September 30, 2017 and the Uniform Resource Locator (URL) for the report; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3625. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Uniform Resource Locator (URL) for the Department's Agency Financial Report for fiscal year 2017; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3626. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Secretary, Employee Benefits Security Administration, Department of Labor, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "18-Month Extension of Transition Period and Delay of Applicability Dates; Best Interest Contract Exemption (PTE 2016-01); Class Exemption for Principal Transactions in Certain Assets Between Investment Advice Fiduciaries and Employee Benefit Plans and IRAs (PTE 2016-02); Prohibited Transaction Exemption 84-24 for Certain Transactions Involving Insurance Agents and Brokers, Pension Consultants, Insurance Companies, and Investment Company Principal Underwriters (PTE 84-24)" (ZRIN1210-ZA27) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 29, 2017; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-3627. A communication from the Acting Assistant Administrator of the Diversion Control Division, Drug Enforcement Agency,

Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Schedules of Controlled Substances: Placement of FDA-Approved Products of Oral Solutions Containing Dronabinol [(+)-delta-9-trans-tetrahydrocannabinol (delta-9-THC)] in Schedule II" (Docket No. DEA-344) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 1, 2017; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-3628. A communication from the Solicitor General, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, an opinion of the United States District Court for the Middle District of Pennsylvania (Keyes v. Sessions); to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-3629. A communication from the Chief Human Capital Officer, Small Business Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy in the position of Chief Counsel, Office of Advocacy, Small Business Administration, received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 30, 2017; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

EC-3630. A communication from the Chief Human Capital Officer, Small Business Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy in the position of Deputy Administrator, Small Business Administration, received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 30, 2017; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

EC-3631. A communication from the Director, Office of Management and Budget, Executive Office of the President, transmitting a report relative to additional fiscal year 2018 funding for disaster relief; to the Committee on the Budget.

EC-3632. A communication from the Secretary of the Federal Trade Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Commission's thirteenth annual report on ethanol market concentration; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3633. A communication from the Secretary of Energy, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "Fiscal Year 2016 Methane Hydrate Program"; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC-3634. A communication from the Chief of the Border Security Regulations Branch, Customs and Border Protection, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Technical Amendment to List of User Fee Airports: International Airport, Rome, NY; Van Nuys Airport, Van Nuys, CA; Cobb County Airport-McCollum Field, Kennesaw, GA; and Charlotte-Monroe Executive Airport, Monroe, NC" (CBP Dec. 17-18) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 27, 2017; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-3635. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the establishment of the danger pay allowance for Guayaquil, Ecuador; Quito, Ecuador; Asuncion, Paraguay; N'djamena, Chad; and Abuja, Nigeria; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-3636. A communication from the Acting Assistant General Counsel for Regulatory Affairs, Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Benefits Payable in Terminated Single-Employer Plans; Interest Assumptions for Paying Benefits" (29 CFR Part 4022) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 29, 2017; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-3637. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Employment and Training, Department of Labor, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule en-

titled "Senior Community Service Employment Program; Performance Accountability" (RIN1205-AB79) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 1, 2017; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-3638. A communication from the Acting Secretary of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a petition to add workers who were employed at the Carborundum Company site in Niagara Falls, New York, to the Special Exposure Cohort; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-3639. A communication from the Acting Secretary of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a petition to add workers who were employed at the Rocky Flats Plant in Golden, Colorado, to the Special Exposure Cohort; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-3640. A communication from the Director, Office of Administration, Executive Office of the President, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to transactions from the Unanticipated Needs Account for fiscal year 2017; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-3641. A communication from the Assistant Attorney General, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, an annual report relative to the activities and operations of the Public Integrity Section, Criminal Division, for 2016, and the nationwide federal law enforcement effort against public corruption; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-3642. A communication from the Senior Official performing the duties of the Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness), transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "Annual Report to Congress on the Post-9/11 Educational Assistance Program"; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

PETITIONS AND MEMORIALS

The following petition or memorial was laid before the Senate and was referred or ordered to lie on the table as indicated:

POM-142. A petition from a citizen of the State of Texas relative to proposed legislation; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. HOEVEN, from the Committee on Indian Affairs, with an amendment:

S. 1223. A bill to repeal the Klamath Tribe Judgment Fund Act (Rept. No. 115-190).

By Mr. CORKER, from the Committee on Foreign Relations, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

S. 447. A bill to require reporting on acts of certain foreign countries on Holocaust era assets and related issues.

By Mr. ISAKSON, from the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, without amendment:

S. 2193. An original bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve health care for veterans, and for other purposes.

EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following executive reports of nominations were submitted:

By Mr. CRAPO for the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

*Jerome H. Powell, of Maryland, to be Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System for a term of four years.

By Mr. CORKER for the Committee on Foreign Relations.

*James Randolph Evans, of Georgia, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Luxembourg.

Nominee: James Randolph Evans.

Post: Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Luxembourg.

Nominated: 9/28/17.

(The following is a list of all members of my immediate family and their spouses. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

Contributions, donee, date, and amount:

Self, Spouse, Children and Spouses, Parents, Grandparents, Brothers and Spouses, Sisters and Spouses: See Attachment A.

ATTACHMENT A

Linda Evans, John McCallum for Congress, 2013, \$1,000.

Linda Evans, Pridemore for Congress, 2013, \$1,000.

Linda Evans, The Guardian Fund, 2013, \$1,000.

Linda Evans, Westmoreland, Lynn A., 2013, \$1,000.

Linda Evans, Shannon for Senate, 2014, \$1,000.

Linda Evans, Nathan Deal for Governor, Inc., 2014, \$6,300.

J. Randolph Evans, Republican National Committee, 2012, \$2,500.

J. Randolph Evans, Republican National Committee, 2013, \$32,400.00.

J. Randolph Evans, Republican National Committee, 2014, \$32,400.00.

J. Randolph Evans, Republican National Committee, 2015, \$25,000.00.

J. Randolph Evans, Georgia Republican Party, Inc., 2016, \$270.

J. Randolph Evans, Georgia Republican Party, Inc., 2016, \$750.

J. Randolph Evans, Georgia Republican Party, Inc., 2016, \$1,000.

J. Randolph Evans, Republican Party, Inc., 2017, \$225.

James Evans, Georgia Republican Party, Inc., 2012, \$800.00.

James Evans, Georgia Republican Party, Inc., 2012, \$1,000.00.

James Randolph Evans, Republican National Committee, 2016, \$350.

Randy Evans, Romney for President, Inc., 2012, \$2,500.

Randy Evans, Republican National Committee, 2013, \$350.

Randy Evans, Georgia Republican Party, Inc., 2013, \$125.

Randy Evans, Nathan Deal for Governor, Inc., Primary 2014, \$6,300.

Randy Evans, Nathan Deal for Governor, Inc., General 2014, \$6,300.

Randy Evans, Senate District 12, 2015, \$500.

Randy Evans, Republican National Committee, 2016, \$300.

Randy Evans, Republican National Committee, 2016, \$300.

Randy Evans, Republican National Committee, 2016, \$19,600.

Randy Evans, Georgia Republican Party, 2016, \$130.

Randy Evans, Donald J. Trump for President, Inc., 2016, \$2,700.

Randy Evans, Trump for President, 2016, \$25,000.

Randy Evans, Georgia Republican Party, 2016, \$270.

Randy Evans, Georgia Republican Party, 2016, \$750.

Randy Evans, Georgia Republican Party, 2016, \$1,000.

*Kenneth J. Braithwaite, of Pennsylvania, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Kingdom of Norway.

Nominee: Rear Admiral Kenneth J. Braithwaite, USN(ret).

Post: Ambassador to the Kingdom of Norway.

(The following is a list of all members of my immediate family and their spouses. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

Contributions, donee, date, and amount:

1. Self: Santorum, Richard J via Santorum 2000, 08/25/2000, \$500.00; Specter, Arlen via Citizens for Arlen Specter, 03/15/2002, \$500.00; Specter, Arlen via Citizens for Arlen Specter, 11/18/2002, \$500.00; Specter, Arlen via Citizens for Arlen Specter, 05/13/2003, \$500.00; Specter, Arlen via Citizens for Arlen Specter, 05/25/2003, \$500.00; Specter, Arlen via Citizens for Arlen Specter, 11/01/2004, \$500.00; Bush, George W via Bush-Cheney '04 (Primary) Inc, 03/24/2004, \$250.00; Pitts, Joseph R. via Friends of Joe Pitts, 06/28/2006, \$250.00; The Hospital and Healthsystem Association of Pennsylvania—Federal Political Action Committee, 03/20/2007, \$250.00; The Hospital and Healthsystem Association of Pennsylvania—Federal Political Action Committee, 02/27/2008, \$500.00; Meehan, Patrick L. Mr. via Pat Meehan for Congress, 09/13/2010, \$500.00; Vizient, Inc., Political Action Committee, 06/06/2012, \$1000.00; Vizient, Inc., Political Action Committee, 12/28/2013, \$500.00; Vizient, Inc., Political Action Committee, 05/07/2014, \$500.00; Trump Make America Great Again Committee, 11/08/2016, \$500.00; Trump, Donald J via Donald J. Trump for President, Inc., 11/08/2016, \$400.00.

