

looming on the horizon ominously, inextricably, is the threat of mass deportation.

It would be a humanitarian nightmare, and it is a bureaucratic nightmare, as well, to wait. If the Dream Act is passed, the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services has work to do. They need to develop new regulations, process applications. This involves conducting security checks, biometric screening, notifying the applicants, and doing the paperwork. Experts say that this process could take up to 7 months in total. So we are already late. We are already late in beginning and accomplishing this task.

If we delay our action, thousands of Dreamers will lose their protections before the law is fully implemented. Young, contributing members of our society—like Alejandra—who have done nothing wrong will be dragged back into the shadows, to lose their drivers licenses, to lose their jobs, to lose their sense of security, to fear every day the sound of police sirens, as so many do right now.

The administration has literally thrown a timebomb to this body, and it is ticking. We have the power to diffuse it. We have the power to do the right thing. We have the power and we have the obligation to truly give those 700,000 Dreamers the ability to make the most of themselves and make the most of this country.

Often, when I think of the Dreamers, I think of my father, who came to this country in 1935. He was 17 years old. He knew virtually no one. He spoke almost no English. He had not much more than the shirt on his back, and he was a Dreamer, although he came here legally. He became a U.S. citizen. Nobody loved this country more than my dad.

I sometimes think how sad and ashamed he would be about the way we have denied Dreamers the opportunity and security that he felt coming here, escaping persecution in Germany. This country has never been perfect, but we are the greatest country in the history of the world because we are a nation of immigrants.

If you are ever discouraged or down about your lives or about the country, you may want to try going to the immigration naturalization ceremonies in your State. They happen in Connecticut every week in courthouses. I go as often as I can on Fridays, when they usually occur, in Hartford, New Haven, and Bridgeport, because it is so uplifting. It is so very inspiring to see people who are moved and grateful beyond words—moved to tears—in becoming citizens of the United States.

The judges usually give me an opportunity to say a few words, and I thank them for wanting to become citizens. I tell them “You passed a test that most Americans couldn’t pass,” and they laugh, as perhaps some who are listening now would laugh because they know it is true.

They wanted to become American citizens, so they studied and they pre-

pared. Many of them came long distances, escaping persecution—just as my dad did—and left behind families, loved ones, jobs, careers. They wanted to be citizens. They will never take it for granted, nor will Alejandra if she is given that opportunity. She wants it too. She is a Dreamer, not only in name but in spirit. I hope all of us keep her in mind and in heart when we think about what we are going to do in the next couple of weeks.

As for me, I am determined that we should not leave here for our holiday without acting on this measure. I know we can do it if both sides of the aisle are reasonable, responsible, and responsive. The vast majority of the American people are with Alejandra. They know her as a neighbor; they know her as a friend. Even though they may never have met her, they know people like her who are in their communities, and they know the immense contribution that she and others like her can make.

I know so many of them who share that simple goal to become a U.S. citizen, and it begins with permanent status, a path—a path to earn citizenship. Whatever it may be called, it begins with a sense of security and belonging.

I hope this body will pass the Dream Act and give Alejandra and so many like her that opportunity to accomplish the American dream.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of the following nomination: Executive Calendar No. 356.

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

The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Mary Kirtley Waters, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (Legislative Affairs).

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the nomination.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

If there is no further debate, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Waters nomination?

The nomination was confirmed.

#### LEGISLATIVE SESSION

#### MORNING BUSINESS

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

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

#### TRIBUTE TO STEVE JOHNSON

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize a longtime member of the Senate family who is concluding his tenure with us as this session comes to a close. His last day of service in the U.S. Senate will be December 22.

Steve Johnson, a resident of Annandale, VA, and a native of Freehold, NJ, is retiring as the manager of the Senate Dining Room after 22 years of service.

Steve has managed the Senate Dining Room with hospitality, professionalism, and graciousness. He is extremely knowledgeable about the history of the Senate Dining Room and has introduced many of our guests to the stained-glass George Washington Memorial Window, which is often the focal point for visitors.

The window was purchased by the Federal Government for the Capitol in 1910 from the artist, Maria Herndl, for \$1,000. The window’s Revolutionary War scene shows President George Washington on his white horse conversing with Marquis de LaFayette and Baron von Steuben, the drillmaster of the American Army. I only know the story behind the painting because Steve told me.

Steve sure knows his history, but his primary focus has always been on his team and the Members of this body. Under Steve’s leadership, the Senate Dining Room has been an ideal venue for conducting the important business of the U.S. Senate. Throughout his career, he has been responsible for overseeing and implementing the requests of Members of the U.S. Senate and has done so with efficiency, poise, and thoughtfulness.

Steve has always been resourceful and, at times, creative. Once, a former Senator who, at the time, happened to be the Vice President of the United States, ordered a lunch that had not been on the Senate Dining Room menu for several years, but thanks to Steve’s ingenuity, Vice President Joe Biden enjoyed his chopped salad immensely.

On another occasion, Supreme Court Chief Justice William Rehnquist stopped by the Senate Dining Room after a long day on Capitol Hill and ordered chocolate chip cookies and milk.