

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Michael Lawrence Brown, of Georgia, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of Georgia.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, the Trump administration has come up with a name for its energy policy. The energy policy amounts to, basically, a big, fat cascade of gifts and special favors for oil, gas, and coal companies, which, in turn, make big political contributions. Trump officials call the policy “energy dominance.” More accurately, its name would probably be “fossil fuel industry political dominance” or one might actually call it “ignorance dominance” since the administration willfully ignores scientific understanding, basic economics, market theory, and even the warnings of our national security community.

The situation is not pretty from an environmental point of view. EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt is busily trying to roll back rules that limit, for instance, emissions of methane, which is a more powerful greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide. He is considering walking back fuel efficiency standards that save drivers money at the pump. President Trump withdrew the United States from the Paris climate accord and was promptly ignored by every other nation on Earth.

Last month, on the Interior Secretary’s recommendation, Trump took big areas of the Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monuments, in Utah, away from the public and opened them, instead, to big mining and oil and gas interests. Zinke has even proposed to open almost all U.S. coastlines to drilling by oil and gas companies. That includes drilling in protected areas in the Arctic, drilling up and down the Atlantic coast, expanded drilling in the Gulf of Mexico, and drilling along the Pacific coastline. The plan even includes Georges Bank and other crucial fishing grounds for New England.

This drilling scheme is likely dead on arrival. Republican Governors in New Jersey, Maryland, and Florida have all denounced the plan, as have Florida’s Democratic and Republican Senators. It even runs into objections from the Pentagon. When President Obama considered opening the southern Atlantic coast to drilling 2 years ago, the Defense Department told the Obama administration that offshore energy development could interfere with military readiness and missile testing.

Given the dominance of fossil fuel political interests in this administration, the whole Trump energy dominance scheme, of course, neglects the warnings of our national security experts about climate change—climate change as an accelerant of global instability

and conflict and climate change as a direct hazard to military installations and infrastructure, from the Naval Station Norfolk to faraway facilities like Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean.

In 2008, the National Intelligence Council reported more than 30 U.S. military installations facing risk from rising sea levels. A vulnerability assessment directed by the “2010 Quadrennial Defense Review” found that at around 3 feet of sea level rise, 128 military installations are at risk. Naturally, many of those belong to the Navy—indeed, 56 out of those 128. It is a significant share of the Navy’s global footprint, totaling around \$100 billion in value.

In 2011, the National Academy of Sciences report, “National Security Implications of Climate Change for U.S. Naval Forces,” recommended the continued review of how sea level rise and changes in storm frequency and intensity would affect coastal installations.

The National Defense Authorization Act, which we just passed, directs the Department of Defense to study how climate change will affect our most vulnerable military bases over the next 20 years, including “the effects of rising sea tides, increased flooding, drought, desertification, wildfires, thawing permafrost,” as well as how climate change may drive new requirements for combatant commanders.

The law includes a sense of Congress statement that “climate change is a direct threat to the national security of the United States and is impacting stability in areas of the world both where the United States Armed Forces are operating today, and where strategic implications for future conflict exist.”

That is a sense-of-Congress statement that has passed this Republican-controlled Senate and the Republican-controlled House and was signed into law by this administration. Thank you to the author of this language, my friend and fellow Rhode Islander, Congressman JIM LANGEVIN.

Even the U.S. Government Accountability Office has engaged. The independent oversight agency issued a report titled, “Climate Change Adaptation: DoD Needs to Better Incorporate Adaptation into Planning and Collaboration at Overseas Installations.”

I think that title gives away the punch line. Surveying our bases and installations across the world, GAO found that weather and climate change pose operational and budgetary risks to infrastructure. GAO recommended that DOD’s climate planning efforts be expanded and increased; specifically, that the Secretaries of the Army, Navy, and Air Force require defense installations to “systematically track the costs associated with extreme weather events and climate change” and that DOD better coordinate addressing climate change risks across different DOD installations.

This picture in the GAO report shows an unnamed military facility in the

Pacific that has at times been cut off by flooding from access points to its munitions storage complex. If you have a military facility that can’t get access to its munitions storage, you have a problem.

This is the picture of the flooded entryway, and this is the picture of the similar entryway under normal circumstances, able to be traveled.

A 2014 typhoon caused flash flooding here that trapped and imperiled American personnel. The point is, when climate change effects inhibit military base operations, defense preparedness requires climate preparedness.

Naval Station Norfolk, the largest Navy base in the world, is a poster child for the devastation that awaits our coastal military bases if we continue to pump out the greenhouse gas emissions that are driving sea level rise. A tide gauge operated at the base since 1927 has shown nearly 15 inches of vertical sea level rise so far. In the broader Hampton Roads metro area, home not only to the Navy but also to facilities of the Air Force, the Marine Corps, the Coast Guard, NASA, and NOAA, high tides are already regularly forcing seawater back through storm drains and flooding roadways.

DOD’s own environmental research program, the Strategic Environmental Research and Development Program, used Norfolk as its case study for sea level rise and extreme storm risks to coastal DOD installations. The study found a “tipping point” of about a half meter, 1.6 feet, of sea level rise, at which point “the probabilities of damage to infrastructure and losses in mission performance increased dramatically.” This is mapping of the flood hazard around Naval Station Norfolk.

This tipping point at which the mission performance losses increase dramatically is only a few decades away. Retired RADM David Titley, a former oceanographer and navigator of the Navy and leader of its Climate Change Task Force, said Norfolk has about 10 to 15 years to get serious about sea level rise in the region before “we’re really cutting it close.”