2. Spouse: Melissa Losito Braithwaite: Trump Make America Great Again Committee, 10/15/2016, \$100.00.

3. Children and Spouses: Grace Anne Braithwaite (age 15): None; Harrison Anthony Braithwaite (age 10): None.

4. Parents: Kenneth J. Braithwaite (Deceased); Sylvia J. (Bell) Braithwaite: None.

5. Grandparents: Rose Bell (Deceased); Gene Bell (Deceased); Franklin Braithwaite (Deceased); Anna Braithwaite (Deceased).

6. Brothers and Spouses: Murray P. Braithwaite: None.

7. Sisters and Spouses:

November 27, 2017.

Hon. BOB CORKER,
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Relations,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

Hon. BEN CARDIN,
Ranking Member, Committee on Foreign Relations,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN AND RANKING MEMBER CARDIN: When completing my Committee Questionnaire and Federal Campaign Contribution Report, some contributions were inadvertently left off the list. Part B. Question 6 regarding Political Contributions and the Federal Campaign Contribution Report should have included the following:

1. April 14, 2011—\$187.50—to the HAPAC, the Hospital and Healthsystem Association of Pennsylvania) https://www.fec.gov/data/receipts/?two_year_transaction_period=2012&data_type=processed&contributor_name=Kenneth+Braithwaite&min_date=01%2F01%2F2011&max_date=12%2F31%2F2012.

2. February 24, 2011—\$900—to the HAPAC https://www.fec.gov/data/receipts/?two_year_transaction_period=2012&data_type=processed&contributor_name=Kenneth+Braithwaite&min_date=01%2F01%2F2011&max_date=12%2F31%2F2012.

transaction period=2012&data_type=processed&contributor_name=Kenneth+Braithwaite&min_date=01%2F01%2F2011&max_date=12%2F31%2F2012).

3. August 5, 2010—\$113.63—to the HAPAC https://www.fec.gov/data/receipts/?two_year_transaction_period=2010&data_type=processed&contributor_name=Kenneth+Braithwaite&min_date=01%2F01%2F2009&max_date=12%2F31%2F2010.

4. March 2, 2010—\$750—to the HAPAC https://www.fec.gov/data/receipts/?two_year_transaction_period=2010&data_type=processed&contributor_name=Kenneth+Braithwaite&min_date=01%2F01%2F2009&max_date=12%2F31%2F2010.

5. October 12, 2009—\$250—to the HAPAC https://www.fec.gov/data/receipts/?two_year_transaction_period=2010&data_type=processed&contributor_name=Kenneth+Braithwaite&min_date=01%2F01%2F2009&max_date=12%2F31%2F2010.

6. February 19, 2009—\$500—to the HAPAC https://www.fec.gov/data/receipts/?two_year_transaction_period=2010&data_type=processed&contributor_name=Kenneth+Braithwaite&min_date=01%2F01%2F2009&max_date=12%2F31%2F2010.

7. July 16, 2008—\$75—to the HAPAC https://www.fec.gov/data/receipts/?two_year_transaction_period=2008&data_type=processed&contributor_name=Kenneth+Braithwaite&min_date=01%2F01%2F2007&max_date=12%2F31%2F2008.

8. August 17, 2007—\$87.50—to the HAPAC https://www.fec.gov/data/receipts/?two_year_transaction_period=2008&data_type=processed&contributor_name=Kenneth+Braithwaite&min_date=01%2F01%2F2007&max_date=12%2F31%2F2008.

9. April 26, 2001—\$500—to the Johnson for Congress Committee https://www.fec.gov/data/receipts/?two_year_transaction_period=2002&data_type=processed&contributor_name=Kenneth+Braithwaite&min_date=01%2F01%2F2001&max_date=12%2F31%2F2002.

Thank you and the Committee for consideration of my nomination.

Sincerely,

KENNETH J. BRAITHWAITE,
Rear Admiral, USN(ret).

*M. Lee McClenny, of Washington, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Paraguay

Nominee: M. Lee McClenny.

Post: Ambassador to the Republic of Paraguay.

(The following is a list of all members of my immediate family and their spouses. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

Contributions, amount, date, donee:

1. Self: None, N/A, N/A.

2. Spouse: Katherine Latimer: None, N/A, N/A.

3. Children and Spouses: Blake Andrew McClenny: None, N/A, N/A; Katherine Marie McClenny: None, N/A, N/A.

4. Parents: Myron Lee McClenny—deceased; Harlean Kay McClenny: None, N/A, N/A.

5. Grandparents: Dean Preston McClenny—deceased; Myra Rindom McClenny—deceased;

Wayne Melville Wilsey—deceased; Ora Tyson Wilsey—deceased.

6. Brothers and Spouses: None.

7. Sisters and Spouses: Kristin Kay (McClenny) Kuppe: None, N/A, N/A; James Brugge Kuppe: None, N/A, N/A.

*Eric M. Ueland, of Oregon, to be an Under Secretary of State (Management).

*Brock D. Bierman, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development.

*Yleem D. S. Poblete, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (Verification and Compliance).

*Christopher Ashley Ford, of Maryland, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (International Security and Non-Proliferation).

*Nomination was reported with recommendation that it be confirmed subject to the nominee's commitment to respond to requests to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Senate.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. COTTON, and Mr. PERDUE):

S. 2192. A bill to strengthen border security, increase resources for enforcement of immigration laws, and for other purposes; read the first time.

By Mr. ISAKSON:

S. 2193. An original bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve health care for veterans, and for other purposes; from the Committee on Veterans' Affairs; placed on the calendar.

By Ms. CANTWELL (for herself and Mr. NELSON):

S. 2194. A bill to remove a limitation on a prohibition relating to permits for discharges incidental to normal operation of vessels; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 260

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the name of the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 260, a bill to repeal the provisions of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act providing for the Independent Payment Advisory Board.

S. 298

At the request of Mr. COCHRAN, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 298, a bill to require Senate candidates to file designations, statements, and reports in electronic form.

S. 373

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 373, a bill to require the Secretary of Defense to submit to Congress a report on hearing loss, tinnitus, and noise pollution due to small arms fire.

S. 422

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the name of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 422, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to clarify presumptions relating to the exposure of certain veterans who served in the vicinity of the Republic of Vietnam, and for other purposes.

S. 447

At the request of Ms. BALDWIN, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 447, a bill to require reporting on acts of certain foreign countries on Holocaust era assets and related issues.

S. 497

At the request of Ms. CANTWELL, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 497, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for Medicare coverage of certain lymphedema compression treatment items as items of durable medical equipment.

S. 498

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the names of the Senator from Nevada (Mr. HELLER) and the Senator from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN) were added as cosponsors of S. 498, a bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to require the Secretary of Defense to use only human-based methods for training members of the Armed Forces in the treatment of severe combat injuries, and for other purposes.

S. 954

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 954, a bill to prevent harassment at institutions of higher education, and for other purposes.

S. 974

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, the name of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 974, a bill to promote competition in the market for drugs and biological products by facilitating the timely entry of lower-cost generic and biosimilar versions of those drugs and biological products.

S. 1050

At the request of Ms. DUCKWORTH, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. HASSAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1050, a bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to the Chinese-American Veterans of World War II, in recognition of their dedicated service during World War II.

S. 1498

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1498, a bill to establish in the Smithsonian Institution a comprehensive American women's history museum, and for other purposes.

S. 1539

At the request of Ms. KLOBUCHAR, the names of the Senator from Montana

(Mr. TESTER) and the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) were added as cosponsors of S. 1539, a bill to protect victims of stalking from gun violence.

S. 1693

At the request of Mr. PORTMAN, the name of the Senator from Iowa (Mrs. ERNST) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1693, a bill to amend the Communications Act of 1934 to clarify that section 230 of that Act does not prohibit the enforcement against providers and users of interactive computer services of Federal and State criminal and civil law relating to sex trafficking.

S. 1738

At the request of Mr. WARNER, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1738, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for a home infusion therapy services temporary transitional payment under the Medicare program.

S. 1795

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1795, a bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to improve the financial aid process for homeless children and youths and foster care children and youth.

S. 1816

At the request of Ms. CANTWELL, her name was added as a cosponsor of S. 1816, a bill to amend the Fair Credit Reporting Act to enhance fraud alert procedures and provide free access to credit freezes, and for other purposes.

S. 1845

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1845, a bill to amend the Lead-Based Paint Poisoning Prevention Act to provide for additional procedures for families with children under the age of 6, and for other purposes.

