Coons-Johanns No. 1079; that at 5:30 p.m. on Monday, June 3, the Senate proceed to votes in relation to the two amendments in the order listed; that there be no second-degree amendments in order to either amendment prior to the votes, and that there be 2 minutes equally divided between the votes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, in recent years the farm bill has changed and become more about welfare than providing a safety net for America's agriculture producers. Because this is so frustrating to me, I offered an amendment that would have restored the integrity of the farm bill. It would have cut the food stamp program by about $250 billion over ten years and converted it into a discretionary block grant. I am disappointed the Senate rejected my amendment by a vote of 36–60.

But the crop insurance program remains the heart of the farm bill. Many of my colleagues believe it is appropriate to reduce the program's effectiveness by imposing means testing and other limitations on participation. These restrictions are counterproductive and result in crop insurance becoming more expensive for family farmers. I agree there are many issues that should be addressed to make the farm bill more about farming, but I am opposed to efforts to limit the effectiveness of the crop insurance program.

VOTE EXPLANATION

• Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I was unable to attend four roll call votes that occurred on May 23, 2013. Had I been present, I would have voted yea on the confirmation of Srikanth Srinivasan to be U.S. Circuit Judge, yea on Feinstein amendment No. 923 to end the Federal crop insurance subsidy for tobacco, yea on Hagan amendment No. 1031 to reduce fraud in the crop insurance program, and yea on Durbin amendment No. 953 to reduce crop insurance premium subsidies for those earning over $750,000 annually in adjusted gross income.•

MORNING BUSINESS

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

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

The Senator from Michigan.

SEQUESTRATION

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I wish to start by thanking Senator WHITEHOUSE who has shown such strong leadership on the issue we are going to be discussing this afternoon, which is how do we get out of the sequestration box we are now in. I also wish to thank him for joining with me in sponsoring the Cut Unjustified Tax Loopholes Act, which could do so much to address the problems we will be discussing today, including the need to move forward on solutions to our budget deficit and to ending sequestration.

I ask unanimous consent that following my remarks, the Senator from Rhode Island be recognized for his remarks on this subject.

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

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, at the beginning of March, when Congress's failure to reach a compromise on deficit reduction triggered sequestration, some in Congress were ready to declare victory. ''Sequestration will take place . . . [and] I am excited,'' said one Member of the House of Representatives. ''It's going to be a home run,'' said another Member of the House of Representatives. ''This will be the first significant tea party victory,'' said a third Member of the House of Representatives.

Well, sequestration may be a victory for the tea party, but it isn't a victory for the American people. It is not a victory for the men and women of our military and their families.

Over the past 2 months, the Senate Armed Services Committee has heard testimony from our highest ranking military leaders, including the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Army Chief of Staff, the Chief of Naval Operations, the Air Force Chief of Staff, the Commandant of the Marine Corps, and the Combatant Commanders who are responsible for our forces in Afghanistan and Korea and around the world. Each of these military leaders told us that continued sequestration will damage our security and harm the troops they lead.

General Dempsey, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of staff, warned us:

> If sequestration occurs, it will severely limit our ability to implement our defense strategy. It will put the Nation at greater risk of coercion, and it will break faith with men and women in uniform.

He warned us that continued sequestration would ''destroy'' military readiness. General Amos, the Commandant of the Marine Corps, told us: ''Sequestration will leave ships in ports, aircraft grounded for want of necessary maintenance and flying hours, units only partially trained and reset after 12 years of continuous combat, and modernization programs canceled.'' The result, he stated, would be ''a lapse in American leadership.''

General Odierno, the Chief of Staff of the Army, told us:

> Sequestration will result in delays to every one of our 10 major modernization programs, the inability to re-set our equipment after 12 years of war, and unacceptable reductions in unit and individual training. . . . It will place an unreasonable burden on the shoulders of our soldiers and civilians. . . . If we do not have the resources to train and equip the force, our soldiers, our young men and women, are the ones who will pay the price, potentially with their lives.

The Vice Chief of Staff of the Air Force warned:

> Lost flight hours will cause unit stand-downs which will result in severe, rapid, and long-term unit combat readiness degradation. We have already ceased operations for one-third of our fighter and bomber force. Within 60 days of a stand down, the affected units will be unable to meet emergent or operations plans requirements.

