

the COLA. That's been adjusted. There are things that can be done to deal with Social Security, but that is a debate separate and apart from the deficit and the fiscal cliff debate.

The fiscal cliff debate is a tax issue, and it's also a spending issue. Today we focus largely on the issue of what are we going to do about Medicare, a big part of the Federal expenditures. And our argument is this: we're here to protect Medicare for seniors, period. We're not here to cut the benefits for seniors. We're here to see to it that Medicare, which has been a program for seniors since 1964-65, is going to continue to be there for seniors as well as the benefits package that's there. There are reforms and changes that can be made to reduce the cost of Medicare but not to reduce the benefits. We've talked about many of those.

So here's where we're coming. Within that area, there are very, very significant savings that can be made. The prescription drug benefit, \$150 billion over 10 years. Other issues having to do with keeping people healthy, to extend their health care, issues having to do with how much we pay for certain services, fraud and abuse. All of those things could add up to the potential savings—not the potential savings—to the savings that the President has called for, which is somewhere in the range of \$300 billion over 10 years—additional savings over and above what has already taken place in the Affordable Care Act. And we've seen in this decline in the inflation rate in health care some of the effects of the Affordable Care Act. So there are things that can be done and will be done.

Social Security is not a part of this debate.

But I also want to point out here in the last closing minutes of this a couple of things that I think are very, very important. The President has put forth a very detailed program calling for \$1.6 trillion in additional revenue over 10 years; and that is money that is to come from the expiration of the George W. Bush tax cuts for the top 2 percent.

Now I want to make this clear. I said this earlier—yes, it's worth repeating because it's not said very often—every American taxpayer gets a tax reduction. The superwealthy to the very minimum taxpayer in this Nation gets a reduction in what the President is proposing. And that is to continue at the current tax rate for those with under \$250,000 adjusted gross income. For those who have income over and above that, they get that tax reduction. And above that, they're going to pay an additional amount up to 3.9 percent in two different tranches. So everyone gets a tax break.

But those superwealthy, the 2 percent, they're going to pay more, and that will amount to a substantial amount of money over 10 years. And, frankly, they've had 12 years of really low, low taxes—the lowest taxes, really, ever since the 1930s.

The President has also proposed something that's very important. We

talked about this last week. I want to talk about this again the next time we come here. And that is, how do we grow jobs? How do we put people back to work?

The President has proposed an additional \$50 billion. He did this more than a year ago in the American Jobs Act, and he's put it back on the table: \$50 billion in infrastructure. Let's build the foundation. That deserves a lot of discussion; and, frankly, it's something we ought to enact here right away and put people back to work.

There are other savings that he's proposed over the course of the next 2 years. We don't have time now. I notice my time has just about expired, if you would like to take a final shot at this, Mr. CURSON.

And by the way, this is the first opportunity I have had to spend part of my hour with you. You are a very articulate spokesperson for the working men and women in this Nation. You know the issues of Medicare and Social Security so very, very well. And I know, coming from Michigan and Detroit, you know the need to build the jobs portion of our economy. So why don't you close, and then I will wrap this up.

Mr. CURSON of Michigan. Thank you for that, and I thank you for your comments.

But without a doubt, we could take an hour talking about rebuilding the infrastructure, the jobs it would create, the need in America to fix our bridges and our roads. If you are about to drive over a bridge, you want it safe. It doesn't matter if you are a Republican or a Democrat, you want that bridge to hold you and your car up as you go over it. That needs to be done.

Much of our infrastructure is crumbling. The power grid is crumbling. If it goes out, it doesn't matter what party you are affiliated with. You want your lights on; you want your refrigerator to work; you want your house warm.

So all of those things that could be done and would put America back to work and create revenue from people working, when they get that paycheck, then they would have money to send their kid to a dance class or to go get a haircut. All the small businesses in the area spawn off of that money from creating jobs, rebuilding our infrastructure. That should be on the forefront of our agenda, and I certainly hope we have a chance to talk about that.

Mr. GARAMENDI. How about next week? We'll come back to the floor next week, and we'll pick up the issues of infrastructure, of jobs and the like.

This week we need to focus on what has been put on the table by the Republicans and the Democrats on how to deal with the fiscal cliff, dealing with the issue of Social Security and Medicare. Social Security—no, not part of this problem. It is something we'll deal with perhaps in the next Congress or even in the one beyond that because we do have time to deal with Social Security.

Medicare—for those who want to privatize Medicare, end it as we know it with a voucher or a premium support program—no. No way, no how are we going to go there.