In 2017, CAPT Dean Vanderley, who leads infrastructure engineering at the Norfolk Naval base, admitted that sea level rise is “something where I don’t know that we’ve fully defined the problem. And we have definitely not fully defined the solution.”

Retired CAPT Joe Bouchard, a former base commander, told InsideClimate News that Naval Station Norfolk would need significant improvements to nearly every piece of infrastructure, from electrical and drainage systems to pier improvements, not to mention a seawall. He estimated this work could cost more than \$1 billion and take as long as a decade to complete. That is just one base with \$1 billion and a decade’s worth of work. The DOD has identified over 128 bases that would be at significant risk with 3 feet of sea level rise. I think NOAA’s current estimate is for 6 feet of global sea rise by the end of the century.

Even though our President is clueless about the basics of climate change, his Secretary of Defense understands and acknowledges the risks. In response to congressional questioning last year, Secretary Mattis said, "Climate change is impacting stability in areas of the world where our troops are operating today. . . . It is appropriate for the Combatant Commands to incorporate drivers of instability that impact the security environment in their areas into their planning."

Well, for political reasons, the White House can't acknowledge the problem so the recently published "National Security Strategy" totally disregards all of these recommendations. It will not even mention the forbidden words. We know these words are forbidden in the Trump administration because over and over again the memos leak out about people being told don't say the words "climate change."

Instead, with all these warnings from GAO, from senior military officials, from the National Intelligence Council, from a decade of Quadrennial Defense Reviews, and the testimony of Secretary Mattis—instead of listening to that, Trump parrots climate change denial talking points that come from the phony fossil fuel front groups. It is pathetic. Calling this deliberate ignorance "energy dominance" may be a fine fossil fuel flourish, but it is completely disconnected from actual safety, security, and military readiness—and don't get me started on what the fossil fuel industry's systematic corruption of our democracy means for America's fabled status as that "city on a hill."

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

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

IRAN

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss my thoughts on recent protests in Iran and the important upcoming decisions by the President with respect to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, or the JCPOA.

While I am mindful that we have limited visibility into Iran and continue to learn more about the circumstances and motivations of the recent protests, one thing is clear: A significant portion of the Iranian people are not satisfied with their government and are increasingly willing to make their dissatisfaction heard. It is important that we support their right to peacefully express their views and demand that the Iranian Government respond with constructive dialogue, rather than force.

It was notable that Iranian President Ruhani implicitly recognized the validity of the protests earlier this week when he reportedly said:

It would be a misrepresentation and also an insult to Iranian people to say they only had economic demands. . . . People had economic, political and social demands

That is according to President Ruhani.

Acknowledging the need for reform, Ruhani continued:

We cannot pick a lifestyle and tell two generations after us to live like that. It is impossible. The views of the young generation about life and the world is different than ours.

Now is the time to support the Iranian people in their quest for a government that is more representative and supportive of their interests. Unfortunately, some have suggested that our response should be to withdraw from the JCPOA, an action that I believe would only serve to embolden the hardliners in Iran and leave the United States more isolated from our allies. Withdrawing from the JCPOA and reimposing nuclear-related sanctions on Iran would immediately change the narrative inside of Iran, uniting reformists and hardliners alike in their opposition to what they view as a hostile United States.

While some would argue that the recent protests in Iran are symptomatic of what they view as a flawed JCPOA, I would suggest otherwise. In reality, the nuclear deal exposed one of the Iranian regime's central vulnerabilities—namely, that the regime can no longer simply blame sanctions imposed by the United States and the international community for its economic woes at home. It is becoming clearer to the Iranian people that it is actually the regime's corruption, financial mismanagement, funding of malign activities, and hegemonic ambitions that are at the root of their government's inability to enable job creation and to ensure that necessities like food and gasoline remain affordable.

In the coming days, the President has several important decisions to make with respect to the JCPOA. In October, President Trump acknowledged that Iran is meeting its commitments under the JCPOA, but he chose not to certify that continued sanctions relief is "appropriate and proportionate" to the actions taken by Iran with respect to terminating its illicit nuclear program. By the end of this week, President Trump is again required to decide whether to issue such a certification. I expect he will again choose not to do so.

The more consequential decision for the President this week will be whether to continue waivers of nuclear-related sanctions, as he is required to do under the JCPOA. Choosing not to continue such waivers would immediately snap back U.S. nuclear-related sanctions, thereby putting the United States in violation of the JCPOA. Let me be clear. This would be a unilateral action on behalf of the United States that would put us in violation of an international agreement, not just with Iran but with the United Kingdom,

France, Germany, Russia, and China, as well.

By all accounts, the JCPOA is working as intended, and Iran is verifiably meeting its commitments under the deal. It is important to remember what the JCPOA was designed to do and what it is now achieving. The JCPOA commits Iran to never seeking to develop or acquire a nuclear weapon; effectively cuts off all pathways for Iran to achieve a nuclear weapon during the period covered by the agreement; and increases the time it would take for Iran to acquire enough material for one nuclear bomb from 2 to 3 months to at least 1 year. When this agreement was signed, they were within months of having that capability. It dramatically reduces Iran's stockpile of enriched uranium and the number of installed centrifuges. It has prevented Iran from producing weapons-grade plutonium and has subjected Iran to robust monitoring by the IAEA to verify its compliance.