S. 2005

At the request of Mr. COONS, the names of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO) and the Senator from North Dakota (Ms. HETTKAMP) were added as cosponsors of S. 2005, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend the publicly traded partnership ownership structure to energy power generation projects and transportation fuels, and for other purposes.

S. 2006

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the name of the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2006, a bill to require breast density reporting to physicians and patients by facilities that perform mammograms, and for other purposes.

S. 2101

At the request of Mr. DONNELLY, the names of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY) and the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) were added as cosponsors of S. 2101, a bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to the crew of the USS *Indianapolis*, in

recognition of their perseverance, bravery, and service to the United States.

S. 2109

At the request of Mr. CARPER, the name of the Senator from North Dakota (Ms. HEITKAMP) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2109, a bill to count revenues from military and veteran education programs toward the limit on Federal revenues that certain proprietary institutions of higher education are allowed to receive for purposes of section 487 of the Higher Education Act of 1965, and for other purposes.

S. 2127

At the request of Ms. MURKOWSKI, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2127, a bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to the United States merchant mariners of World War II, in recognition of their dedicated and vital service during World War II.

S. 2135

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the names of the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. CORKER) and the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) were added as cosponsors of S. 2135, a bill to enforce current law regarding the National Instant Criminal Background Check System.

S. 2141

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. DONNELLY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2141, a bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to reform procedures for determinations on disposition of charges and the convening of court-martial for certain offenses under the Uniform Code of Military Justice, and for other purposes.

S. 2152

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the names of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) and the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) were added as cosponsors of S. 2152, a bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to provide for assistance for victims of child pornography, and for other purposes.

S. 2163

At the request of Mr. CRUZ, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. LANKFORD) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2163, a bill to expand school choice in the District of Columbia.

S. 2164

At the request of Mr. KING, the names of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) and the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) were added as cosponsors of S. 2164, a bill to amend the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 respecting the scoring of preventive health savings.

S. RES. 139

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the names of the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO) and the Senator from North Dakota (Ms. HEITKAMP) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 139, a resolution condemning the Government of Iran's

state-sponsored persecution of its Baha'i minority and its continued violation of the International Covenants on Human Rights.

S. RES. 150

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 150, a resolution recognizing threats to freedom of the press and expression around the world and reaffirming freedom of the press as a priority in efforts of the United States Government to promote democracy and good governance.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. President, I have 8 requests for committees to meet during today's session of the Senate. They have the approval of the Majority and Minority leaders.

Pursuant to rule XXVI, paragraph 5(a), of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the following committees are authorized to meet during today's session of the Senate:

COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS

The Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, December 5, 2017, at 10 a.m. to conduct a hearing on S.2155 "The Economic Growth, Regulatory Relief and Consumer Act" and the nomination of Jerome H. Powell, of Maryland, to be Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System.

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

The Committee on Energy and Natural Resources is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, December 5, 2017, at 10 a.m. in room SD-366 to conduct a hearing on the following nominations: Timothy R. Petty, of Indiana, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Interior, and Linda Capuano, of Texas, to be Administrator of the Energy Information Administration, Department of Energy.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

The Committee on Foreign Relations is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, December 5, 2017, at 2:30 p.m. to conduct a business meeting and hearing on the following nominations: nominations of Eric M. Ueland, of Oregon, to be an Under Secretary (Management), and James Randolph Evans, of Georgia, to be Ambassador to Luxembourg, both of the Department of State.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

The Committee on Foreign Relations is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, December 5, 2017, at 2:30 p.m. to conduct a hearing entitled "The President, Congress, and Shared Authority".

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

The Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions is author-

ized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, December 5, 2017, at 10 a.m. in room SD-430 to conduct a hearing entitled "The Cost of Prescription Drugs: An examination of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine Report 'Making Medicines Affordable: A National Imperative'".

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

The Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, December 5, 2017, at 10 a.m. in room SD-430 to conduct a hearing on the following nominations: Kenneth L. Marcus, of Virginia, to be Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, and Johnny Collett, of Kentucky, to be Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, both of the Department of Education, and Scott A. Mugno, of Pennsylvania, to be an Assistant Secretary, and William Beach, of Kansas, to be Commissioner of Labor Statistics, both of the Department of Labor.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

The Select Committee on Intelligence is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, December 5, 2017, at 3 p.m., in room SH-219 to hold a closed hearing.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ENERGY

The Subcommittee on Energy of the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, December 5, 2017, at 10 a.m. to conduct a hearing.

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that my intern, Scott La Rochelle, be granted privileges of the floor for the remainder of the day.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MEASURE READ THE FIRST TIME—S. 2192

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I understand that there is a bill at the desk, and I ask for its first reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bill by title for the first time.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2192) to strengthen border security, increase resources for enforcement of immigration laws, and for other purposes.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I now ask for a second reading and, in order to place the bill on the calendar under provisions of rule XIV, I object to my own request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The bill will be read for the second time on the next legislative day.

ORDERS FOR WEDNESDAY,
DECEMBER 6, 2017

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 10 a.m., Wednesday, December 6; further, that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, and the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day; finally, that following leader remarks, the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order, following the remarks of our Democratic colleagues.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Delaware.

CONFIRMATION OF KIRSTJEN
NIELSEN

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, we just concluded a few minutes ago the confirmation of the President's nominee for the next Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security.

As it turns out, the Presiding Officer is the chairman of the Committee on Homeland Security, which has jurisdiction over the Department of Homeland Security. I have the privilege of being the immediate past chairman of the committee. The Presiding Officer and I have worked together on a wide range of issues that actually pertain to the jurisdiction of the Department of Homeland Security.

I don't want to speak out of turn, but I believe both the Presiding Officer, who is as well the chairman of the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, and I believe that one of the most important ingredients of success of any organization—I don't care whether it is a football team, a body such as the U.S. Senate, a hospital, a school, a State, a country—the key is always leadership. The key is leaders who are always interested in figuring out what is the right thing to do; people who believe in the Golden Rule, treating other people the way they want to be treated; and leaders who focus on excellence in everything they do. They surround themselves with the best people they can find. They embrace the idea that if a program or whatever is not perfect, let's make it better. The best leaders with whom I have been privileged to serve are those who just don't give up. When they are sure they are right, they just don't give up.

We have had a series of leaders, and I have been privileged to know every

Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security since the very beginning of time, when I served as Governor and when I served in the Congress. I served with the first Secretary we had and others who have succeeded him—most recently, John Kelly, retired Marine four-star general who came from his command in SOUTHCOM to become Secretary of Homeland Security. He is now at the White House serving as the Chief of Staff to the President. We are grateful to him for his service.

Since he has moved on to that post, it has left a vacancy to lead the Department of Homeland Security. I think Elaine Duke is filling in quite nicely as the Acting Secretary. She was previously Deputy Secretary of Homeland Security. Now that Kirstjen Nielsen has been confirmed, we will see whether Elaine Duke will step back and be the Deputy. I think a number of us hope that she will, but that is not our decision to make.

The vote today in favor of Kirstjen Nielsen's confirmation was, I believe, 62 ayes and 37 nays. Every now and then, we have the opportunity to vote and it is a close call. Not all of our votes are easy; some are more difficult than others. But for a number of us, this was a close call.

I think Kirstjen Nielsen is arguably bright. She is well-spoken. She has appeared before our committee and taken any number of questions. She was asked and has answered hundreds of questions from committee members and questions for the record. She has been good enough to meet with me not once but twice. I said to her yesterday when we met that I think she is a person with a good heart and good values—again, well-spoken and bright. She is especially strong with respect to cyber security.

The real question mark for me—one of the question marks for me, among others—was, for someone who has at best only led organizations with maybe a couple dozen people to now be thrust into—or selected to serve in this position, where she will be leading 240,000 people at the Department of Homeland Security, spread out all over the world, is a daunting challenge. As someone who has been privileged to spend 23 years of my life in the Navy as a naval flight officer, then as a treasurer, a Congressman, a Governor, a Senator, and I led the National Governors Association—for me, leading an organization of that size would be daunting. I would expect that the same is true for Kirstjen Nielsen.

John Kelly, who for 6 months was our Secretary, has a lot of confidence in her, and I have a lot of confidence in John Kelly. JOHN MCCAIN and I introduced him as the ranking member and the chairman when General Kelly was nominated to be Secretary. JOHN MCCAIN sat on one side of the nominee, and I sat on the other. I think we have taken his recommendation to heart, and that was maybe the tie-breaker for some of us.

When I spoke with Kirstjen yesterday, we talked about her core values and what guides her in making decisions. I think some of it is faith-based, which I find encouraging; the idea of treating other people the way we want to be treated; the willingness to welcome people to our home, our country, who are strangers.