For those that want to work on changing the way in which Medicare operates to get savings, such as negotiating drug prices, dealing with fraud and abuse, the various payment systems that are in Medicare, all of which can save money and to continue the work of the Affordable Care Act, and the way it has already brought the inflation rate down from the 4 percent, 5 percent range down into 2, 2.5 percent range, this is an extraordinary savings right here. And that will be calculated in the years ahead. And, frankly, this will add up to hundreds of billions of dollars in the reduction and the projected cost of Medicare in the years ahead.

So we're making progress. We've got work to do, and we're prepared to do it. The Democrats are prepared to put together a compromise. Let's get to work on it. The American public expects us to do that. And we can, and we will.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

IMMIGRATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentleman from California (Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I take to the floor at this time to talk about an issue that is of the utmost importance to this country, one that I have worked on for several decades, and one that has an urgency to it that cannot be denied, and that is the issue of immigration.

It is a multifaceted issue, one that has a number of subtexts to it but, nonetheless, is one that will not be confronted. The challenges will not be met unless or until we recognize the problem or the challenges as they truly exist.

And what I mean by that is this: immigration, in all its aspects, is a part of the heritage of this country. Immigration is one of the cornerstones of this Nation. It has been said—and I think it is true—that this is a Nation of immigrants. And what that means is that most of us, with the exception of those who are Native Americans, trace our ancestry to some foreign country, some foreign shore.

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The rate of immigration has gone up and down over the two-plus centuries of the existence of this country. It has varied in terms of where the greatest numbers come from over the centuries. It has resulted from and has been altered by decisions made by previous Congresses and Presidents in terms of

the laws that prevail with respect to immigration. But the fact of the matter is that we now are facing a question of immigration policy that has not, in fact, worked for some period of time to the extent that is necessary.

There are several aspects of it, as I mentioned before. One is the area of legal immigration. This country has a glorious history in terms of inviting and accepting and embracing peoples from all over the world. I think I can say without contradiction that this country has had the most open policy with respect to immigration over the years of any country in the world. We had restrictions at times, some that, as we look back now, appear to have been at least misguided. We have had some discriminatory practices in the past with respect to people from certain parts of the world, certain parts of Asia at times. There was, in fact, a bias, if you will, towards Europe, and particularly Western Europe, over a number of years.

But in the 1960s, there was a decision made in this country by way of our laws that moved us towards a worldwide quota system, meaning that the chances for peoples around the world were to be in some ways viewed as equal, meaning that we did not have a bias towards Europe, we did not have a bias towards some other part of the world. The idea was that we would try and make our immigration policy work such that someone who wished to come to the United States from a country in Africa or a country in Asia would have a similar chance as existed for someone in Europe. So that was a major change in our overall policy.

When I came to Congress in 1979, that was essentially where we were, but we also realized that there had been a lack of enforcement of the laws with respect to legal immigration such that we had a significant number of people who had come to the United States without the benefit of papers, or to say it another way, who had come into this country illegally or had overstayed their legal status in this country and were now here illegally.

One of the consequences of a lack of proper enforcement, one of the consequences of having large-scale immigration is that it overrides, in a significant way, the law that would look out and say no matter where you are from in the world, you would have approximately an equal chance of coming to the United States. And if you had illegal immigration from particular areas of the country, that would, in a sense, create a bias under the practice, if not the actual law, for that part of the world.

We found, interestingly enough, that the largest number of people who had come to this country or were in this country without proper documentation came from Central and South America, the largest number of them from a single country, that is Mexico, which is not altogether surprising when you realize we have a common border with

Mexico that ranges from the Gulf of Mexico to the Pacific coast and is approximately 1,960 miles long. If you have visited it, if you have traveled along its entire length as I did back in the early 1980s as a member of the Immigration Subcommittee, you will find the topography such that it is difficult at times to actually have a border that is marked and a border that is controlled. Nonetheless, that does not excuse us for not exercising the control that we should have.

Because of the fact that we had this dilemma of a large number of people who had come to this country illegally and at the same time we're attempting to enforce the law such that a worldwide quota system would still, in fact, be worked, in the 1980s there was an effort to try and reform our immigration laws. I was a part of that as a member of the Immigration Subcommittee. We were, as Republicans, the minority at the time. So as the top Republican on the subcommittee, I was not the chairman. I was, in fact, the ranking member.