Withdrawing from the JCPOA at this point would provide no benefit and would actually leave us more isolated and less able to deal with the various challenges posed by Iran. The crippling sanctions regime that brought Iran to the negotiating table in the first place only worked because the international community was united in its determination to keep Iran from achieving a nuclear weapon. If we withdraw from the JCPOA unilaterally—and in the absence of a clear violation of the deal by Iran—there is no reason to believe that our partners in the P5+1 would join us. In fact, French President Macron has said that there is "no alternative" to the JCPOA and told the U.N. General Assembly that "renouncing it would be a grave error."

General Dunford, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told the Armed Services Committee last year:

I believe that the U.S. would incur damage vis-a-vis our allies if we unilaterally withdraw from the JCPOA. Our allies will be less likely to cooperate with us on future military action to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon and less likely to cooperate with us on countering other destabilizing aspects of Iranian behavior that threaten our collective interests.

Our sanctions may snap back but not those imposed by the rest of the world, many of whom have begun building economic ties to Iran since the JCPOA was signed. Our international partners would then blame us, not Iran, for the failure of the deal.

Some, including President Trump, have argued that we can and should dissolve the JCPOA and renegotiate a better deal. This is a highly unrealistic proposal. We were only able to achieve the JCPOA after years of sustained multilateral diplomatic efforts and the imposition of aggressive international sanctions in concert with our partners. It will likely be impossible to replicate those conditions if the United States unilaterally withdraws from the JCPOA.

Contrary to President Trump's belief, threatening to walk away from the

deal actually weakens our ability to address the JCPOA's perceived flaws by alienating our partners. Instead, we should remain committed to the JCPOA and lead the international community in imposing additional sanctions, where necessary, to change other Iranian behaviors—namely, their respect for human rights, ballistic missile development efforts, and other malign activities.

We must also seek to help enable the Iranian people to make their choices heard, including by encouraging the adoption of social media and other means of communication. We could start by building upon general licenses issued by the Obama administration designed to encourage the export of communications technology to Iran.

Secretary Mattis told the Armed Services Committee at his confirmation hearing: "When America gives her word, we have to live up to it and work with our allies."

If the President decides this week not to continue nuclear-related sanctions relief for Iran, he will be effectively choosing to restart the Iranian nuclear program, thereby making military conflict with Iran more likely.

Withdrawing from the deal would also be a devastating blow to our efforts toward diplomacy with North Korea—and for that matter, any future diplomatic efforts to constrain aggressive behavior by our adversaries. Why would any nation engage with us in serious dialogue to resolve differences if they fear we will later withdraw unilaterally, even when the other parties are complying with the agreement?

Regardless of whether you supported the JCPOA before it was signed, the truth is that it has removed the greatest threat we faced from Iran while also preserving all other means to address Iran's malign activities. Let there be no doubt—Iran continues to be a state sponsor of terrorism and an abuser of human rights. Iran continues to destabilize the region through its development of ballistic missiles and support of proxies in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Yemen, and elsewhere. If Iran behaves this way without a nuclear weapon, imagine how much worse a nuclear-armed Iran would be.

Fortunately, our nonnuclear sanctions on Iran remain in place and are unaffected by the JCPOA. In fact, Congress authorized additional sanctions in July to help deal with these issues. The administration should work with our international partners and use all tools at its disposal, including by ramping up nonnuclear sanctions, where necessary, to counter Iran's unacceptable behavior in these other areas.

Abrogating the JCPOA only invites another nuclear crisis like the one we are currently facing with North Korea—a concern echoed by General Dunford when he appeared before the Armed Services Committee and said: "It makes sense to me that our holding up agreements that we have signed, un-

less there's a material breach, would have impact on others' willingness to sign agreements."

Many have criticized the JCPOA as a "flawed deal." For example, concerns have been raised that certain provisions sunset after a period of years, thereby delaying rather than permanently preventing Iran from achieving a nuclear weapon. If the concern is that Iran may seek to resume nuclear weapons development activities after these sunsets—a concern that I share—the appropriate course of action is not to throw out the deal but to work with our international partners to ensure that necessary restrictions on the JCPOA are appropriately extended or supplemented.

As I noted before, Iran has committed in perpetuity not to develop or seek to acquire nuclear weapons. We should not take them at their word; we should verify their adherence to this commitment, just as we are doing under the JCPOA. If at any point in the future we have evidence to suggest Iran is taking steps that would indicate a violation of that commitment, we should use that information to rally the P5+1 and other international partners to take a unified stand against such efforts. Unilaterally withdrawing from the JCPOA would seriously damage our ability to exert such leadership in the future.

Again, according to General Dunford, in the absence of the JCPOA, Iran would likely resume its nuclear weapons program and "a nuclear-armed Iran would likely be more aggressive in its actions and more dangerous in its consequences." General Dunford also told the committee that "the intel community assessment is, in fact, that Iran is in compliance right now [with the JCPOA], and therefore, I think we should focus on addressing the other challenges: the missile threat they pose, the maritime threat they pose, the support of proxies, terrorists, and the cyber threat they pose." I wholeheartedly agree with General Dunford's assessment.

Our troops in Iraq and Syria are operating in close proximity to Iranian-aligned militias, including those who previously targeted American troops. Unilaterally withdrawing from the JCPOA could embolden these hardline militias and possibly result in Iran giving them a green light to begin targeting U.S. forces once more.

Furthermore, while I have full confidence in our military's ability to fight and win wars when necessary, we cannot escape the reality that military contingencies to respond to both a nuclear-armed North Korea and Iran would result in massive loss of life and national treasure and greatly stress our military's capacity and capabilities.

