

The PRESIDING OFFICER. 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 Kansas.

## LEGISLATIVE SESSION

### MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, for debate only, and with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MORAN). The Senator from Nebraska.

### NOMINATION OF STEVE GRASZ

Mr. SASSE. Mr. President, today the Judiciary Committee had the opportunity to advance the nomination of Steve Grasz, one of the foremost appellate attorneys in the State of Nebraska, and I would like to make one brief comment about that.

The Judiciary Committee has now heard and soon the full Senate will be hearing about the impeccable credentials of Mr. Grasz. Steve has served with distinction as Nebraska's chief deputy attorney general for nearly a dozen years. During that time, he defended our State's laws with integrity, humility, and decency. Whether he was litigating before the Eighth Circuit, before the Nebraska Supreme Court, or before the U.S. Supreme Court, Steve's character and professionalism earned the respect of Republicans and Democrats alike.

Members of the committee became familiar with Steve and in particular his recommendation from President Obama's U.S. attorney for Nebraska, Deborah Gilg. She wrote to the committee: "Steve has always enjoyed a reputation for honesty, impeccable integrity, and dedication to the rule of law." She continued by noting that Steve "possesses an even temperament well-suited for the bench and always acts with respect to all that interact with him."

Steve has earned the support of Republicans and Democrats back in Nebraska, and I hope that when his nomination comes to the floor of the Senate, we will take to heart all of the support he has across the political spectrum and from well-respected lawyers across our State.

Thank you for the time, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

### DACA

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, across the country, families are deco-

rating their Christmas trees. They are singing along to holiday playlists. They are searching for that perfect gift for the ones they love. They are making travel plans to see their families. The holidays are a time for joy and togetherness, a time for faith and family, a time for gratitude and hope.

The holidays are not a time for fear. Yet, without action, Congress may leave hundreds of thousands of families across America in fear this holiday season. I am referring, of course, to the 800,000 Dreamers across America whose lives have been thrown into jeopardy by the administration's decision to end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Program, or DACA.

DACA is a program that made it possible for 800,000 undocumented youth across this country—including 22,000 in my home State of New Jersey—to come out of the shadows, to step into the light, and to follow their dreams without fear of deportation.

It has been months since this administration decided to end DACA. Despite what some of my Republican colleagues say, the consequences of this cruel and reckless decision are not some distant threat; more than 11,000 Dreamers have already lost their DACA protections and work permits. So to anyone who thinks we have until March of next year to take action, you are surely mistaken. For these young people who grew up in the United States, who know no other home or country, who today live in fear of deportation, the crisis is here, and the crisis is now.

Ending DACA has created a national emergency that is playing out in our communities each and every day. Tens of thousands of DACA recipients are likely to lose their status on or before March 5. So what exactly are we waiting for, and why wait at all?

There is no legitimate reason for the President to have ended DACA—a crisis that was avoidable. Now it is here, and it is our job to fix it. President Trump essentially told Congress: The ball is in your court. Well, today I want to know from my colleagues: When are we going to take our shot? If we have the votes—and I believe we have the votes—isn't it time that we held a vote?

We know there is overwhelming support from the American people, Republicans and Democrats alike, for America's Dreamers. It is not fake news. Poll after poll, from Quinnipiac, to the Washington Post, to even FOX News, shows that the American people want a solution, and we know there is solid support for the Dream Act here in the Senate.

I have seen my colleagues share the photos of the Dreamers they meet. They post the stories about these brave, young people fighting to stay in the country they know and love. But they deserve more than an Instagram post or a friendly tweet; they deserve action. Every day that goes by, more and more Dreamers find themselves in

danger of being sent back to countries they simply don't know or even remember.

Let's take a moment to remember exactly whose lives we are talking about when we talk about Dreamers. In my mind, we are talking about the "motherhood and apple pie" of the immigrant community and the question of immigration. We are talking about young people brought here as children through no choice of their own. Every child who is a Dreamer is someone who knows only the United States of America as their country. The only flag they pledge allegiance to is the flag of the United States of America. The only national anthem they know is the "Star-Spangled Banner." These children grew up in America and are American in every sense of the word except on paper.

Dreamers are studying in our colleges, playing on our sports teams, serving in uniform in our military, risking their lives on behalf of what they consider to be their country, growing our economy, obeying our laws, and most of all, loving our country, too, because it is their country as well. They aren't undocumented aliens; they are Americans who happen to be undocumented. And that includes 22,000 Dreamers in my home State of New Jersey, promising students like Sara Mora, whom you see pictured here on the floor.

Sara grew up in Hillside, NJ. Her parents brought her to this country from Costa Rica at the age of 3. She was 3 years old. As Sara recently wrote in the Star Ledger, "New Jersey has been my home for as long as I can remember." Today, she is a hard-working college student, thanks to DACA. That is how she was able to get a work permit, find a job, and work her way through Union County College. Sara was preparing her applications to transfer to Seton Hall University and earn her 4-year degree when the Trump administration announced the end of DACA. Now, Sara says, her future is one "big question mark. Without DACA, I'll go back to zero—no driver's license, no job, no possibility of paying for my education. I'll have to wake up fearing deportation every day."

When will we accept some responsibility and recognize that it is our inaction here in the Senate that contributes to Sara's fear every day?

Take Adriana Gonzalez of Toms River, NJ. As the Asbury Park Press recently wrote, Adriana is "a flute player, a student ambassador, a girl who would play soccer with special needs children." Like most Dreamers, Adriana isn't known by her peers as an undocumented immigrant; she is known as a smart young woman with a bright future and something to contribute to her community.