So we will see how it plays out. I think it is critically important that—just as I try to surround myself with people who have strength and fill in for my weaknesses, my hope is that is exactly what will happen when she assumes the responsibility to lead the Department of Homeland Security.

So I would say to Kirstjen Nielsen: Congratulations on your confirmation, and we look forward to working with you, hopefully agreeing a lot more often than we disagree. Good luck and God bless.

REPUBLICAN TAX BILL

Mr. CARPER. Next, Mr. President, I have a couple of charts here. I don't know whether the Presiding Officer can see them from where he is sitting. I can barely see them from right here.

The first chart we are going to take a look at deals with the—on this side over here, we have median household income for Americans since 1987. Over on this side, we have corporate profits in the billions of dollars.

When we come back here to 1987, we look at the orange line here, and that is median household income in 2016 dollars. The median household income in 1987 was just a shade over \$50,000. All of these years later, in 2017, it is just a little bit higher. It has gone up a little bit but not a whole lot—maybe close to \$60,000, but I don't know that it is any higher than that. It has gone up a little bit, really, over the last few years.

The green line here on our chart is corporate profits. When we go back to 1987, corporate profits were equal to about—it looks like \$30,000 billion, and if I am not mistaken, that would be maybe \$30 trillion. I hope I have that right. That was 1987. If you look at what has happened, it has gone up and down. This is during the great recession when we fell off the cliff and almost fell off the world. In 2007, 2008, we started to climb back out of it. Today, the corporate profits have roughly doubled in this country since 1987—roughly doubled—while median household income is growing a tiny bit but actually not that much.

Let's look at the next chart, and then I will not speak from the charts. I guess the lesson here again is that corporate profits have gone up rather nicely. There were some ups and downs because of the great recession, but they are on an uptick now.

This is a look at the national deficit and debt. I know the Presiding Officer has a great concern about this.

I came to the House I guess in 1983. I had been State treasurer for a State

that had the worst deficit in the country. The State of Delaware tied with Puerto Rico. We were a mess.

Finally, Pete du Pont, a Republican, did a wonderful job for 8 years as Governor. I had the opportunity to serve with him in the State treasury and later on to become the Governor of the State of Delaware, when we went to a triple A credit rating for the first time in State history.

I came here in 1983 as a Congressman who was concerned about debts and deficits. My sense is that here in the Senate and the House, we don't have a lot of deficit hawks these days. If we do, their voices are not heard very loudly. We are on a course that is unsustainable in terms of our accumulation of more debt.

This is an interesting chart because it goes back to really the beginning of World War II, the war my dad was in and my uncle served in. There is a lot of red ink here, and it shows the deficit as a percentage of gross domestic product, and it reached about 30 percent right in the middle of World War II. After the war, we have the green down here where we actually had some surpluses in the late 1940s and the early 1950s. We actually had a surplus in 1968. Then we went from 1968 to about 1998 and never balanced the budget, all of those years at one time. The last 4 years of the Clinton administration, we balanced our budget four times. It was a bipartisan deal.

The chairman of the House Budget Committee, if I am not mistaken, was a Republican from Ohio, John Kasich, who is now the Governor of Ohio. John and I came to the House together in 1983. He came as a deficit hawk as well. He and the Clinton administration obviously did a nice job to help to balance four budgets. We haven't done so well since then. Since then, we have shown, right from here up to the present, which would be right around there, one deficit after the other—deficits that peaked out over the last year of George W. Bush's administration, when we were again falling into the great recession, and we have spent a lot of money in stimulus to try to get us out of recession.

The debt dropped from about \$1.4 trillion per year down to about one-third that much, and now it is starting to go up again. The debt last year—the year that ended on September 30—the deficit had bounced back up to \$666 billion again in 1 year—a lot of money. The prospect going forward is not encouraging; it is actually discouraging.

The tax cut bill that was passed in this Chamber just a few days ago—last Saturday morning, in the middle of the night—called for tax breaks, some for individuals for a while, some for corporations that tend to be more permanent in nature. But for me, maybe the most troubling aspect of the tax bill that was enacted last Saturday morning, aside from the way it was pushed through, is the idea that we got, right here on the Senate floor, I think some-

time around the middle of the evening last Friday night, a 400-page amendment, over 400 pages that we had never read, never seen, with scribbling on the side of the pages. The idea was that somehow we were supposed to read that and understand it and then vote it up or down in an amendment in like 4 or 5 hours. Good luck. That just doesn't happen. That would be the triumph of man's hope over experience.

I always ask these four questions when people ask about what we should do in tax reform. I say, No. 1, it ought to be fair. What we have actually passed is something where most of the benefits, the lion's share, go to people who are, frankly, very wealthy. Folks who are lower and lower middle income may realize some benefits in the first few years following the implementation of the new tax cut, but over time—say, by 2025—families with incomes up to \$75,000 per family are going to be realizing not a net gain from the tax cut but actually a net loss, which is not good.

I always ask: Is it fair? I think it is not fair when you look at the numbers and see how middle-income folks fare and those who happen to be wealthier fare.

The second question I always ask is this: Will it foster economic growth or diminish it? I focus a lot of my time and energy on economic growth, job creation, and job preservation. Senators, Presidents, and Governors don't create jobs. We create a nurturing environment for job creation, job preservation, and workforce, transportation infrastructure, protection of intellectual property rights, public safety, access to water and wastewater. There are a lot of things that contribute to economic growth and so forth. Tax policy is important. Commonsense regulation is important as well.

But my second question is this: Does the tax reform bill that we passed foster economic growth? Not really. To a modest extent, some, but not really. One of the things it does is it suggests uncertainty and the lack of predictability going forth, which I don't think businesses really care for.

One area where we, frankly, decided not to spend any money this time is the area where we could actually get the biggest bang for our buck in terms of growing GDP. We have a transportation infrastructure that is woefully inadequate these days, in terrible shape—roads, highways, bridges, rail, ports, and airports. We have many broad areas in the country that don't have access to the internet.

We just passed a tax bill that is going to increase the deficit by \$1.5 trillion. Unfortunately, none of that goes to pay for or to make investments in things that would grow GDP by a lot and would provide employment opportunities—not just for a couple hundred thousand people but for millions of people, over the next decade or so. None of that is there.

The third question I always look at in terms of tax reform is this: Does it

simplify the Tax Code or make it more complex? The new provision that was adopted is going to increase by this much the thickness of the Tax Code, or by about another 15 or 20 percent—not making it simpler or easier to understand, but actually more difficult.

The last piece I consider is this: What is the effect on the deficit? Pumping up the deficit by another \$1.5 trillion is making the situation even worse.

We are going to go to conference now, the House and Senate. My hope is that it will be more bipartisan than what we saw here in the Senate. It needs to be. I quoted last week and I quoted again today an old African-American proverb: If you want to go fast, travel alone. If you want to go far, travel together. Our Republican friends, at least on this side of the Congress, for the most part have chosen to go fast and to go alone. That is unfortunate. The last time we did tax reform, we did it together. It took 3 years, but it was a more lasting and, I think, a better outcome.

DACA

Mr. CARPER. I want to pivot for just a moment, Mr. President, and talk about workforce. Most people, when they think of Dreamers and DACA, think of young people who were born in other countries and maybe at a very early age were brought here by their parents and maybe have no recollection of the countries they grew up in. But they have been here now. They came here, were raised here, and were educated here, many of them in our public schools. A number of them had the opportunity to go to college.

Delaware State University is a historically Black university in Dover and is the home of the Hornets. It is a wonderful land grant school that I have been heavily invested in as Governor and even now to make sure they rise and continue to improve. I am very proud of all of the progress that has been made there. I was invited by their president, Harry Williams, to come to their campus a couple of months ago. We met with Dreamers, "DACAs," students born in other countries who were brought here by their parents years ago.

I have met a lot of college students in my day. I have been joined on the floor here by Senator DURBIN from Illinois. He has probably met at least as many as I have—probably more, because he is from a bigger State.

I don't think I have ever been more impressed by a group of college students in my life than the young men and women I met that day. We literally happened to be there at 11 in the morning that day, when the President's administration announced that the time for the Dreamers was going to expire in 6 months, unless Congress was somehow able to put together an agreement and pass legislation—which is hard to do without the support of the administration.

I was there with young people that day. I will never forget what a young man said. I think he was born in Central America—either Honduras, Guatemala, or El Salvador. This was right on the heels of the problem of recognizing these young people and celebrating their promise and potential. Right in the middle, we got an announcement, learning that the administration had just announced about sending these folks home in 6 months—not really home, because their home is here, but back to the places where they were born.

There were about five or six students, all undergrads—freshmen, sophomores. One young man had come here maybe from Guatemala, and he stood up and said: As a young person, I honestly don't remember ever living in my native country. The only country I remember is this country.

I grew up in public schools. Every day, we would start our school day in class, in home room, by standing, putting our hands over our hearts, and pledging allegiance to the United States of America.