In conclusion, I will return to where I began. Now is not the time to impose a self-inflicted wound upon our foreign policy and standing in the world. Unilaterally withdrawing from the JCPOA

would empower Iranian hardliners and dramatically undermine the reform-minded protests we should be seeking to empower. Worse still, it would leave us more isolated in the international community and, by extension, less able to address the range of national security challenges posed by Iran, North Korea, and our other potential adversaries.

We must not abdicate the JCPOA or American leadership on these issues. Therefore, I urge the President to stay the course with respect to the JCPOA, while also rallying the international community to take effective actions intended to change other unacceptable behaviors by the Iranian regime to suppress dissent at home and sow instability abroad. We must not squander this opportunity by making the story about the United States rather than the courageous Iranians who at great risk to themselves have taken to the streets to demand a better future.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at 12 noon tomorrow, all postcloture time on the Brown nomination be considered expired and the Senate vote on confirmation of the Brown nomination with no intervening action or debate; further, that if cloture is invoked on the Counts nomination, all postcloture time be considered expired at 1:45 p.m. tomorrow and the Senate vote on confirmation of the Counts nomination with no intervening action or debate; finally, that if confirmed, the motions to reconsider with respect to the Brown and Counts nominations be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

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

The Senator from Oklahoma.

MISSILE DEFENSE

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, for about 20 years now, I have viewed the development and deployment of a layered ballistic missile defense shield as probably singularly the most vital thing we could be doing around here. People are aware of that now. Adversaries, like North Korea and others, have ballistic missiles, and they are increasing their range capability. Iran is getting almost everything. One of the problems you have is that you get countries like North Korea developing missile capabilities, and if they have it, then other adversaries have it. I am talking about Yemen and all the rest of them.

It is important for us to communicate to the American people that the

threat we face is probably the most imminent threat we have had in the history of this country. Today, it is the greatest threat we have had certainly in my lifetime.

I have come to the floor and spoken on this issue in 2001, 2009, 2012, and this will be the fourth time this year. Over the last 30 years, we have witnessed the missile defense programs go through dramatic investment periods, followed by extreme starvation and cancellations—I am talking about in the United States—depending on who happens to be President at the time.

Remember, of course, when Reagan came in and people made fun of him with “Star Wars” and tried to defame him in any way they could. Yet he was able to be persistent and start a program, and we should be very thankful we have it today. That was followed in 1989 by President Bush. He continued that program.

However, in 1993, when President Clinton was in office, the first thing he did was to cut \$2.5 billion out of the Bush missile defense budget request for fiscal year 1994. He also terminated the Reagan-Bush Strategic Defense Initiative and downgraded the National Missile Defense Program to a research and development program. He cut 5-year missile defense funding by 54 percent, from \$39 billion to \$18 billion.

I say this because these times are changing. Continuing with his administration in 1996, he cut the funding and slowed down the development of THAAD and the Navy Theater Wide Systems. To remind ourselves of how important that was at that time and the cuts he made to that and how critical that was, THAAD right now is the only thing we have to join forces with South Korea to be able to knock down something coming from North Korea to South Korea. The Aegis system is a defensive system that we could share with Japan. Without these systems, they would be wide open. That was 1996.

In 1999, the last of the Clinton years, he delayed by at least 2 years the Space Based Infrared System, which is a very complicated system that knocks down incoming missiles. Then, in 2000, Bush came in. By the end of 2008, President Bush had succeeded in fielding a missile defense system capable of defending all 50 States. One of the things he did that was most significant—and this is in the final years of his administration—was to recognize the fact that we have had ground-based interceptors in our country for a number of years. In fact, there are 44 ground-based interceptor systems. Unfortunately, they are all on the west coast because that is where we thought the threat would be. We discovered at that time, during the Bush administration, that the threat was from both sides because we recognized that Iran was developing the capabilities, as well as North Korea and others. So in order to protect Eastern United States as well as Central Europe, we had the system that was set

up. It was kind of funny because I remember being there with one of our strongest allies. The system they set up was one where they had a radar system in the Czech Republic, and they had a rocket system—a ground-based interceptor—in Poland, right next door. I remember when Vaclav Klaus was the President of the Czech Republic, one of our strongest supporters, and he said to me at that time: Now, if we go ahead and put our system in the Czech Republic and in Poland, can you assure me that if we incur the wrath of Russia, we are not going to end up being embarrassed and have the rug pulled out from under us?

I said: There is not a chance in the world that would happen.

Well, that did happen. In fact, it was a total of 44 ground-based interceptors that were fielded. That was in Alaska and California, on the west coast. We went through this where they pulled the rug out from under Poland, as well as the Czech Republic. Then, in April, came our first Obama defense cuts, which began disarming America and dismantling our layered missile defense system. This is critical because we put this in for the reason that we perceived the threat to be coming in from the east as opposed to the west coast, and the very system that would have protected us was taken down by President Obama.

I would say, due to his overall reduced budget requests in defense, there were not enough Aegis ships. I already mentioned how we are using those today in defense of many of our allies, including Japan. Since Kim Jong Un took power in 2009, he has already conducted more than 80 ballistic missile tests. That is far more than his father and his grandfather conducted.

North Korea has conducted six nuclear tests of increasingly powerful weapons. The latest test was in September of last year. The major test actually came after that, and that was on November 28. On November 28, he demonstrated that he had the range of the United States and the central part of our country. In other words, it was stated by others who observed that he now has the capability of reaching any target in mainland United States.