The Vice Chief of Naval Operations told us:

> In FY13, we will reduce intermediate-level ship maintenance, defer an additional 84 aircraft and 184 engines for depot maintenance, and defer eight of 33 planned depot-level surface ship maintenance availabilities. At our shore bases, we have deferred about 16% of our planned FY13 shore facility sustainment and upgrades, about $1 billion worth of work. . . . By the end of FY13 . . . nearly two thirds of the fleet . . . will be less than fully mission capable and not certified for Major Combat Operations.

We rely on the men and women of our military to keep us safe and to help us meet the U.S. national security objectives around the world. We expect our men and women in uniform to put their lives on the line every day, but in return what we tell them is that we will stand by them, we will stand by their families, we will provide them the best training, the best equipment, and the best support available to any military anywhere in the world. Sequestration in fiscal year 2013 is already undermining that commitment to the men and women in the military and their families.

There may be a few people who, hearing all of this, might still consider sequestration a ''victory.'' But members of the Armed Services Committee who have heard the testimony—Democrats and Republicans—believe the continued sequestration is a grave mistake.

These cuts will damage our military readiness, restrict our ability to respond when crisis erupts, and restrict our flexibility in confronting national security threats from Iran to North Korea to international terrorism. These cuts will cost taxpayers in the long run because maintaining our military readiness today is far less expensive than rebuilding our military readiness tomorrow after it has been squandered.

The devastating effects of sequestration are also felt in other of our agencies and departments. These effects are going to harm students and seniors and farmers and families across this Nation. Continued sequestration will set back our slow climb out of recession, as well as education and medical research and health care and public safety.

As former Defense Secretary Panetta told our committee in February:

> It's not just defense, it's education, loss of teachers, it's childcare. . . . It's about food safety, it's about law enforcement, it's about airport safety.

The desire to avoid this outcome is, I believe, bipartisan. That is why it is so baffling to me that some of our Republican colleagues still refuse to allow us to take the necessary next step to avert this continued damage. By refusing to allow a House-Senate conference

committee to meet—a meeting in which Members of both Chambers and both parties would work to resolve differences between the Senate- and House-passed budgets—a few Senate Republicans are objecting to the search for a solution to sequestration. For reasons I do not understand, they are objecting now to the normal budget process they previously urged us on with such energy to follow.

It is truly baffling because 2 months ago we heard from some Republicans that it was a travesty that we had failed to pass a budget. They called failure to pass a budget an outrage. Now that we have passed a budget, a few of our colleagues across the aisle are preventing us from going to conference so we can work out our differences with the House and finalize a budget.

Those colleagues want a guarantee in advance of a conference in which they will get their way on a number of issues or else, they say, they are going to prevent the conference from even occurring. They want the rules of the game to guarantee they are going to win even before they agree to play. The budget resolution is no game, but the analogy is apt.

I cannot understand the reasoning—I simply cannot understand that reasoning—but at a time when our national security is challenged on so many fronts and we face the effects of sequestration that I have outlined, this is not just illogical, it makes responsible governing impossible. It is harmful to our Nation. Getting to conference and working out our differences is simply essential.

I am very much encouraged that some of our Republican colleagues have come to the floor to point this out. They have spoken forcefully, admirably, courageously about the need for the Senate to move forward. They give me hope. Those Senate Republicans who have come to the floor and urged us to go to conference and urged those who are blocking our move to conference to remove the blockage have a mission which I hope succeeds.

I have spoken on this floor on a number of occasions about what I see as the proper path to sensible deficit reduction, and that is the reverse of sequestration. A significant majority of Americans believes we need a balanced deficit reduction plan to dig us out of the hole we are in. Such an approach would include some additional discretionary budget cuts, but prudent, prioritized cuts, replacing the hatchet which is sequestration with a scalpel instead.

Such an approach would include reforms to entitlement programs, and it would include revenue. Budget experts of all ideological stripes know additional revenue must be part of our deficit solution. By closing unjustifiable tax loopholes, such as those my Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations has outlined in detail on a bipartisan basis, we can provide tens of billions of dollars for deficit reduction—deficit reduction that does not require us to raise the burden on working families or on the men and women in uniform who put their lives on the line to keep us safe. That kind of revenue will help us reverse sequestration—part of a solution to this budget crisis we are in.