I am pleased to say that at that time I had a great working relationship with the then-chairman of the subcommittee, Ron Mazzoli, a Democrat from Louisville, Kentucky. Perhaps the fact that we both were graduates from the University of Notre Dame and shared an affinity for our alma mater assisted us in working closely together. And also, consequently, there had been a bipartisan commission established in the first instance by President Carter and continued on by President Ronald Reagan. It was cochaired by Father Theodore Hesburgh, the former President of the University of Notre Dame, a person much admired and someone that I had known for most of my life and Ron Mazzoli had known, as well. In a very interesting way, we worked together acknowledging the proper roles of the commission and the Congress and shared information, and I think we shared the same hope that we could come up with legislation that would reform our laws.

In 1984, we passed an immigration reform law here in the House of Representatives, and there was a similar law passed in the United States Senate. There was a call for a conference. And in a practice that is somewhat different from what you observe today in the Congress, at least for the last several Congresses, at that time you actually had a physical conference where you had Members from the Senate and the House representing those two sides of the Capitol meeting in public session attempting to try and work out a conference report.

I recall meeting in a large room where the table, as it was set up in a rectangular fashion, was very large to accommodate all of the Members of the House and all the Members of the Senate who were there attempting to try and deal with the issue, and our staffs assisting us. We spent, I think, actually an entire month in conference at-

tempting to work out a conference report. We were unsuccessful.

We came back in 1985 in the new Congress and began working both in the Senate and the House. At that time, the common name of the bill changed from Simpson-Rodino to Simpson-Mazzoli, recognizing the tremendous effort made by the chairman of the subcommittee, Ron Mazzoli. And I recall being at this position on the floor of the House, when this was the minority leadership table, being the Republican floor manager of the Simpson-Mazzoli bill.

We spent well over a week on the floor debating. As I recall, we had well over 200 amendments that were in order, most of which actually got debate on the floor of the House. And there was consideration of some issues within the overall issue of immigration reform that I think went from liberal to conservative, from issues of legal immigration to illegal immigration, agricultural work, seasonal workers. Just about everything was considered on this floor in almost totally open debate.

I was proud to be a part of that debate. I was proud to have garnered the sufficient number of votes on the Republican side to join with those on the Democratic side so that we passed that bill.

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We went to conference. We completed action on that. We sent the bill to the President. I can recall driving back to the residence I had here in this area on an afternoon when I was listening to the radio and hearing the report that the White House had announced that President Reagan was going to sign the bill. I almost drove off the road at that time. I recall that I had worked with the administration but that it was not a perfect bill—I've never found a perfect bill here—and there were many naysayers. So you were never sure until the President made the decision that he would sign it, and I was pleased to be at the White House when the President signed that bill. It was a true compromise.

It did result in the largest legalization that we'd ever had in the United States. I don't believe it was total amnesty—I would reject that notion—but it was, in fact, a legalization. The genius of that compromise was that there would be legalization on the one hand and that there would be enhanced enforcement going forward on the other. If one would look at the reports of illegal immigration that followed the signing of that bill into law by President Ronald Reagan, one would see an interesting thing: the numbers coming across our southern border dramatically dropped immediately after that law was passed. In large measure, it was because of the widely held belief that, in fact, we would enforce the law, that there was enhanced enforcement, and that we were going to be serious about it.

I haven't looked at those numbers in a long time, but it seems to me, as I recall, that for a period of, maybe, 12 to 18 months we saw a significant drop in illegal migration into this country. Then it became evident that enforcement was going to be slow, if at all. The fact of the matter is that there was not enforcement. There was not enhanced enforcement as there wasn't enforcement. There wasn't a serious effort. That was a combined result of a failure to follow through on the part of the Congresses and the administrations. As a result, after a significant drop for a short period of time following the passage of and the signing into law of Simpson-Mazzoli, we saw a ratcheting up of illegal immigration into this country. That was in 1986.

Fast-forward to the present time. We have had the result of that ratcheting up of illegal immigration into this country. We have had a situation in which, since people saw that we weren't going to enforce the law, there was an encouragement, in essence, to come to this country in any way one could. There was, as the sociologists called it, the magnet that caused people to come to this country or invited people to come to this country or attracted people to come to this country; and that magnet, otherwise known by sociologists as the "pull factor," was called the prospect of jobs.

I had argued on the floor of this House back in the 1980s that, in fact, we had to recognize the reality of the reliance of American agriculture on foreign workers to a significant degree. Now, I'd come from the Southwest. I'd come from southern California. I had seen that close up. I had gone to the fields. I had seen the conditions in which people would live just for the possibility of coming to the United States for a job. Since we—the people through our government—didn't control it in a fashion in which the government actually determined the number of jobs that would be available, determined who would come in, how long they would stay, under what circumstances they would work, and in what areas of the country they would work, it happened anyway, without any controls whatsoever, and the problem was exacerbated.