There were some scientists who did an analysis of what they did on November 28. They made it very clear. David Wright, an analyst for the Union of Concerned Scientists, wrote that—this is something that happened on November 29—that yesterday’s test indicates that North Korea can now hold the United States well within missile range. He said: “Such a missile would have been more than enough range to reach Washington, DC, and in fact any other part of the continental United States.”

Here is the scary part of this. Those who are not wanting to believe that the threat is real and the threat is there are saying: Well, we don’t know that the missile he demonstrated on November 28 could have reached that

range if it had a full payload, a load of a nuclear warhead.

We don’t know if they had one or not, but that doesn’t give me much comfort. They also questioned whether or not it could sustain the reentry back into the atmosphere.

The point is that they now have that capability, and that is something we have to keep in mind as we are making decisions, because we have decisions to make, and that is what we are doing right now in trying to decide how we are going to keep the government from shutting down and develop some kind of a budget plan that is going to serve us well.

TAX REFORM

Mr. President, let me mention something else that I think is very significant because I heard today a lot of people criticizing and not really understanding what happened with the tax plan that was passed. We are already getting the results of it. It is kind of exciting. I don’t recall anything in my career where we got the results as quickly as we got and we are getting right now. We heard Minority Leader SCHUMER call the tax plan “a punch in the gut to the middle class.” In an op-ed piece in the New York Times, Senator ELIZABETH WARREN and Senator BERNIE SANDERS said: “The Republican agenda on health care and taxes is . . . widely disliked by the American people” and a “tax giveaway to the wealthy.”

I think it is important that people understand that not only is middle-class America going to benefit from this, but they already have. One million Americans are counting on receiving raises and bonuses from this tax reform. In my State of Oklahoma, thousands of employees will be receiving and have already received large compensation increases, bonuses—Express Employment Professionals in Oklahoma City, American Airlines, Southwest Airlines, and AT&T. In fact, Senator ROY BLUNT was coming back on a plane, the same one I was on, and the flight attendant was talking about how she had already received a \$1,000 bonus. Then, the rest of them chimed in and said: We have too.

That is already happening. Right now we have a list of 123 major corporations that have already given an average of \$1,000 for every employee they have, predicated on the assumption that the tax plan is going to increase the economy, and that is exactly what is going to happen.

I am confident that this is actually happening today. I have to say this, though, because more people still try to say: Well, we can’t give tax reductions to people and still increase revenue to do all of these things we need to do with our national defense and with our infrastructure programs.

That is not true.

I am going to repeat one that I have done before on this, but people seem to not understand. It is easy to say: Well, if you reduce taxes, you are going to reduce revenue.

That is not the way it works. I remember very well what happened. It was not in this position, of course, but in 1991, when Ronald Reagan was President, at that time he had the most far-reaching reduction in taxes. Remember, the top rate was reduced from 70 percent to 30 percent, and the other brackets came down proportionately. Yet at the time he did that, in 1981, the total amount of revenue coming into the United States was \$469 billion. As a result of that, it increased revenue to \$750 billion. That is huge, and it shows that it really happens. The reason it happens is that for each 1-percent increase in the economy, it produces increased revenue of some \$3 trillion. That is what happened then, and that is what is going to happen now. People are rejoicing today.

I ask unanimous consent that a sheet that outlines all of these companies that are giving large bonuses as a result of the tax bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

COMPANIES INCREASING COMPENSATION, SO FAR

1. AAON
2. AT&T
3. AccuWeather
4. Advance Financial
5. Aflac
6. Alaska Air Group
7. American Airlines
8. American Bank
9. American Savings Bank
10. Americollect
11. Aquesta Financial Holdings
12. Associated Bank
13. Atlas Air Worldwide
14. Ball Ventures
15. Bancorp South
16. Bank of America
17. Bank of Colorado
18. Bank of Hawaii
19. Bank of the James
20. Bank of the Ozarks
21. Berkshire Hills Bancorp
22. BB&T
23. Carl Black Automotive Group
24. Central Banccompany, Inc.
25. Central Pacific Bank
26. Charlie Bravo Aviation
27. Charlotte Pipe and Foundry
28. Citizens Financial Group
29. Colling Pest Solutions
30. Comcast
31. Comerica Bank
32. Commerce Bank
33. Community Trust Bancorp
34. Copperleaf Assisted Living
35. Cornerstone Holdings
36. Dayton T. Brown Inc.
37. Delaware Supermarkets Inc.
38. DePatco, Inc.
39. Dime Community Bancshares
40. Eagle Ridge Ranch
41. EastIdahoNews.com
42. Elite Roofing Systems (Idaho)
43. Elite Clinical Trials, Inc.
44. Emkay, Inc.
45. Ennis, Inc.
46. Express Employment Prof.
47. Fifth Third Bancorp
48. FirstCapital Bank of Texas
49. First Farmers Bank & Trust
50. First Financial Northwest, Inc.
51. First Hawaiian Bank
52. First Horizon National Corp.
53. Flemington Car & Truck
54. Fort Ranch