A balanced approach to deficit reduction is the approach to the budget which this body passed on March 24. I hope this position prevails in conference when we get to conference with the House. I would hope the Senate position prevails. But I cannot even believe that Members of this body would consider obstructing the budget process until they were given a guarantee they could get their way. It is the wrong way to govern. Most of us know it. You cannot guarantee in advance of a conference that the conference is going to have your outcome. If you want to instruct conferees, fair enough, and that is what the effort has been here on the part of the Democratic majority leader. But for some Members of this body to insist that unless they are guaranteed they will get their way in conference or else they are going to block us going to conference is not the way we are able to get anything done here. If we all took that position, we would never get anything done.

This obstruction does a disservice to the men and women who serve in our military and to the people of this great Nation whom they protect. Their position is as damaging as it is illogical. I hope they will soon relent to logic, to the needs of the Nation, and end the objection to proceeding to conference with the House of Representatives, because that is the way we can try to work out our differences, finalize a budget, and take the necessary steps toward deficit reduction and the end of sequestration.

I thank our Presiding Officer.

Again, I thank Senator WHITEHOUSE. It is his initiative that brings us to the floor today. It is his initiative which has cast a light in so many ways on the budget dilemmas we face, but also the solution to these challenges.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, let me first thank Chairman LEVIN for the immense amount of work and passion and good thought he has put into trying to accelerate the day when we can say good riddance to the sequester. He sees firsthand, as chairman of the Armed Services Committee, how much damage the sequester is doing to the military, to the soldiers and sailors and airmen and marines who honor us by their service, to the talented and loyal civilians who support their efforts. But families all across the country also are feeling the painful consequences of this sequester.

Just in my small State, Rhode Island, 8,100 folks have already seen their weekly unemployment checks reduced by $50. For a family struggling to get by, losing $50 can hurt. Federal rental assistance has been eliminated for 500 low-income Rhode Island families, which may cause some even to lose their homes.

Economy-wide, our nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office estimates that the $85 billion in sequester cuts this year will cost us 750,000 jobs nationwide. We have 12 million Americans out of work already. Why on Earth would we want to cut 750,000 more jobs?

As Chairman LEVIN said, it does not have to be this way. In fact, Leader REID tried twice to bring up measures that would get rid of the sequester, but twice Republicans filibustered. Now they refuse even to allow the process to go forward that would negotiate a solution through the regular legislative process. They will not even let us appoint Senators to negotiate a compromise between the Senate and the House budgets.

It has been 61 days since we passed our budget, and each time we try to move the process along, Republicans object. If their rule is: I have to have it my way before I am willing to enter into negotiations and I need a guarantee, I would like some of that deal too. I have some things I feel pretty passionately about, and if they want to play by those rules, then we should all be playing by those rules. If not, then let's follow the regular order and let the process of democracy work.

From government shutdowns to Federal default, the other party has a strategy: to manufacture one crisis after another, each time holding our economy hostage to demands for radical policies that the vast majority of the American people reject.

They demand the end to Medicare as we know it. The American people want no part of that. They demand cuts to Social Security. The American people want no part of that. They refuse to close a single—not one, not a single—corporate tax loophole. Well, huge majorities of Americans want that to happen. But our friends do not care. They are extremists.

It is not just the American public, by the way, that rejects the extremist tea party agenda. So do economists. What economists say has been confirmed in practice by the experiences of other nations that followed the Republican austerity strategy.

Republicans say budget cuts are necessary to reduce the deficit, but their fervor ignores the established economic effect that has during a recovery. Right now, for every $1 we cut, the economy shrinks by more than $1. Their theory is when you cut $1 in government spending, that releases the economy to grow more rapidly. Well, the fact is, during a recovery the exact opposite is true. The way this is measured is through an economic phenomenon called the fiscal multiplier.

There have been a number of recent studies that try to identify what the fiscal multiplier is right now, and they range from 1.4 to 3.7, which means that

for every $1 you cut, the economy takes a $1.40 hit. There is an extra 40-cent harm for each $1 cut to our national economy.