One of the fundamental changes I've seen or differences that I've observed in being in the Congress these last 8 years, as opposed to the 10 years I was from '79 to '89, is that the problem, as I saw it in the Southwest, is not nearly confined to the Southwest now; it is, in fact, a national problem. You will find the presence of those who are here illegally who are working in agriculture all over this country. You'll see the increase in seasonal work because you'll see the increase in the demand for "local produce," for locally grown crops. As you see that, you see the demand for seasonal agricultural workers expanding to other parts of the country, and we don't control it.

We don't have a workable system. Some people say, well, we have the

guest worker program under the Labor Department, the H-2A program. It, frankly, doesn't work. It works for about 4 percent of the agricultural industry in the United States. I say that as someone who helped draft the legislation as a part of Simpson-Mazzoli, not because that's what I thought was the best we could do, but that it was the best that was able to be accomplished in any legislation that was going forward. So we now are confronted with a situation in which we have had large-scale illegal immigration into this country after the passage of Simpson-Mazzoli and the failure to implement the enforcement side of that.

We also are confronted with the question of legal immigration and the fact that, right now, I believe, we set aside too many visas for those folks who have particular skills that we believe might help this country at the present time. I'm not in any way denigrating unskilled workers, and I'm not in any way denigrating those people who come to this country without skills and then develop them once they're here. Our history is replete with those who have accomplished great things in having come to this country with nothing more than a desire to do well, a commitment to hard work, and using the intelligence and the other skill capacities given them by God.

I do say it makes no sense when we have a situation in which we take people from around the world who come to this country because we have the greatest colleges in the world and who develop expertise in science, technology, engineering, mathematics—and in areas that might have an immediate impact on some of the most important growth industries as we look to the future—and we say to them, if you get your degree here, you've got to go to your home country for several years and then apply to come back to this country in order to work here but that Canada will allow you in right away or that many other countries will allow you in right away; or go back to your home country and, thereby, compete with the United States' economy amidst emerging economic growth in your home country.

I saw this very, very closely at hand when I saw one of our major technology companies actually build a plant just over the border in Canada, utilizing a core of those people who had graduated from American colleges, who had come from foreign countries, and who were immediately accepted into Canada. Then Canada was able to build a workforce of about 1,000 people around a core of probably no more than 100 people who would have been required to go back to their home countries from the United States. They basically said, Hey, you don't have to go there. You can come to Canada—and we lost the potential for 1,000 jobs going right across the border because of a policy which doesn't fully understand the appropriateness of our

matching up with those people who have particular skills and wish to stay in this country after they've been trained in this country; their skills and our needs. Now, we did vote on the STEM Act here this past week, which was one attempt at dealing with that question, but it was only one attempt at dealing with that question.

In some ways, in my judgment, the changes we need to make in legal immigration have been—I don't know if I'd use the term "held hostage," but they certainly have been put on the back burner because of the desire for us to deal with a true problem that is more prominent, and that is illegal immigration. So why am I talking about this? Well, I'm not going to have the chance to work on this after January 2. While I devoutly desired the opportunity to do that, there has been a decision made otherwise. I still have the passion for dealing with this issue, because I think it's so important to this Nation. I think it goes to the identity of this country, and I think it goes to the future of this country. I reject the notion that we either have to be a Nation of immigrants or a Nation of laws.

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I think we can be both a Nation that welcomes immigrants and a Nation of laws. I think we have to understand that there is nothing wrong with this country as a sovereign Nation making decisions with respect to immigration law that are in the best interest of America. Sometimes I think when we're talking about international law, we're talking about international relations, and we're talking about the work of the United Nations, and we're talking about working with other people in the world; and we lose sight of the fact that the first obligation of the Federal Government is to have the interest of the people of this country at heart, that the obligation of the State Department, for instance, is to represent the national interest of the United States.

And so I make no apologies for the United States asserting that it has a right to make decisions in the area of immigration that are in the best interest of the United States. I guess the tough question is what is in the best interest of the United States. Again, I would say it is to show that we can be both a Nation of immigrants and a Nation of laws.

So I refrain from using the phrase "comprehensive immigration reform" because that has become a watchword or a watch-phrase for amnesty, and I understand that. I avoid using the term "pathway to citizenship" for those who have been here illegally because that, in fact, is defined as amnesty—and for good reason, in many circumstances.