55. Gardner Company
56. Gate City Bank
57. GetFoundFirst.com
58. Great Southern Bancorp
59. HarborOne Bank
60. Hartford Financial Services
61. Hawaii National Bank
62. IAT Insurance Group
63. INB Bank
64. InUnison Inc.
65. JetBlue
66. Jordan Winery
67. Kansas City Southern
68. Kauai Cattle
69. Melaleuca
70. Mid-AM Metal Forming
71. Move It Or Lose It Moving
72. National Bank Holdings Corp.
73. Nationwide Insurance
74. National Guardian
75. Navient
76. Nelnet
77. Nephron Pharmaceuticals
78. Northpoint Apartments
79. OceanFirst Financial
80. Ohnward Bancshares
81. Old Dominion Freight Line
82. Pinnacle Bank
83. Pioneer Credit Recovery
84. PNC Financial Services
85. Regions Financial
86. Renasant Bank
87. Resident Construction
88. Riverbend Communications
89. Riverbend Management, Inc.
90. Riverbend Ranch
91. Riverbend Services
92. Rush Enterprises
93. Sheffer Corporation
94. Sinclair Broadcast Group
95. Smith Chevrolet
96. Smith Honda
97. Smith RV
98. South Point Casino
99. Southwest Airlines
100. Steel Design
101. Stifel Financial Corp.
102. Summit State Bank
103. SunTrust Banks, Inc.
104. TCF Financial Corp.
105. The Flood Insurance Agency
106. The Travelers Companies
107. Territorial Savings Bank
108. Texas Capital Bank
109. Tokio Marine HCC
110. Total System Services
111. Turning Point Brands
112. Unity Bank
113. U.S. Bancorp
114. Visa
115. Washington Federal
116. Webster Financial
117. Wells Fargo
118. Western Alliance Bancorp
119. Western & Southern Financial
120. Willow Creek Woodworks
121. Windsor Federal Savings
122. Yancey Bros.
123. Zions Bancorp

TAX RELIEF PAYS AMERICAN WORKERS

Almost immediately after Congress passed the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, American workers at dozens of firms began to see the effects in the form of bonuses and raises. For supporters of tax relief this was good news, though not altogether a surprise. During debate over the law, economists cited research that workers bear most of the burden of the corporate income tax via reduced wages. The remainder is borne by consumers and investors. A significant cut in the corporate rate would provide real benefits to workers.

One study by scholars at the American Enterprise Institute concluded that a 1 percent increase in the corporate tax rate is associated with a 0.5 percent decrease in real wages. A 2007 Treasury Department survey of

economic studies found that workers “bear a substantial burden” of the corporate income tax. The Congressional Budget Office concluded in 2006 that workers pay more than 70 percent of the cost of corporate taxes.

Opponents of tax relief countered that a corporate rate cut would help only the wealthy—a claim being knocked down more each day. Minority Leader Chuck Schumer said that “history shows tax cuts like these benefit the wealthy and the powerful to the exclusion of the middle class.” As a wave of companies across the country began announcing bonuses and giving raises to workers, it became clear that tax relief is putting more money in the pockets of the hard-working Americans who Republicans said would win because of the law.

The same day the House and Senate passed the bill, December 20, AT&T Inc. issued a press release saying: “Once tax reform is signed into law, AT&T plans to invest an additional \$1 billion in the United States in 2018 and pay a special \$1,000 bonus to more than 200,000 AT&T U.S. employees—all union-represented, non-management and front-line managers. If the President signs the bill before Christmas, employees will receive the bonus over the holidays.”

So far, at least 123 companies have announced they are giving employees bonuses or otherwise increasing compensation due to the tax cut legislation. Notable examples include:

American Airlines, Southwest Airlines, and JetBlue announced \$1,000 bonuses for their employees (a total of more than 200,000 people). American’s bonuses will exclude officers; Southwest’s and JetBlue’s include all employees. American said it would pay bonuses “in light of this new tax structure.” JetBlue said that “our Crewmembers should be the first to benefit.” Southwest said it would put the savings from tax relief “to work . . . to reward our hard-working Employees.”

AT&T announced \$1,000 bonuses to its 200,000 employees. It also said that it will increase capital expenditures by \$1 billion in 2018.

Comcast announced a \$1,000 bonus for more than 100,000 employees. In addition, it plans to invest \$50 billion in its infrastructure in the next five years. Comcast said the bonuses are “[b]ased on the passage of tax reform and the FCC’s action on broadband.”

Nationwide Insurance announced a \$1,000 bonus for 29,000 employees and increased 401(k) matching. The company told its employees: “The combination of the new tax legislation, including a reduced corporate tax rate, and our associates’ ongoing commitment to our members, community and On Your Side promise are the reasons we’re making this investment that further enhances the already robust benefits we offer to attract and retain the best talent.”

PNC Financial Services announced \$1,000 bonuses for 47,500 employees as well as \$1,500 to be added to existing pension accounts. The company also will raise its base pay rate to \$15 per hour. PNC’s CEO said: “The tax reform law creates an opportunity to reward our employees who are working hard each day to serve our customers, build strong relationships in our communities and create long-term value for our shareholders.”

U.S. Bank announced a \$1,000 bonus for nearly 60,000 employees and enhanced health care offerings in the 2019 enrollment period. It will also raise base pay rate to \$15 per hour. The bank said that these decisions were “a result of the tax reform package.”

Mr. INHOFE. 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.

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

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

DACA

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. President, every Member of this body is only a few generations removed from the immigrant experience. At some point in the recent past, each of our ancestors made the courageous decision to leave his home in search of a better life in America. Each of them took a risk. They didn't know what awaited them in this country, but they believed that through their own hard work and determination, they could succeed.

My mother took a huge risk when she brought my brothers and me to this country. Leaving her entire family behind, she packed our belongings into one suitcase, and we set sail for Hawaii. We grew up poor, but Mom worked so hard every day to build a life for us in this country. She worked minimum-wage jobs with no health insurance. We moved apartments and schools every few years. Eventually, we were able to bring my grandparents to Hawaii from Japan. So I understand as an immigrant how important family unification is to immigrant families.