He said: This is my home. This is my country. This is the only home I have ever really known.

He then went on to tell about his aspirations.

Those kids are smart and have parents who are engaged in their education and have high expectations for their children. A number of the students are working not one but two jobs to help support themselves through school. As a Navy ROTC midshipman at Ohio State, I worked two jobs to help pay the bills. These students are too. They are taking courses that include math, science, and physics. They want to do the kind of work that, frankly, a lot of people in this country—some want to serve in the military, some want to be in public safety, some want to be educators, some want to be scientists. They want to do all kinds of things. This is a time when we have across the country some 4 million to 5 million jobs that are literally going unfilled today, and people who maybe would like to do those jobs don't have the requisite skills to do them, maybe they don't have the interest in doing the jobs, or maybe they can't pass a drug test. But at a time when we have 3 million or 4 million jobs that are vacant, unfilled, and employers are pleading for qualified applicants, that somehow we are going to send 700,000 or 800,000 Dreamers back to wherever they were born makes no sense.

One of the loudest voices we have heard in this debate is that it is not just a fairness argument for the Dreamers, in terms of turning our backs on their aspirations and hopes, but that it is in our self-interest as a nation, in terms of a stronger economy, to keep them here.

Why would we educate them here and they learn values here, and then we ship them off to another country to

compete with us, to start businesses of their own, instead of doing that here?

I suggest that we listen to the employers of this country. We don't always agree with everything that the U.S. Chambers of Commerce or State Chambers of Commerce say, but in this case they are absolutely right.

I have a 3-minute statement that I would like to read, if I could, from one of our Dreamers. Could I do that, I ask the Senator, our Whip, from Illinois?

This is about a woman living in Wilmington, DE, which is where my wife and I live. Her name is Kay-Dean Hayden. This is a portion of a short email she recently sent to me:

My name Kay-Dean, a community builder who happens to be a DACA recipient. I was born in Jamaica but I have lived in the U.S. since I was 7 or 8 years old. I grew up in Delaware and moved to New York in 2012 and moved back [to Delaware] recently after 5½ years [in New York].

I am approaching 30 years old on March 1st, so I've been here [in the United States] for almost 22-23 years.

My grandmother raised myself and two of my cousins. I grew up not really understanding my immigration status or the implications it would have on my reality and dreams. I missed out on opportunities, but I assumed it was due to our financial lack. My grandmother worked hard but she couldn't read or write so this limited her.

After unjustly gaining a juvenile record because of poor representation and ignorance of my rights, I decided I would become a lawyer, not fully understanding that my immigration status would potentially bar me from obtaining that dream.

After that summer, I gained a better understanding of my status and why I couldn't really get a summer job or travel. In order to truly cope, I determined that if I worked hard enough, surely I could attain all my hopes and dreams.

I told my guidance counselor what I understood about my immigration status and heard nothing but disappointment, I was discouraged but I remained determined. I believed God would reward my hard-work and faithfulness. So I saw [a] different guidance counselor my 12th grade year, in tears, pleading for help. She looked at my records (grades, SAT score and activities) and by the grace of God she connected me with a family member who worked with international students at the local community college. With God's grace I had the privilege of attending Delaware Technical and Community College on a full scholarship.

In 2009, I graduated with my Associates in Business Administration [with Concentrations in] Marketing Management. Upon graduating, God opened the door and I was accepted to Goldey-Beacom College with scholarship assistance . . . I completed my degrees in 2011, and graduated in 2012 with my Bachelors in Business Administration [with Concentrations in] Financial Management.

After graduating from school and living and working in New York, Kay-Dean moved back to Delaware. She wrote:

I currently work with a program that provides mentorship opportunity for minorities and under-served youth who are interested in working in the medical field. I have been absolutely blessed to walk through the doors I have though they were not the ones I originally pictured. I have had the pleasure of helping and building up others, especially young people.

I thought for sure DACA would begin to allow me the chance to finally not only build up others, but myself as well.

But with Mr. Trump as President and his ending of the DACA Program and whispers of immigration raids, I fight to hold on to my dreams. My DACA status ends in March and with it all I have worked so hard to build over the last 4 years.

I wrote this long email to simply ask that you fight for people like me. We didn't choose to be here but we are grateful to be here.

It is here where we've grown, cried, dreamed and worked hard for our American Dream. Here is where those we hold dear reside.

It is my prayer that you will fight for me and others like me. It is my prayer that you will be our voice in congress. It is my prayer that you will humanize us to politicians who have marginalized and demonized us. It is my prayer that you would fight for us as if we were yours because truth be told, WE ARE.

Your prayer has been heard.

I just want to say to my colleague Senator DURBIN of Illinois, thank you for years of leadership on this issue to do the right thing, to treat other people as we would want to be treated if in their shoes and, frankly, to do the right things in terms of strengthening this economy.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Delaware. He and I came to the House of Representatives together a few years back, and we have had the pleasure and honor of serving together in the Senate. When he is on my team, I feel much stronger because I know TOM CARPER is a person of values, principles, and hard work, and he really takes this job seriously. His State is lucky to have him, and I am lucky to count him as a friend. I thank him for joining me on this important issue.

Sixteen years ago, I introduced a bill addressing young people brought to America by their parents who, frankly, were young, didn't really know much about the immigration experience, grew up in the United States thinking they were just like all the other kids in the classroom, and then realized one day they weren't.

You see, they are not legal. Their parents didn't do it properly, didn't file the right papers. I am not holding it against their parents. Let me add that quickly. Their parents were doing the very best for the family they could. They were taking risks that many of us would take any day for a son or daughter to have a chance to live a good life.

Here were these young people in the United States undocumented. What were they to do? They didn't know that old country where their parents came from. They may not even be able to speak the language of that country, and here they were in the United States. They thought things would work out, some way or another. Time passed, and it didn't.

We have a broken immigration system. We have a lot of gaps in the system, and they were caught up in one of

them. Sixteen years ago, I introduced a bill, and here is what it said. If you came to the United States as a child, if you grew up in this country, you didn't have any serious problems with the law, and you graduated from school, we were going to give you a chance, a chance to earn your way into legal status. You could do it by furthering your education, volunteering for the military. There were a lot of ways to do it. We said to these young people: This will be your chance.

That bill was introduced a long time ago, and it has never become the law. At one point when President Obama was in the Office of the Presidency, I wrote him a letter with 20 of my colleagues in the Senate and asked him to find a way, if he could, to protect these young people from being deported out of America, and he did. They called it DACA. The DACA Program said, if you are one of the people who, by definition under the DREAM Act, would be eligible, you can stay in the United States if you step up and pay about \$500 in a filing fee, go through a serious criminal background check, and then we will give you a temporary 2-year protection from deportation—2 years that you can work legally in the United States and come back and see us if you want to renew it.

At the end of the day, about 800,000 young people in America did that. They paid their fee. They went through the background check, they submitted all their information to our government, and they were protected.

Just 3 months ago, President Donald Trump abolished DACA and said, as of March 5 next year, it is gone. What does that mean for these young people? It means that as of March 5 of next year, many of them will be subject to deportation and subject to losing the jobs they have or being unable to finish school because they can't work.

I have met a lot of those young people. I am sure Senator HASSAN has met some. I know Senator CARPER has. He just read one of their stories. They are heartbroken, and they are scared. They worry about what is going to happen to them and their families when March 5 rolls around.

For weeks, months since President Trump's announcement, I have come to the floor and asked: For goodness' sake, can't we agree—Democrats and Republicans—to fix this problem? President Trump challenged us: Do your job, Congress. Pass a law.

That is what we are supposed to do. Here we are, 3 months later, and it hasn't been done. What I hear from the other side of the aisle is, give us a little more time; we will try to get to it next year.

March 5, 2018, DACA is over and finished. Waiting several weeks is bad enough. Waiting several months is unacceptable. I will tell you why it is. We know this needs to be done now. Today, 34 Republicans in the House of Representatives sent a letter to the Speaker of the House, PAUL RYAN, calling for

Congress to pass legislation to protect Dreamers this year—34 Republicans. They said: "It is imperative that Republicans and Democrats come together to solve this problem now and not wait until next year"—34 Republicans in the House. How many bipartisan things go on around here anymore? Not many. Here is one. I salute these Members of the House. I salute the four Republican Senators who joined me in cosponsoring the Dream Act. They, I think, have stuck their necks out, and I respect them so much for it. I will stand up for them because of it. I thank them for that. I know why they are doing it. They are not doing it for me. They shouldn't, and I am sure they are not. They are doing it for these young people. I will tell you without fail, when you meet them, they convert you in a minute.

For the last several years, I have come to the floor to tell their stories. I am told the one I am going to tell right now is the 99th time I have told a story like this. Each time I tell one of these stories, it makes the case for why we need to do something to help these young people and do it quickly.