But I do think we have to apply a multifaceted response to a multifaceted challenge or problem. So, first, in order to gain the confidence of the American people, we have to admit that when we did the last major immigration reform, and we've had some

bills since then, but I'm talking about the major immigration reform Simpson-Mazzoli, we did fail to implement the enforcement side of things. The American people understand that. They think they were shortchanged; I think they were shortchanged. We have to admit that readily. That is part of the context in which we have to deal with the issue; and I think we have to, therefore, accept it, acknowledge it, and learn from those mistakes.

So we need to have a commitment towards enforcement. We need to have borders that are controlled, not just because of the issue of immigration or illegal immigration, but because of the threat in a period of asymmetric warfare or an asymmetric threat where those who are committed to do us harm are not just nation states but maybe transnational terrorist organizations or maybe those that have been known as lone wolves who are incited by, inspired by, and committed to the values that have been expressed by those terrorist organizations who spread their venom around the world seeing who might be attracted to it.

And if, in fact, you have a situation like that, you ought to be even more cautious than before about those entering into this country with terrorist thoughts and terrorist desires against this country.

So for any number of reasons, we need to have a commitment to controlling our borders, number one; and, number two, we have to acknowledge that one of the magnets, or one of the pull factors, causing people to come to the United States or inviting people to come to the United States is the prospect of employment that does not consider the legal status of those who seek that employment. And so that's why I think an E-verify system or something very much like that has to be a part of what we do.

Third, we have to acknowledge that in the area of agriculture, there is a proven need for foreign workers. People can argue about it, but I would just say look at the example of the State of California, my home State. We've seen that for well over 100 years we've relied greatly on foreign workers for agriculture. They've been legal or illegal depending on whether or not we've had a program.

I have for many years looked back at the bracero program to see both its positives and its negatives. Its positives were basically categorized as a government-sponsored, regulated program that allowed people to come into this country to seek work in the area of agriculture and give them legal status while they did. That's the positive. The negatives are that in many ways there weren't protections for the workers and because one who came under the bracero program was tied to a specific employer, if he or she had a complaint about that particular employer, they often found themselves back in their home country before they ever had any adjudication of that complaint.

So I think you have to devise a program that would determine the number of people that come here, determine under what circumstances they come here, determine in what areas of the country they can be here, but in a sense allow them to be free players in a free market that is defined by the job, that is, agriculture. And particularly because of the seasonal-worker nature of much of agriculture that they engage in, allow them to go from employer to employer.

There are enforcement mechanisms that can be put in place to ensure that they stay in agriculture, and there are significant penalties that you can apply if they fail to get a job or get a job in agriculture.

One of the things that I've had as part of any proposal that I've presented is that you take the amount of money that would go into Social Security, the employer and the employee contribution, and that goes into a fund that first is responsible for paying for the administration of the program so there's no burden to the taxpayer. Secondly, that money would go into a fund that would pay for any cost incurred by local jurisdictions for emergency medical care that was rendered to those individuals. And, third, that which would be remaining would go into a fund that would—that is for the contribution by the employer and the employee for that particular individual—be dedicated to that individual but would be redeemable only if they returned to their home country and were physically present there. If they weren't during the period of time they were supposed to be home, they would not have that fund. That money would be forfeited. If they did, they would be able to redeem that money back in their home country.

My idea would be that they would be able to work in this country for 10 months out of any calendar year, and they'd be able to go back and forth during that period of time. One of the things that we have discovered is that as we've increased our ability to enforce our control of the border, if someone successfully gets across the border to work in the United States, they now have a great incentive not to return home for fear they won't be able to make it back.

So in a very perverse way, the very success of our increased enforcement has made it more likely that they will stay here permanently rather than return home. So we need to develop a program that is based on the facts as they exist. And participation in the program doesn't put them on the road to citizenship. It doesn't grant them any rights with respect to citizenship or permanent resident status. It is a temporary worker program.

I do not think that other industries have proven the case that they need those kinds of foreign workers. I really don't. In terms of construction, for goodness sake, why do we have the high unemployment rate among Afri-

can Americans in this country and among Hispanics who are here legally in this country when the construction trade is a great trade to learn, is a wonderful way to be able to earn one's living, and has an opportunity for people to move from just someone working at the job site up to learning their trade and becoming a contractor or subcontractor in some ways.

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So I would not suggest that we expand the Guest Worker Program that I'm suggesting beyond agriculture, but I do believe it is appropriate in the area of agriculture.

Probably the most difficult thing to deal with in this entire arena is the question of those who have been here for a substantial period of time in illegal status, illegal immigrants who have been here for a long period of time, those that have put down roots in the community.