I share my story not because I think it is particularly extraordinary but because it is a story that millions of families in our country share. The same hopes that drove my mom to risk everything to bring us to America are reflected in the stories of millions of immigrant families across the country, and they are reflected in the lives of Dreamers, whose futures are now at risk because of the President's decision to end the DACA Program.

More than 15,000 young people have already lost their protection from deportation as a result of the President's decision, and 122 more will lose DACA protection every single day. It was with this sense of urgency in mind that I joined a bipartisan group of my colleagues at the White House yesterday to find a path forward to protect the Dreamers. The President took great pains to appear reasonable and eager to make a deal, but we left yesterday's meeting without much clarity about where he stood.

Only a few days ago, the President threatened to hold Dreamers hostage until he got \$18 billion to build the wall. I would call that his vanity project. In response to my question at yesterday's meeting, the President appeared to demonstrate some flexibility on this issue, but after the Freedom Caucus spent yesterday afternoon warning of a potential betrayal on so-called "amnesty," the President reaffirmed in a tweet his hard-line position that funding for the wall must be part of any deal on Dreamers.

Between insisting on building an unnecessary wall, demonizing family reunification, and peddling misinforma-

tion about the diversity visa lottery, the President lost track of what is really at stake here—the inspiring young people whose lives he has left hanging in the balance.

Before the holidays, it was heartening to see so many Dreamers from all across the country taking direct action in the halls of Congress to fight for their futures. I spoke with a number of these young people, like Victor from Houston, who traveled for days to make his voice heard in Congress.

Victor's parents were seasonal farmworkers who traveled to the strawberry fields of Florida every year. They settled down in Houston and saved money for a car and an apartment. They sent for Victor and his sister when he was only 4 years old.

Victor spent most of his childhood not even knowing his immigration status. It wasn't until he came home one day with a permission slip to join his middle school class on a trip to Spain that his mom told him that he was undocumented. Learning what it meant to be undocumented—that if he traveled to Spain he couldn't come home—was really hard for Victor, but he tried to put it from his mind.

As the years passed, it got harder for Victor to grapple with his status. He loved going to school, but he knew as an undocumented immigrant that his options after he graduated from high school were limited. He developed depression, and his grades suffered. But a few months after graduation, President Obama created the DACA Program, and Victor successfully applied for it.

Victor told me that even though he had DACA, he was still too afraid to talk about his status with anyone. During the 2016 election, this changed. He confronted his friends who voted for Donald Trump and shared what losing DACA would mean for him.

On September 5, Victor knew there would be an announcement about his future. He put his phone away and started cleaning his house to distract him from what was about to happen. Eventually he ran out of distractions and sat down to watch Attorney General Jeff Sessions' DACA announcement. Victor began to cry. In the days that followed, Victor started having panic attacks—sometimes as many as five to seven per day. He was afraid to get in the car because he didn't want to hurt anyone if he got a panic attack while driving. A few weeks later, Victor showed up for his first United We Dream event in Houston. There he met fellow Dreamers and allies committed to fighting for him. He told me that it was amazing to see so many people show up in support and solidarity.

Victor made himself a promise that once the Dream Act passes, he is going to go back to school to study psychology so that he can help LGBT youth like him. Before he left, Victor said something really insightful. He said that it is really important for people to come out of the shadows to tell their stories because once you tell your

story, then they can no longer demonize you.

I couldn't agree more.

Fighting to protect Dreamers is about much more than the law. It is about compassion and basic human decency. Late last night, Dreamers won a temporary reprieve when a district court judge in San Francisco issued a preliminary injunction to reinstate the DACA Program for existing enrollees. The judge said that ending DACA in the way the administration ended it was arbitrary and capricious. This was an important victory, for now. It is just a temporary injunction, a temporary reprieve. So I agree with my Democratic leader that we cannot allow this decision to make us think that we are out of the woods, not at all. It cannot dim our resolve to pass the Dream Act. The fight continues.

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

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

Mr. KAINE. Thank you, Mr. President.

I rise as many of my colleagues have this afternoon, and I have risen on the same topic often to talk about our Dreamers.

Usually, when I have risen in the past, I have told stories about Virginia Dreamers. We have about 13,000 Dreamers in Virginia. I have highlighted stories of Dreamers from Latin America, Africa, Sweden, and Asia. One of the students I talked about, Gloria Oduyoye, just graduated from William & Mary Law School within the last month and thus became the first Dreamer to be a law school graduate in Virginia and one of the few Dreamers who attained a law degree in the United States. I talked about her story.

Today I decided not to talk about stories of individuals again but to try to put it in context, with the message really being that the time is now to make a decision. We don't need more information. We just need the will to act and do what I think is the right and the fair thing to do because we have been at this discussion now—it is hard to believe we have been at this discussion for 16 years.

The American public—Democrats, Republicans, and Independents—overwhelmingly support a permanent solution for Dreamers. It is not that we need to know anything more to solve this. We have been talking about it for a very long time.

I want to encourage Members of this body and in the House who are involved in the negotiation to come to an agreement and provide permanent protection for the Dreamers before next Friday so that we can protect this community, which is frightened because

they are so worried about being deported or losing their ability to work, to go to school, losing the ability to protect their families. But it is more than just protecting people because they are frightened; it is protecting them because, as I have seen in Virginia and in every State, they so enrich this country.

The first version of the DREAM Act, it is hard to believe, was introduced in 2001. The Senator from Illinois, Mr. DURBIN, who has been a champion of this and has my deepest admiration for his persistence in this endeavor, introduced the first version of the DREAM Act together with the senior Senator from Utah, Mr. HATCH.