If this one is right, 3.7, then every $1 cut is $3.70 worth of harm to our economy. It is a multiplier of damage from government cuts. So shrink the GDP, which we do if we have a fiscal multiplier of 1, and collect less taxes. Less taxes means less of the deficit reduction that is supposedly achieved by the budget cuts. It is a vicious cycle that could keep our economy weak and our deficits high. We can go backward, and Europe proves it from Spain to Portugal to Greece.

Countries slashed their budgets and things got worse, double-digit unemployment and negative growth. We have a U.S. unemployment rate of about 7.5 percent. That is way too high, but it is way better than 27 percent in Spain, 27 percent in Greece, and 16 percent in Portugal. We had 2.3 percent growth last year. They had negative growth rates. Negative growth rates. Their economies contracted.

The evidence from the austerity experiment is in countries that cut the deepest hurt themselves the worst. As we can see, employment in the eurozone is worse by about 20 percent since the major austerity programs kicked in.

Over that same time period unemployment in the United States is better by about 25 percent. Their policies, unemployment worse by 20 percent; our policies, employment better by 25 percent. A lot of these Republican calls for harmful U.S. austerity cited a 2010 paper called ''Growth in a Time of Debt'' by Harvard economists Reinhart and Rogoff. Republicans loved Reinhart and Rogoff. They cited them at least five dozen times on the House and Senate floors to justify their demands for budget cuts.

They cannot get enough of Reinhart and Rogoff. It turns out there is a big problem. There were numerous errors in Reinhart and Rogoff's computations; math errors, programming errors, dropping a column of data. Oh, oops. With the fiscal multiplier over 1, the best thing we can do to accelerate our recovery is to lift the harmful European-style sequester cuts. The Job Preservation and Sequester Replacement Act of 2013 would do just that, through September 30, giving us time to negotiate a broader compromise.

Cosponsored by Chairman LEVIN, Chairman HARKIN, Senator LAUTENBERG, Senator MERKLEY, Senator SCHATZ, and Senator WARREN, it would replace the sequester from the Buffet rule and from closing corporate tax loopholes, sensible tax changes that on their own we should do because they make the Tax Code fairer.

The Buffet rule would ensure that multimillion-dollar earners pay at least a 30-percent effective Federal tax rate. Last year we debated whether the top income tax rate should be 35 percent or 39.6 percent. But the fact is that many at the top, people making hundreds of millions of dollars in a single year, will not pay anything close to that rate. Why? Because the Tax Code is riddled with special provisions that favor ultra-high-income earners.

For example, investment income is taxed at the special rate of 20 percent. The so-called carried interest loophole allows billionaire private equity fund managers to pay this low rate. So many of them pay the same tax rate or even less than a hard-working average firefighter or brick mason in Rhode Island making $50,000 a year. So at $200 million a year, they are paying the same tax rate as folks making $50,000 a year. The Buffet rule follows the common sense that people earning millions of dollars a year, even hundreds of millions of dollars a year, should pay higher tax rates than middle-class families. It would also cut the deficit by $71 billion.

Another loophole, the so-called Edwards-Gingrich loophole, lets high-earning professionals dodge paying payroll taxes by calling themselves corporations. We close that too, saving another $9 billion. We save another $3 billion by going after a deduction that allows private jet owners to depreciate their planes faster than commercial aircraft are allowed to be depreciated, another commonsense change.

The fourth part of the proposal would contribute $24 billion to lifting the sequester by ending tax breaks for Big Oil. Over the past decade, the five largest oil companies have reaped over $1 trillion in profits. That is trillion with a ''t''—$1 trillion in profits. While they are making that massive profit, they nevertheless pull strings in Congress to keep billions of dollars a year that regular taxpayers have to cough up for them in tax giveaways. As with all of the elements in this bill, repealing Big Oil giveaways is something we should be doing anyway, just because it is the right thing to do.

Finally, we end a tax break for companies that ship jobs overseas. Believe it or not, the Tax Code allows manufacturers to indefinitely delay paying taxes on profits in overseas operations. Ending this unfair and un-American advantage would lower the deficit by another $20 billion. Each one of those five reforms would make the Tax Code fairer for all Americans. They are each worth passing for that reason alone. They are embarrassments in our Tax Code. Getting rid of them could stop the sequester while Democrats and Republicans work together on a balanced deficit reduction package; that is, of course, if we could get Republicans to actually work with us and negotiate and go through the regular order they have claimed for so long to seek, to get to a balanced and negotiated deficit reduction package.