There are those that say, look, the best way to do this is just take care of the problem by putting them on the road to citizenship. And there are those who have suggested things such as voluntary departure or enforcement of some other mechanism. And while I appreciate the sincerity and the thinking that goes into both those positions, my belief, after being involved in this for over 30 years, is that neither one of those positions is going to ultimately succeed.

So what do we do?

In baseball we have something, when a ball is pitched to the batter the batter wants to get the wood on the ball. He wants to hit it in the sweet spot, right?

He wants to be able to maximize the energy that is generated by his swing against the ball. And one of the best ways to do that is to hit that sweet spot in the bat. So I've been looking for the sweet spot on this issue. Some people call it the midway; some people call it the compromise. I call it the sweet spot.

It seems to me that we could do this. And I've proposed this in legislation, and I would hope that at least it would be considered in the next Congress by those who will remain. And the idea is that you would identify those individuals who've been here for a significant amount of time. And of course that's up to a decision by the future Congresses as to what that time is. Is it 5 years? Is it 10 years? I mean, what is it?

But I think you'd have to establish what characteristics of roots in the community would identify these individuals. Certainly you wouldn't grant this to someone who just got into the country yesterday or last week, I don't think, because I think that would then encourage further illegal immigration in the future. People say, hey, look, they make it fairly easy, they're going to do it down the line.

So you have to understand about the consequences of the impact on those

who are looking at it from afar, as well as those who are immediately impacted. So you first determine what the period of time would be that would establish them as people who have roots in the community.

Secondly, I think you have to make sure that they haven't committed crimes of another nature, the crime of coming into this country, remaining in this country illegally, but not any other crimes. And people say, well, gee, it might be this crime or that crime. Well, you know, that's a consequence of your action. I think this would be for those people who have not committed other crimes in this country.

It seems to me there ought to be a requirement that they know English or are engaged in the study of English. Why do I say that?

I'm not opposed to foreign languages. I wish I knew some foreign languages. I have enough trouble with English. But if we are a country of immigrants, as we profess to be, and as we are, I believe, you have to have some unifying, identifying characteristics that bring you together. One is the sense of the understanding of the civil institutions we have. But certainly, one is the manner in which we express ourselves.

So a common language, I think, is particularly important to a country of immigrants. It brings us together. It allows communication. It allows us to come together as a community, without giving up or in any way disparaging our heritage. So I would have that as the second requirement.

Third, it seems to me, there ought to be a requirement for a study of some of those civil institutions of our society. There should be an understanding of what the essence of the democratic institutions are because people coming from other countries have other traditions, other systems.

I'm reminded of this, when we had large-scale refugee numbers coming into this country. I was a young attorney in southern California. I remember going down to Camp Pendleton with other attorneys and volunteering our time to teach those in the refugee community, and that was one of the places that they first came in California, to Camp Pendleton, before they then found sponsors and came to other parts of our country and the state.

Giving them simple instructions in the law, and the way the courts worked, and what your rights were. Fairly elementary, but nonetheless, necessary. And it was indelibly impressed on me that some of the things we do in our system are not immediately apparent, and people from different backgrounds, different cultures, different countries may not appreciate it.

If they are coming here, one of the great things about this country is assimilation. And so that's why I would require a study of civil institutions, and our governmental structure among them, for those individuals.

Next, people talk about a particular fine, and I don't know what that num-

ber would be, but I understand that to be appropriate.

Now, under those circumstances, what would I say they have?

Would they go to permanent resident status?

No. I would create a new category of legal status in this country called a blue card or red card, whatever you want to call it, in which they would, for a period of time, maybe 3 years, maybe 5 years, but they could repeat it, they could re-up this. During that period of time they would have legal status in the United States. They could work in the United States, live in the United States, go to school in the United States, but they would not be on the road to citizenship. In order to do that, they would have to have a touch-back in their home country, and they would get in line behind everybody else.

Now, why do I think that's important?

I think at the base of the objection to amnesty, as I understand it, is this idea that it is unfair to cut in line. If you're a kid and you're at school and you're waiting in line to get a drink of water, you're waiting in line to go to the bathroom, you're waiting in line to get your lunch, and you see somebody cut in line, you immediately know that's not fair. We all know that's not fair to cut in line.

So why should someone who didn't follow the law cut in line in front of those who have waited in their own country for their opportunity to come to the United States?

So my sweet spot in this particular argument would be that, while you have an ability to remain in the United States, in order to get on the path to citizenship, and not give you an advantage over somebody else from your home country, you must touch back in your home country and you must get in line behind everybody else who followed the law.