Let me show you this wonderful young lady here. Her name is Blanca Morales. Blanca Morales was brought to the United States by her parents from Mexico when she was 5 years old. She grew up in Santa Ana, CA. Growing up, she took care of her two younger siblings while her parents worked in factories and in the agriculture fields of California.

She was quite a student. In high school, she was named one of the top 100 students in the county. She was active in community service, mentoring students who couldn't complete high school without help. She attended a community college, Santa Ana College. I might add, because she is undocumented, she didn't qualify for any Federal Government assistance. Going to college in that circumstance means working, scraping by, putting things off, sacrificing to get through. She did it. She majored in chemistry and biology. She was part of Phi Beta Kappa, an international honors society. She won first academic team in the All-USA Academic Competition. She was her class's valedictorian, with a perfect 4.0 GPA.

Blanca, after graduation, attended the University of California, Irvine. She majored in neurobiology. At UC Irvine, she graduated with honors magna cum laude. After obtaining this premed degree, she couldn't land a job in the medical field because she is undocumented in America.

Then, in 2012, everything changed. President Obama established the DACA Program I mentioned earlier, which allowed Blanca, for the first time in her life, to get a permit to legally work in America. Last year, Blanca Morales was accepted to the Harvard School of Medicine. She has remained involved in community service, mentoring students, teaching health classes at a

community health center, and volunteering as a translator at clinics for Spanish-speaking patients.

Close to 70 Dreamers are enrolled in medical schools around the country just like she is. Without DACA, these Dreamers will never become doctors. Why? They are going to be deported back to their countries if they are not lucky. If they happen to be able to stay, they cannot legally work in America without DACA status. You cannot finish medical school and go on to a residency without a work permit, without being able to legally work in America. They cannot legally work without DACA protection, and President Trump has ended it.

Are we going to be a stronger nation if we deport her, tell her to leave, go back to Mexico, which she left when she was 5 years of age, give up on all the education she has put on the board—at the community college where she was leading her class, on to get her degrees, on to be accepted to Harvard Medical School. The answer is clear. America would be less if she left.

The Association of American Medical Colleges reports the Nation faces a doctor shortage, which is only going to get worse. Both the AMA and the Association of American Medical Colleges have warned that ending DACA will make this problem worse. They have urged Congress to do something.

Blanca wrote me a letter, and here is what she said.

It took me eight years from graduating from the university to enter medical school. Without DACA or better yet, a formal way to become a full member of society, I am left to live in the shadows. I don't know if I will be able to finish my medical training without a permanent solution to my immigration status. Please help me keep my dream of becoming a physician alive.

When my colleagues come to the floor and say we are just too busy here to take up this issue, I wish they would have a chance to meet this spectacular young woman. I wish they would consider what she is asking us to do. She is asking us to do our job. We are supposed to solve problems.

When you read the numbers, 70, 80 percent of Americans approve of the Dream Act, even an overwhelming majority of those who voted for President Trump believe these young people deserve a chance to be legal in America. Why can't we get our job done? We need to do it and do it now. We have 3 weeks before we are likely to end the session this year. I want to see us get this finished this year. I want to see a bipartisan agreement.

I came to the floor earlier and listened to the speeches of many of my colleagues—one from North Carolina and another from Oklahoma, one from the State of Texas and another from the State of Arkansas—and each one of them said there are lots of things we need to do to fix our immigration system. I couldn't agree more.

I was on the task force—the Gang of 8 they called it—that came up with a comprehensive immigration reform. It

took us months to do it, but we did it. We did everything we could think of within the four corners of immigration reform. We passed it on the floor of the Senate with a strong bipartisan roll-call, and the House of Representatives refused to even consider it. That doesn't mean the problems have gone away. They are still here. What I am saying to my colleagues is, don't try to fix every immigration problem you can think of on the backs of these Dreamers like Blanca Morales. I am willing to talk to you honestly, forthrightly about border security. Count me in. I voted for it as part of comprehensive immigration reform, but every notion, every idea, every theory you have about immigration shouldn't be placed on the shoulders and backs of these young people.

Let's fix this, and then let's go on to the next phase of dealing with immigration reform in its totality. That makes sense to me. I am ready to bargain, work, compromise in good faith with any Member on the Republican side and the Democratic side who wants to make sure a young woman like this deserves a fighting chance in America. I believe that. I think most Americans believe it too. Now let's roll up our sleeves and go to work. There are plenty of things we can do the remainder of this year that will make a big difference in her life and in the future of America.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. RUBIO). The Senator from California.

Ms. HARRIS. Mr. President, I would like to thank the senior Senator from Illinois. Senator DURBIN has been a longstanding leader in this Chamber and in our country on this issue, and I can't thank him enough for all he does so tirelessly. I see his work behind closed doors, and I know his passion and personal commitment to this issue. I thank the Senator from Illinois.

Mr. President, on February 16 of this year, which was 292 days ago, I offered my maiden speech as a new Member of the U.S. Senate. The subject of the speech was immigration—in particular, an emphasis on DACA and the Dreamers. Here we are 292 days later, and we have failed to move forward in any substantial or substantive way in bringing relief to these Dreamers who have qualified for DACA status. So we stand here, these 292 days later, talking about an issue that we must ultimately, and before the end of this year, resolve.

Let's also be clear that 3 months ago today, on September 5 of this year, the administration arbitrarily, recklessly, and cruelly ended DACA—the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Program. DACA allowed young immigrants who were brought here by their parents to live and work in this country without fear that they would be deported. Later this week, on Friday, December 8, funding for the government runs out. I have been clear, along with my friend from Illinois and several

other colleagues, that any bill that funds the government must also include a fix for DACA.

I want to talk with you about why I believe it is important that we resolve this issue. I do believe there is a lot of misinformation out there. I think it is important that we as policymakers, as leaders in our country, craft and create public policy based on facts, not on misinformation and certainly not fear.

Let's begin by being very clear. The decision to rescind DACA is part of a much broader and troubling attempt to remake the demographics of the country by cracking down on immigrants. We have an administration that has ignited anti-immigrant sentiment, characterizing immigrants as rapists and murderers and people who are going to steal your jobs. We have an administration that has implemented an aggressive anti-immigrant agenda. This administration has called for a border wall that could cost up to \$70 billion. They have implemented Muslim bans which severely restrict immigration from six Muslim-majority countries. They have requested 10,000 new ICE agents and 5,000 new Border Patrol agents when they have not given the resources to be able to fill all the vacant positions they now have. They have ended the protected immigration status, known as TPS, for Haitians and Nicaraguans who fled disasters and may crack down on the protective status on Salvadorans as well. They are seeking to lower the refugee cap from 110,000 to 45,000 at a time when we have seen an increase in the worldwide number of refugees who are in crisis. This is the lowest number ever in the history of this country—actually, since 1980. Gen. John Kelly, the President's Chief of Staff and former Homeland Security Secretary, said that he wishes the number of refugees we would admit into our country were between zero and one.

I want to be clear. I have an incredible amount of respect for the men and women of the Department of Homeland Security, who each day leave their homes, committed to doing the work of keeping our homeland secure. It is noble and important work, and their mission is critical. I believe the vast majority of those frontline agents are doing their jobs honorably and effectively, but it is troubling when the White House has encouraged frontline agents to "take the shackles off." In fact, the Acting ICE Director has said:

If you're an immigrant in this country illegally . . . you should be uncomfortable. You should look over your shoulder.

When you look at these independent acts, there is a clear constellation that has formed. This enforcement surge is a barely disguised purge. This is not leadership. Leaders should not be in the business of inciting fear and sowing hate and division. Instead, leaders should be about creating smart public policy based on facts. So here are some of the facts.

It is a fact that there are 700,000 DACA recipients, 200,000 of whom are in California alone.

It is a fact that the Dreamers have been extensively vetted before they have qualified for DACA. They have gone through a process. They have turned over copious amounts of paperwork with incredible detail. They have gone through background checks. They have given personal information about the circumstances of their arrivals. They have answered questions that seek to figure out whether they have committed crimes. If they applied and they received DACA status, we determined that they were not threats in that regard to our public safety. We asked questions that sought to figure out if they have graduated high school. Are they living lawful and productive lives? It is only when they cleared that extensive vetting that they qualified for DACA status and received DACA status.

Let's be clear. These Dreamers who receive DACA status study in our colleges, serve in our military, and work in Fortune 100 companies. They are contributing to our economy in a way that we all are benefiting. If DACA recipients were to be deported, it is estimated that California would lose \$11 billion a year. The U.S. economy as a whole would lose an estimated \$460 billion over a decade.