But as Chairman LEVIN pointed out, at the moment they refuse to even appoint conferees to begin the process. They want to be assured they will have it their way before they even begin to negotiate. As I said earlier in the speech, if that is the way they are going to behave, I want some of that action myself. I have many things I feel very strongly about.

I could be in a position to say I will not allow us to go to conference either until we are clear that we are never going to do chained CPI and put that burden on our Social Security-receiving seniors. I could do that and say we are never going to go to conference unless I get a guarantee that we are going to get a carbon fee so the big polluters are paying their share and we are not having to subsidize what they are doing to our atmosphere and oceans. I could say those things. Any one of us could say those things.

Mr. LEVIN. If the Senator would yield for a question, if that position were taken by all of us, that is a guarantee of inaction?

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. That is a guarantee of total gridlock and failure. That is why it is so important that no one in this body try to use that kind of hostage-taking extremist tactic, rather than allowing the regular order to continue.

Mr. LEVIN. Since I have interrupted the Senator, let me ask one additional question. I notice that even though the Senator's menu yields $127 billion, that he only requires $85 billion for the 1-year sequester replacement, which means that, for instance, if just the Buffet rule were put in place, which is a tax fairness approach, plus the bottom one, a tax break for offshoring, those two items out of this menu—and there are many other items which are not on the Senator's menu, those two items alone could reverse sequester for 1 year?

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Yes.

Mr. LEVIN. I wish to make one more comment about offshoring. My dear friend from Rhode Island knows that my permanent subcommittee has done a lot of work on the tax breaks for offshoring. In addition to what the Senator said about delaying the tax on profits, under our Tax Code, companies which move jobs overseas get a tax deduction for the cost of the moving?

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. They do.

Mr. LEVIN. If they are building a plant overseas, the cost of that plant can be deducted currently?

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. It can.

Mr. LEVIN. This is perhaps the most stunning thing I have learned fairly recently. It is even possible under our Tax Code for the cost of operations of that facility to be deducted currently, while the tax on the profits or the income of that operation is delayed, which means they can cut domestic taxes by the cost of running a foreign operation currently. That takes a little bit of gimmickry to do it, but that is what is going on. I just wanted to kind of fill in that one little element of some of these offshore bonanzas, these incredible loopholes that are in the Tax Code.

As the Senator from Rhode Island said, we should get rid of some of these

things even if we had no deficit because, as the Senator put it, they are embarrassments.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Nobody has spent more time and more energy and put more effort into the way in which American income gets hidden offshore so people can avoid paying taxes and corporations can avoid paying taxes than Chairman LEVIN. He is our expert. There are indeed other loopholes that are exploited, primarily by corporations but also by very high-income taxpayers, hiding money in the Cayman islands, putting assets into Ireland and other tax havens, and refusing to treat them as American, even though it is nominally an American company. There are enumerable tricks.

I will close by making one point. Very often people look at what we are trying to accomplish, and even actually pretty honest reporters will say the Democrats actually want to raise taxes. That is the fight. Republicans want to cut spending; Democrats want to raise taxes. No. We raised taxes once already. We raised the rates for people over $450,000 thousand a year in the last big agreement. What we want to do now is to go into the Tax Code and close down the loopholes. That is all we are looking for.

What most Americans do not understand is that if we look at how much money goes out the backdoor of the Tax Code through loopholes, through special rates, through exemptions and so forth, it is very nearly the same amount of money that is actually collected through the Tax Code and becomes the revenue of the United States of America. We let almost as much money out the backdoor of the Tax Code as we collect through the Tax Code. If we take a look at the areas where Chairman LEVIN has done so much good research, that money actually never gets into the Tax Code to go out the backdoor.

If we were to count that, in addition to the money that is allowed out the backdoor of the Tax Code, there is actually more that goes out the backdoor of the Tax Code and is avoided coming through the Tax Code than is actually collected as the revenues of the United States of America.

So it is a big number. The refusal of the Republicans to let us attack one single loophole, not one loophole—every loophole is sacred right now to them—I think is unjustified. I hope the people of America understand we are not looking at more tax rate increases; we are looking only at closing these loopholes. It is a rich field to pursue because more money goes through that than actually gets collected. You can bet, if you are an average American, that when those loopholes were being carved into the Tax Code, you were not in the room. The special interests were in the room.