I think that is an approach that at least ought to be considered. I'd hoped to be here in the next Congress to be able to raise that and to fight for it and to see how others would view it, but I won't have that opportunity. I hope to be on the outside, and whatever I do, to have a chance to continue to influence the debate, following whatever the lobbying rules are. I know I can't directly lobby, but hopefully, as an American citizen I can talk about those issues in that first year, and I can talk about why it's important for us as a country.

And yes, I've said in our own conference, it's important for us as a party, my party, the Republican Party. We have to understand the dynamics that are involved there. I've seen it happen in my home State. I've seen what the political implications are, and I think we ought to pay attention to them.

But, beyond that, far more important than that, far more fundamental than that is the fact that this country has

to confront this issue in a reasonable fashion, in an intelligent fashion, and in a fashion that improves the state of this country.

So I know there are men and women of goodwill in this House and in the Senate who will and can work together. I would make a humble request of the President of the United States, that he toss aside partisanship, and that he join those Members in the Congress and those of us who will be in the public, out in the public, in an effort to try and deal with this issue.

With all due respect, when the President of the United States went down—I think it was to El Paso—a couple of years ago and said Republicans want to build a fence, and then they want to build a moat, and they want to put alligators in it, that is hardly an invitation to cooperate.

That image, in and of itself, when you realize the history of the Rio Grande, and when you realize the history of people coming across the Rio Grande to this country, that image is devastating. It does not open people's hearts to the possibility of reaching a compromise. It drives people away.

And so my hope would be that the President would, as Ronald Reagan did in the 1980s, work with those who are in the House and the Senate to try and come up with a compromise that deals with the issues of this day under the grand rubric of immigration, and that, putting aside partisanship and political advantage, work in good faith with Members of the House and Senate to accomplish this task.

□ 1610

And I would ask this: that those in this House and those in the Senate and those in the administration under the direction of the President begin working on this early, not late. If the work is done early, as we did in 1985, the chances of being able to actually accomplish a completed legislative vehicle and have it on the President's desk for signature are greatly enhanced. Don't wait until it's campaign year politics and certainly don't wait until it's the next Presidential election year for politics. Try and work on it now.

This country is lesser for the fact that we haven't dealt with an issue of this importance. This country is lesser for the fact that we have all the tensions that exist as a result of a failure of the law to respond to the realities of the time. And we put ourselves in a conundrum where, in just one instance, I would cite men and women in the farm community in my home State of California who have farmed for generations and have seen the reality of the labor market for agriculture—our men and women who are patriotic and love this country and want to follow the law, who in fact would support an E-Verify system which would allow them the certainty of having legal workers but who on the other hand recognize the need for foreign workers—these people would be put into a no-win situation, a

catch-22, where on the one hand they would be forced to follow the letter of the law, knowing that they would not have the workers that would allow them to continue in the generation's old farming business that they have or, on the other hand, as patriotic Americans in their own way, nonetheless be forced to break the law in order to retain their livelihood. That's unacceptable. That is shortsighted. That is self-defeating. And it is something that we should not allow.

Now it's easy to get up here and do a Special Order and talk about how I would solve the problem. It's much more difficult to have a completed solution to a problem. And I understand that. I in no way suggest that this is easy or it will come quickly. But I do believe we have men and women of goodwill, of patriotic hearts, who can and are prepared to work on this issue. And I would hope that the President of the United States, now almost in his second term, would understand the seriousness of the issue, the immenseness of the challenge facing us, and would understand that in the best interest of the United States it would behoove us to work together to solve the problem. I'm not sure what I'm going to do be doing in the next year, but I do know that I want to be involved in the debate, and hopefully I can applaud my colleagues that remain here as they succeed in dealing with this very difficult problem.

So, Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues for listening to me and I encourage my colleagues to deal with this issue in the spirit of goodwill that I know they have.

I yield back the balance of my time.

RIGHTING THE WRONGS IN AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BARLETTA). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) for 30 minutes.

Mr. GOHMERT. It's uplifting to hear my friend, DAN LUNGREN from California. What an amazing public servant he has been. I fought battles with the man. I know his heart. And he's going to be sorely missed. He cares so deeply about this country.

Such is the lot of people whose country has leadership decided by elections. Sometimes good things happen, sometimes they don't. But democracy ensures that a people are governed no better than they deserve. So whether someone liked President Reagan or President George H.W. Bush or President Bill Clinton or President George W. Bush or President Barack Obama, the truth is that at the time they were elected President, we as a Nation overall got the President we deserved at that time.