How about Reiniero Amaya of Elizabeth, NJ. He is studying civil engineering at Fairleigh Dickinson University. I can't think of anything more backward than deporting a hard-working

student who dreams of becoming a civil engineer. We need civil engineers. We give people from different parts of the world permits to come to the United States to do these engineering jobs that we don't have enough domestic people to do. Here is a young man who grew up in America, who is American in every respect, and who is, in essence, pursuing a career path that would inure to the national economic interest. His story is just one more reminder that our country can't afford to lose America's Dreamers. They have so much to offer to our communities and our economy.

In fact, ending DACA is projected to cost New Jersey's economy over \$1.5 billion annually and reduce the overall economy of the United States by \$460 billion over the next decade.

DACA gave Dreamers like Reiniero the freedom to pursue his dreams. But it also gave him a sense of security. He recently wrote this on northjersey.com:

The day I received my work permit and my Social Security card was the day I finally felt proud of who I am. I felt recognized. I felt safe.

That sense of belonging, of acceptance, and of safety was ripped away by the President's decision to end DACA. So long as Congress fails to act, we are complicit in prolonging the very real fear that 800,000 Dreamers feel today—the fear that the knock on the door is not your family or neighbor but an immigration agent ready to whisk you away from your family; the fear that we see when these young people who believed in our government came forth, went through a criminal background check, gave all their information, and gave information on their family, all under the guise that they thought it was going to be confidential. Now all of that is at risk.

The willingness of DACA recipients to share their stories speaks volumes about their integrity, their courage, and the trust they put in us as elected officials. I am reminded of Psalm 56:3: "When I am afraid, I put my trust in You."

Well, Dreamers like Sara, Adriana, and Reiniero put their trust in the United States of America when they applied for DACA. They came out of the shadows. They registered with the Department of Homeland Security. They passed criminal background checks. They handed over personal details about themselves and their families to authorities they had been forced to hide for their entire lives.

DACA recipients went through all of this to get a 2-year renewable work permit and the promise of protection from deportation. That is the limited bargain they made, and the administration has eviscerated that limited promise and struck fear in the hearts of all of these families.

So I ask my colleagues—Democrats and Republicans—was their faith, their trust, their belief in the U.S. Government's word a monumental mistake?

Were they wrong to believe that we could put partisan politics aside and come together and do the right thing in this case? Will the Senate go home for the holidays without lifting a finger to make sure these promising young students feel safe in their homes, in their schools, in their communities?

They have become an integral part of our American family, and many are starting families of their own. In fact, 25 percent of DACA recipients have U.S.-born children. Do we really want these young mothers and fathers to be torn from their children and sent back to the country that they never called home? Do we not have an obligation to protect American children from the trauma of losing a parent? Do we not have a moral responsibility to keep families together? Isn't that one of the basic concepts that we have?

Will we sit idly by with the implementation of the administration's policy, which says: Whether you are selling drugs in your streets—which I am all for deporting—or earning A's in our classrooms or serving in our military, everyone is fair game for deportation. No one is safe, not even children who know no other home. That is a wrong policy. That is not law and order. That is fear and chaos.

So where is our compassion and our sense of urgency? How many more Dreamers have to lose their DACA status before we stand up and do what is right? The time for temporary fixes is over. The time for empty gestures is over. The time for heartfelt words is over.

It is time for us to stand up for these young people, and it is time for us to act. It is time for us—Democrats and Republicans—to use whatever legislative vehicle is necessary to pass the Dream Act. Whether it is a continuing resolution or a straight vote here on the floor, it is time for us to get this done.

Let's put an end to the fear and uncertainty hanging over so many families this holiday season. Let's summon our collective compassion. Let's pass the Dream Act. Let's do it now. Let Congress not go home for the holidays unless we have a solution to this question. For me, it is a moral imperative that these young people, who know no other country but the United States and who are Americans in every other sense of the word, not have to live this holiday season in the fear that a knock on the door is from someone other than a family member or their neighbor.

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

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

#### CONFIRMATION OF SUSAN BODINE

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, the Environmental Protection Agency needs strong and experienced leadership. That is why I come to the floor today to speak in support of President Trump's nomination of Susan Parker Bodine to serve as the Assistant Administrator for the Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance at the EPA.

Her expertise and her experience make her an exceptional pick to lead this important office at the Agency. She has extensive environmental policy knowledge from years working as a private attorney, a staffer on Capitol Hill, and in leadership at the EPA.

From 2006 to 2009, during the Bush administration, she served as the Assistant Administrator for the EPA's Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response. She also served as the staff director of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure's Subcommittee on Water Resources and the Environment.

Most recently, Susan served as my chief counsel at the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee. That is why I know Susan is committed to finding commonsense ways to protect America's land, air, and water.

In this new role, she will work to help communities and small businesses comply with the law, while holding polluters accountable. Democrats and Republicans, alike, agree that she is the right person for the job.

Mathy Stanislaus, a former Obama EPA Assistant Administrator, said: "Ms. Bodine understands both the internal side of the agency and the proper balance of enforcement" and is a "standup person."

Ben Grumbles, a former George W. Bush Assistant Administrator and currently Maryland's secretary of the environment, said: "She's tough and fair and committed to public service."

Susan is an excellent pick to lead the EPA's Office of Enforcement. Taking on the critical task of enforcing our Nation's environmental laws is a big job. I can think of no better candidate for this job than Susan Bodine.

Thank you, Mr. President.

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.

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

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

#### TAX REFORM BILL

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, I rise today to talk about my support for the Senate tax reform bill and to encourage Congress to help American families.