It is also a fact that these young people have stood in classrooms and stood in line in many places and have placed their hands over their hearts, pledging allegiance to the flag of the United States—a flag that many of us wear on our lapels, a flag that represents the best of what we are in terms of the ideals upon which we were founded. We must be true to those ideals and consistent in the way that we approach so many issues as applied to this issue about what we do with these DACA kids. We must keep our word and our promise to them and guarantee what we promised, which is that we would not share their personal information with ICE and that they would not be deported if they continued to follow the rules.

In my experience, it is also true that many who have opinions or who have expressed opinions or who have the opportunity to make decisions about this issue have never met a Dreamer. We cannot fault them, but what we can ask is that those who have the power to make a decision on this issue make it their business and make an effort to really understand who we are talking about. Senator DURBIN talked about it, and Senator CARPER talked about it. My colleagues will be talking about who these Dreamers are, who these young people are.

I have to say that I have been a bit troubled when I have had this conversation. I remember when I had a conversation many months ago with the then-nominee to head up the Department of Homeland Security, Gen. John Kelly. I asked him if he had ever

met a Dreamer, and he said that he had not. When I asked him if I could arrange a meeting, he then went on to say: How about if I could take a meeting, instead, with their representatives? That is disheartening.

Before our colleagues make a decision about where they stand on this policy, I believe that it is only fair—it is only the right thing to do—that they make an effort to sit down and talk with Dreamers and get to understand who they are, the circumstances of their arrivals, and how they are contributing to our country.

There are going to be hundreds of Dreamers here tomorrow on Capitol Hill. I want to thank them for their leadership and their tireless advocacy because their stories will change hearts and minds. Let me just speak of a few. My colleagues have shared some; I will share some others.

I met Yurianna Aguilar, whom I took to the President's joint session address this February. Her parents brought her here from Mexico when she was just 5 years old. She grew up in Fresno, CA. She attended public schools, and she attended UC Merced. She was the first DACA recipient to earn a Ph.D. and now is a biomedical researcher in Chicago who is focused on the human heart. She is doing everything that she can to improve the condition and the lives of the people in our country because of the work she has done and the research she has done.

I met Eric Yang, who came from South Korea. He grew up in Irvine, CA, and is now studying business economics at UC Irvine, where he works to help other students.

My husband and I recently attended a play in Los Angeles. It is a great program at which there is free entertainment in the community park, and families show up and have a wonderful evening outdoors with each other in fellowship. I met a young woman who came up to me. She was with a group of friends.

Her friends said: Tell her. Tell her.

I looked at this young woman. She looked as if she was about maybe 19 years old.

I said: Tell me what? Tell me what is going on.

She looked at me, and she spoke so quietly that I didn't hear what she had said, so I asked her to repeat herself. She looked at me, and she started crying.

She said: I am DACA.

She was trembling as she cried, absolutely in fear of what her future may hold.

I suggest that before we take a position on this issue, we take a moment, each one of us as colleagues and each one of us as individuals, to see these young people, to truly see them—to see them not through a lens that is about partisanship or politics, not through a lens that is ideological, but based on who they really are and the practical realities of the lives they lived that brought them to this country, the cir-

cumstances that brought them to this country, and the lives they are living every day now.

These are incredible young people who are doing everything that we hope and pray will epitomize the American dream—work hard, be respectful, play by the rules, contribute to your community, have dreams and aspirations about how you can be productive. That is who these young people are.

Let's reject the fearmongering. Let's also understand that this is an imminent issue and that this is something we must address immediately. Let's agree that each day in the lives of these young people is a very long time. Each day that they go to sleep at night and are worried about a knock on the door at midnight that might tear them away from their families is a very long time. Let's not wait. Let's not wait to help them.

Let's reject those folks who say that there is no crisis, the folks who say that this is not an emergency. Let's understand that for these 700,000 Dreamers who cannot concentrate at school or at work and who are terrified of that midnight knock, this is an emergency. Let's think about the classmates and the coworkers and our neighbors and family members who have these children who are terrified that this protected status will be stripped and taken away. For them, this is an emergency.

Let's think about the 122 Dreamers who are losing their DACA status every single day, 851 of them every week, over 11,000 of them since September. Let's agree that this is a crisis, that this is an emergency. It has been 91 days since this administration ended DACA, and we cannot wait a single day longer.

Let's reject the fearmongering. Let's find a bipartisan consensus to act in the way that we know we should and can. Let's put the Dream Act to a vote today. I believe it could pass and would pass if everyone looked in their hearts and looked at the facts.

Today, 35 House Republicans signed a letter, writing that they want a DACA fix before the end of the year. It included Members from California and Texas and Florida and Utah and Pennsylvania and New York. Earlier today, my colleague, the junior Senator from Arizona, said:

We don't need to make a statement. We need to make a law.

I could not agree more. Let's give these Dreamers a future.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

MR. MARKEY. Mr. President, I thank the Presiding Officer for presiding today.

I thank the Senator from Illinois, DICK DURBIN, for organizing all of us this afternoon to speak on behalf of these Dreamers. His leadership has been critical in this fight for the dignity and recognition of hundreds of thousands of wonderful young people

who know no other home than the United States of America.

For 5 years, the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals—or DACA—Program, has created security and opportunity for young immigrants around the country, but now the futures of some 800,000 young people—7,900 of them in Massachusetts—are needlessly in jeopardy because President Trump has coldheartedly repealed DACA.

DACA has been a hugely successful program. It has provided so many young immigrants safety, security, dignity, respect, and opportunity. These are young people who study, who work, who live next-door to us every single day. They are our friends, our neighbors, and our loved ones.

I would like to speak for a few minutes about one of these DACA beneficiaries. She is 28-year-old Paola Sanchez, who came to the United States from Bolivia when she was 14 years old. Paola's father passed away when she was just 8 years old. Her mother was in a wheelchair and was unable to work. With her family facing hardship, Paola came to America to live with an aunt and uncle in New York. There, Paola worked in the manufacturing industry while she attended high school full time. She often got home late at night and grabbed a few hours of sleep before getting up to head to school to do it all over again.

In 2007, Paola graduated from high school and moved to my State of Massachusetts, where she has lived ever since. She now works 30 hours a week as a case manager while attending Bay State Community College full time. She has been a model student, earning a 3.9 grade point average, and she hopes to enter nursing school in January.

Paola has been a DACA recipient since 2013, but her current status expires next year. This means that unless Congress acts and saves the program, Paola and thousands like her will have to leave the United States for countries they do not really know and no longer consider to be home.

Paola's case, like many others, is even more difficult because she has a 4-year-old son—a child who is an American citizen by birth and has never known any other home than the United States.

All Paola wants is to stay here with her son, get her nursing degree, get a good job, and give back to the country so much more than she has been given. Instead, Paola and countless other young people and families across the United States face uncertain futures. Instead of going to sleep tonight knowing they will be able to live their lives in peace and plan for the future, they are left with uncertainty, vulnerable to deportation, and unable to work legally. This is a human tragedy in the making. It is heartbreaking, it is unjust, and it is just plain wrong. We should not punish these young people who have no other home than the United States of America. We should not go back on the word we gave when

we told these young people to come out of the shadows.

These Dreamers are engineers, police officers, teachers, future nurses, and students, many in our great Massachusetts colleges and universities. They serve bravely in our military. They are our best and brightest and are making the most of the opportunities that the United States has always provided to immigrant communities.

The ball is in the court of the Republican leadership in the House and Senate. Speaker PAUL RYAN and Leader MITCH MCCONNELL can listen to a growing chorus of their own colleagues and to business CEOs, including those at Apple, Amazon, Microsoft, Facebook, General Motors, and to academic leaders, countless college and university presidents, all of whom support DACA—or they can side with the forces of intolerance and injustice.

Congress should pass the Dream Act so that people, like Paola, who were brought here at a young age and who have served in the military or pursued higher education can earn citizenship.

I urge everyone to listen to DICK DURBIN, to listen to this chorus of voices from around our country. Protect these 800,000 young people. Protect them because they deserve it, and America will be the beneficiary of these great Americans who are serving our country right now.

I thank the Presiding Officer.

I yield back the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Ms. HASSAN. Thank you very much, Mr. President, and I thank my colleague from Massachusetts for his eloquent words just now. I also thank Senator DURBIN for his leadership on this critically important issue.

As many of my colleagues have stated, we must protect Dreamers and allow them to continue to be vital members of communities in New Hampshire and across the Nation. The energy, hard work, and innovation of Dreamers are critical components of our economic future. These are hard-working young people who have so much to offer and who deserve our support and our urgent action.

They are people like a young man from the Seacoast area of New Hampshire, who recently met with my staff. This young person was brought to the United States when he was in elementary school. His parents emigrated from Indonesia, joining members of the New Hampshire community who had left their country because they were fleeing religious persecution. For years, members of this community have worked, paid taxes, and raised their families on the Seacoast. Now the Trump administration is engaging in misguided efforts to prioritize their deportation—efforts that I urge this administration to stop immediately.