One of the most impressive speeches I've ever heard was given by Senator Barack Obama at the Democratic Convention. And I love the way he talked

about America, coming back as one America. Not a red America or a blue America, but America. Just one country. And it was one of the things that I drew great hope from on 9/12/2001 as people around the country gathered around, as we did in our local east Texas town, and people of all races and ages and gender, and we all held hands and we sang hymns and patriotic songs. And I looked around the circle and was deeply moved because I knew that day there were no hyphenated Americans, there were just Americans. And we were together. And everybody standing there in that square holding hands, we shared the love for our country. We wanted to see it strong. We wanted to see it recover from that devastating blow from people intent on evil, based on hatred.

That senator that wanted one America has presided in such a way that we seem more divided than ever—more people on food stamps, more people below the poverty level, more people struggling than ever before. We were told if the \$900 billion giveaway stimulus proposal—porkulus some called it—if that was passed, we would be recovering very quickly. And if we did not pass that stimulus, porkulus, whatever you want to call it, if we didn't pass that bill in early 2009, the country might well reach unemployment rates as high as 8, 8.5 percent, as I recall. Well, guess what? We passed it and things got worse. It was a terrible bill. It was not the way you fix an economy in danger, suffering.

□ 1620

What's so tragic right now, Mr. Speaker, is how many people across America are struggling, out of work. I'm not just talking manual laborers or older workers, I mean all ages, well-educated, poorly educated. We've got people out of work around this country that are really in desperate straits. Some take different approaches. I was shown numbers that indicated at one point that when people are unemployed, many of them will look full time for employment, for substitute employment, but on average may have 30 minutes a week—for an average—until the last 2 weeks of the unemployment benefits, and at that time it may go as high as an average of 10 hours or so of the last 2 weeks looking for employment.

This President is demanding that we extend unemployment benefits for another year for those who have been unemployed for a year. We also know that in his JOBS Act—it was really a JOBS Act for lawyers because they created a new protected class called the unemployed; so that if you had been unemployed for 2 years and you go apply for a job and the employer looking for a worker considers the fact that you didn't look for a job for 2 years and instead hired somebody that had been out of work for a month and was desperately spending all his or her time looking for employment, if you consid-

ered the fact that somebody had been unemployed, how long they had been unemployed, then you would be sued under the President's proposed bill.

So it was going to be a great boon to trial lawyers, to plaintiffs' lawyers because they would be suing on behalf of every unemployed worker who went and looked for a job for the first time in a couple of years. I mean, you could have that kind of scenario, not look for a job for a year or two, go look for a job, and then turn your case over to a lawyer to sue anybody that didn't hire you because you didn't show any particular motivation, and most employers want motivated employees.

So we know that the President has made this proposal; he wants to extend unemployment for another year. Just to show what a worthless organization—they're smart people; they're very good people; they're a good organization, but their rules are so pitiful, so unrealistic, so unmoored to the foundation of good economic projections—we have the Congressional Budget Office, CBO. They come in, and apparently—I was reading an AP story. I didn't see the CBO numbers themselves, but the story said that, according to CBO projections, extending unemployment for another year for those that have been unemployed for a year now would cost \$30 billion. But the great thing is that \$30 billion of paying people to remain unemployed would create 300,000 jobs. So what a great thing for America, for our economy if you spend \$30 billion and create 300,000 jobs. Until you start looking at the numbers and you go, Wait a minute. Wait a minute. We're spending \$30 billion. We're told if we do that it will create 300,000 jobs? Well, that's not very smart. That's \$100,000 that we would be spending for every job we create.

What kind of math is being utilized by the White House and by CBO? I mean, how stupid are Americans? Oh, yeah, great idea. Let's let the government spend another \$100,000 to create one job that may not be but a part-time job, pay \$20,000 or so. Well, I'll bet if we offered people across America, made an offer, we want to create 300,000 jobs this month and so we're looking for bids. Who will come to work for less than \$100,000? I'll bet you would get 300,000 people working very quickly for a whole lot less than \$100,000 a job.

So that kind of math is what has gotten us in trouble. It's why we need an alternative to CBO scoring that deals realistically with what we're engaged in, because it's only when we have a scoring system for bills that is wedded to legitimacy and historical reality that we will begin to have better legislation. Because when you have a group that has such ridiculous rules to score bills that it will come in and say ObamaCare, yes, it will cost \$1.1 trillion, and then they have their Director called to the Oval Office and reminded, apparently, that the President promised it would cost less than \$1 trillion