That is why a lot of people want to defend them. But it is also a very good reason for making a more honest Tax Code that gets rid of these loopholes. But our friends want to crisis manufacture. They want to do crisis manufacture so they can force-feed on all of us bad economic ideas that Americans do not want. I think we need to resist that.

I yield to the chairman.

Mr. LEVIN. Again, if my friend would yield, the name of the bill which the Senator cosponsored is called Cut Unjustifiable Tax Loopholes.

There are plenty of tax deductions which are totally justified. Mortgage interest is justified, accelerated depreciation, there are all kinds of contributions.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Charitable deductions.

Mr. LEVIN. These are justifiable tax deductions. What we are talking about are the unjustifiable ones which shouldn't be there. As the Senator points out, we are not proposing tax rate increases. The way I phrase it is I am talking about collecting taxes which should be paid.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Yes.

Mr. LEVIN. Not increasing taxes or the rates for taxes, but collecting the taxes which, in all justice, really should be collected by Uncle Sam.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Let me thank the chairman for allowing me to join him today. He has shown great leadership in this area, and I am privileged to be here with him today.

I yield the floor.

IMMIGRATION

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, after several hearings and five lengthy markup sessions, the Senate Judiciary Committee Tuesday evening voted with a strong bipartisan vote of 13–5 to report the Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act to the full Senate. This vote demonstrated our commitment to bring millions of people out of the shadows and into American life by establishing a pathway to citizenship for the 11 million undocumented immigrants in this country. It addresses the lengthy backlogs in our current immigration system that have kept families apart sometimes for decades. It grants a faster track to the ''dreamers'' and to the agricultural workers who are an essential part of our communities and our economy. It makes important changes to the visas used by dairy farmers, tourists, and investors who create American jobs that spur our economy. It improves the treatment of refugees and asylum seekers so that the United States will remain the beacon of hope in the world.

I am immensely proud of the process through which the Judiciary Committee considered this bill. The Committee held more than 37 hours of debate in five markup sessions spread over almost 2 weeks. We considered 212 amendments offered by Republican and Democratic Senators, and voted to accept 141 of those amendments. The committee accepted amendments from nearly every member of the Judiciary Committee. Every Republican member but one offered amendments the committee voted to accept by a bipartisan majority. Senator CRUZ is the lone exception and his amendments were all defeated by bipartisan majorities.

Of the more than 300 amendments filed, more than 200 were debated. By contrast, during the committee's consideration of the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, the number of amendments voted on was 11. In 2006, the committee's consideration of the Securing America's Borders Act voted on approximately 60 amendments. The quality of the debate and the effort that went into it is a testament to the committee and each of its members, even those who ultimately voted against the bill.

As Chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, I ensured more process and transparency than any previous committee consideration of immigration reform. Committee members filed their amendments 2 days before our first markup, giving members, their staffs and the public ample time to review those amendments so they could be thoroughly debated. For the first time in the committee's history, amendments were posted online on our committee website for the public to review. The markup meetings themselves were broadcast online and on public television so that they could be viewed across the country. Many members of the public also lined up early each morning to attend the meetings in person. Families, faith leaders, advocates and community leaders were present to witness the committee's deliberations. This was an open, thorough, and thoughtful debate.

In real time, as members accepted and rejected amendments, the committee's website was updated to reflect which amendments were modified, accepted or defeated. In addition to the live webcast and gavel-to-gavel coverage on C–SPAN, I provided regular updates through the Judiciary Committee's website, Twitter and other means. I was heartened to see a Vermont editorial describe the Judiciary Committee markup as a ''lesson in democracy.''

The committee unanimously approved my amendment to permanently authorize and further strengthen the EB–5 Regional Center Program which will benefit the economy. The United States Citizenship and Immigration Services, USCIS, estimates that the EB–5 Regional Center Program has created tens of thousands of American jobs and has attracted more than $1 billion in investment in communities all across the United States since 2006. Senator SESSIONS spoke in support of my amendment before it was adopted without a single vote in opposition.

Another example of the Committee's bipartisan efforts to improve this legislation was offered by Senators HATCH, COONS and KLOBUCHAR, to increase certain immigration fees and direct a portion of the proceeds to the States to