The Dreamer I am talking about this afternoon had never known that he was undocumented until he wanted to get

his driver's license. But he said his life was changed after President Obama unveiled the DACA Program. This young man was able to get a job, attend community college, and eventually enroll at the University of New Hampshire, where he is working toward his degree. His story makes clear why there is so much at stake and why it is critical that our colleagues work together in order to support these young people.

Granite Staters, like all Americans, recognize the value of hard work, the importance of unleashing the talent and energy of each and every individual, and they demand and expect that their elected leaders act with fairness and with common sense, which is all that the Dream Act represents.

We must pass the bipartisan Dream Act now and protect those who have so much to offer to the future of our great country.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Ms. WARREN. Thank you, Mr. President.

I have been sitting on the floor for a while, listening to other Senators tell amazing stories about young people who came to this country as children and how they have thrived, how they have become woven into a part of the American fabric. These are stories of courage, stories of hope, and it is inspiring to listen to these stories.

Tonight I want to add another piece to this story, and that is about why law matters—why it matters that we have a Dream Act. This photo portrays Reina Guevara. She is a Massachusetts resident. She is a student now at UMass Boston. When Reina was 11 years old, she fled from El Salvador and settled with her mother in Everett, MA.

Reina is a model student. After completing high school and graduating with high honors from Bunker Hill Community College, she won a scholarship and transferred to UMass Boston, where she currently has a double major in philosophy and in public policy.

Until DACA came along, Reina had to live in the shadows, and living in the shadows wasn't easy. She worked long hours in a restaurant where she was subjected to sexual harassment. Knowing that she didn't have legal status, Reina's boss frequently propositioned her to have a sexual relationship with him and threatened to report her to immigration authorities if she didn't go along with what he wanted. So instead of giving in to her boss's advances, Reina quit her job, even though her boss refused to pay her for the work that she had already completed.

DACA changed the world for Reina. It meant protection. It meant that she could go to work without the fear of being sent back to a country that she barely knew. It meant that she had access to more jobs, where she wouldn't have to face exploitation, humiliation, and sexual harassment. It meant that

Reina could pay in-state tuition and become the first person in her family to complete college, opening up even more doors of opportunity.

Right now we are in the middle of a long overdue discussion about sexual harassment and sexual assault. Women are bravely coming forward to tell their stories about powerful men who have abused their power to hurt others. Sexual assault isn't just happening in Silicon Valley or in Hollywood or in legislative chambers. It happens all across America at hotels, fast food restaurants, and convenience stores. If you are a woman without official status, you have yet another barrier to speaking out.

When the DACA Program started, we made a promise to young people like Reina. We promised them that if they came out of the shadows, they would have an opportunity to live and to work and to go to school without the fear of deportation. We promised to protect them. Donald Trump broke that promise when he ended DACA.

But there is something that Congress can do to help Reina and people like her, young kids who have spent their lives reaching for their dreams. We can pass a clean Dream Act, a bipartisan bill that would give young people like Reina status and a path to citizenship, a bill that protects those young people without subjecting their parents or their siblings to deportation. We could do that, but time is running out.

Soon DACA recipients will begin losing their status and will be subjected to deportation. We can stop that from happening, but we have to act soon. I am ready to vote and many of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle are ready to vote. So I have one question for MITCH MCCONNELL: What is stopping you?

We are ready to pass this bill. Just get it done.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I am rising to engage in the conversation about getting the Dream Act passed. I thank my good friend and colleague from Illinois, Senator DURBIN, for his passion and for his unrelenting commitment to protecting our American Dreamers. He has been on this floor day after day, month after month, advocating that we have to address this situation in which individuals came to the United States as small children; they have grown up here, they speak English, and they have been totally immersed in making our community stronger, our States stronger, our Nation stronger. We need to make sure

that we treat them fairly, with respect, and that we ensure that we are able to benefit from their presence here, just as they benefit from being here in the United States. There are 800,000 Dreamers across our country. I know they all very much appreciate his leadership.

The young men and women who came out of the shadows to be part of the DACA Program—Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals—were made a promise that they would be all right if they did so; that their information would not be used then to deport them. So they took a gamble that the United States would stand by the commitment it was making to them, and now they are wondering what happened because their futures are dangling by a thread. The program has been abandoned by the President, and if it is not replaced by legislation done right here in this room, they basically will be subject to being deported to places where they don't speak the language, they don't understand the culture—they are unfamiliar with it—and they don't have any network. They are really kind of stateless individuals who are in a very tough condition.

One person like this from Salem, OR, is Diana Banda Palacios. In 1993, Diana, who is shown here in this picture I have in the Chamber, came to this country from Mexico as a 3-year-old toddler. She has lived her entire life since then, here in America.

Growing up in America, Diana dreamed of becoming a first responder, so much so that during her high school years, she volunteered for Red Cross and for her community emergency response team, but that dream was thrown into doubt during her senior year when she was diagnosed with thyroid cancer. She has fought that cancer, and she has beat that cancer. She graduated from high school more determined than ever to pursue her vision of how she could contribute to the community, and she has contributed. She enrolled and put herself through the firefighting and paramedic program at her local community college, and now she has made a career for herself as an emergency medical technician, an EMT. Every day, she is working literally to save lives, and we are threatening to kick her out of the country—the only country she has ever known.

Diana said a few years back when the DACA Program was first being discussed:

America is my home. This is the place I love, where everyone and everything I know

is. I know nothing outside the United States. Whatever punishment I must pay I am willing to do. All I ask is for a chance. Better yet I beg for a chance to prove that I am not a criminal, that I have much to offer this beautiful place.

That is, in her words, her vision, her desire to be able to fully participate in our society.

Just recently, over Thanksgiving, I led a delegation to Burma. Burma has had horrific circumstances occur because they have a population of Muslims called the Rohingya, and the Rohingya have been in Burma for generations. Many of them came 200 years ago, and they came because they were imported for labor. They have farmed the rice paddies, they have fished in their boats off the coast, but they have never really been accepted by Burma. Burma recognized in their 1982 law 135 minorities, but they didn't recognize the Rohingya because the adjacent Rakhine minority is in kind of a hostile relationship with them. They have always been treated as second-class citizens, so much so that in the middle of Rakhine State, there are about 120,000 people living in camps. They are not allowed to leave the camps. They are not allowed to fully participate in society. They are not given citizenship rights. In northern Rakhine State, in that area, the military went in and burned some 300 villages, engaged in systematic rape, proceeded to shoot people as they fled their villages, and now 600,000 people have gone into Bangladesh.

The reason I raise this is not a parallel situation, but there is, at its core, a similar issue, and that issue is whether a nation thrives by entertaining the situation of having a stateless population. Burma had a stateless population that it did not recognize, did not allow to be fully engaged. They weren't even second-class citizens because they weren't allowed citizenship.

Well, we have now a tremendous population of young folks who have grown up in America. They are culturally American. Many of them had no idea they were born abroad, and they are ready to be full participants if we will let them. Won't we be so much better off to enable them to rise to their full potential, to make their full contribution, to have a full measure of participation in our society?

We have Diana's story, but multiply that times 800,000 people. What a fantastic reservoir of talent, ability, energy, and passion waiting to be fully contributed to being part of the United States of America.

While we delay, these 800,000 young members of our communities are in limbo. They are waiting for us to act. They know they took a gamble by joining the DACA Program, and they now know the Federal Government has all of their information to track them down and deport them. Wouldn't that violate completely the spirit under which we established the DACA Program to begin with? Let's get this DREAM Act done.

Earlier today, I was here on the floor, listening to a conversation from some of my colleagues, and they were saying: Well, let's get it done by March. I would say to my colleagues across the aisle: Let's not wait until March. Let's not wait until February. Let's not wait until January. Let's engage in this conversation now. Let's get it done by the end of the year. These young folks have waited a long time. They have waited too long. So let's address it, and let's maintain in our hearts the spirit that has animated our Nation.

All of us, unless we are 100 percent Native Americans, either came from foreign lands or our parents or our parents' parents, our forefathers and foremothers came from other lands. We know what that is like. It was difficult many times, but our families found their place. Let's enable these young folks, these Dreamers to find their place. It will be far better for them and far, far better for us.

Thank you.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M. TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 6:26 p.m., adjourned until Wednesday, December 6, 2017, at 10 a.m.

CONFIRMATIONS

Executive nominations confirmed by the Senate December 5, 2017:

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

EMILY WEBSTER MURPHY, OF MISSOURI, TO BE ADMINISTRATOR OF GENERAL SERVICES.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

KIRSTJEN NIELSEN, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE SECRETARY OF HOMELAND SECURITY.

FARM CREDIT ADMINISTRATION

GLEN R. SMITH, OF IOWA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE FARM CREDIT ADMINISTRATION BOARD, FARM CREDIT ADMINISTRATION, FOR A TERM EXPIRING MAY 21, 2022.