The bill has evolved since then. It wasn't exactly the same as we are contemplating now, but it was the first version of the bill. It sought to repeal a provision of the 1996 immigration reform that prohibited undocumented immigrants from eligibility for higher education. Instead, what the bill, in its original version, did 17 years ago was to grant permanent resident status to young, undocumented immigrants with a high school degree or equivalent GED who fulfilled certain residence requirements and did not have criminal records. That was the start of this discussion. We are still looking for the permanent answer.

The DREAM Act first almost passed in 2007. It attained more than a majority vote in the Senate, but it didn't get to the 60-vote threshold, so that was insufficient for passage. In 2010, the House passed the DREAM Act, but the Senate again failed to approve it with a 60-vote threshold.

In 2013, just a few months after I came to the Senate, we contemplated, debated, discussed, voted upon comprehensive immigration reform in June. I was kind of proud then. I was a young Senator, had been here a couple of months and stood in my chair and offered a speech on the floor of the Senate in Spanish to describe what was in the bill for the 45 million Americans who get their news every day in the Spanish language. After I was finished describing it, people came up to me and said: Has anybody ever done that before? And I said: Frankly, I don't know.

It turned out that it was the first time in the history of the body that a speech had been given in a language other than English. But what was important about that moment in June of 2013 was not the speech; it was the vote. The package was comprehensive. It included not just the DREAM Act but border security, assistance for employers to determine the immigration bona fides of those applying for work. These are reforms—an approval for people here on temporary protected status from El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Somalia, Sudan, and Haiti to become permanent residents and then convert that into a path to citizenship. That comprehensive immigration reform bill, in my view, represents the Senate working at its best: a bipar-

tisan working group, coming through committee, coming to the floor with amendments. It passed this body with 68 votes in favor.

It was evidence of the naivete of a young Senator at the time that I assumed, of course, something was going to happen because it passed here with 68 votes. I knew the House wouldn't do exactly what we did, but I thought they would do something, and we would be conferencing it. But alas, I was naive; that was not to happen.

We are now in a different place, and we have the ability to act.

I supported President Obama's actions in June of 2012 to protect Dreamers—the DACA Program; and then later, the DAPA Program. I felt that those actions were completely in accord with earlier Executive actions Presidents had taken in the area of immigration.

Since June of 2012, 800,000 young people have achieved Dreamer status. Some of them aren't so young anymore. I sometimes refer to them as students and kids, but they are in the military, they are parents, they are teachers, and they are active in their communities. As I said, there are 13,000 in my State. DACA has allowed them to continue their education, to work legally, and to remain in the only country they have ever known.

I will say I was disappointed when President Trump in September announced that he would terminate the program in 6 months—in March. I felt like it was the breaking of a promise to these young people because he had said, even as a candidate and then as President, that Dreamers were good kids and that they wouldn't have anything to worry about from him.

I will say there was one aspect of what the President said—I can't just be critical without pointing out that there was one thing about what he said that I thought was right. He said: And Congress should fix it. I agreed with President Trump on that. I wish he hadn't terminated the program, but he was right that this is something for Congress to fix because anything done by Executive action, even fully within the power of a President to take it, is subject to being changed by another Executive. The lives and futures of these young people are such that we shouldn't be scaring them about whether they are protected or maybe back to being protected depending upon who was the occupant of the White House.

That Presidential announcement in March, although I was disappointed, on that core piece of it, that Congress should fix it, I think President Trump was right and I think he is right. I think this is something that Congress must fix, should fix, can fix, and we have all the information about it to fix it right now.

It has been difficult and a little bit heartbreaking to talk to these young people and their families about the fears they have. I don't live under the

fear of deportation. I don't live under the fear of my job being taken away because of my status. I don't live under the fear of my kids not being able to get in-state tuition and instead having to pay out-of-state or not being able to afford it at all. It is not a fear I walk around with every day. It is hard to put yourself in somebody else's shoes and experience the fear and even terror they are feeling when you yourself don't have that same exposure.

I have spent a lot of time listening to these young people and their parents in Northern Virginia and Richmond, especially, where I live, and the fear they feel is very palpable, and the panic they feel is very palpable, and I understand why. I think part of our job should not be to increase anxiety and fear; part of our job should be—when we can, when it is the right thing to do, when it is within our grasp—to take action and provide clarity and certainty so people will know what their status is. I think the time for that is now after 16 years.

Maybe the most important thing I am saying is that this is not a new issue. It is not that we need another week or another month or another year to figure out the answer. The first bill was introduced in 2001, and I think January 19, 2018, is ample time for us to now get this right and make it either part of the spending bills that we will do at year-end or part of a stand-alone bill that we could embrace as a body.

I was heartened by some of the comments by the President, as reported yesterday, during the meeting with bipartisan leadership at the White House about this. We can do it, and the time is right to do it now. So I would ask my colleagues and especially urge all those in the negotiations to make this decision and provide these wonderful young people with certainty about their future.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I join my colleague from Virginia, as well as Senator DURBIN, who has been working so hard to get this done, to stand up for the Dreamers. I give my strong support once again for taking action on the Dream Act. We need to take up this bill.

As Senator KAINE just noted, I was also heartened, after the meeting at the White House, by the fact that this President understands—he said he understands that we can't wait until March to get this done, that we need to get this done soon. For me, the easiest way to do this is by passing the Dream Act.

The Federal court decision in California yesterday will provide some temporary relief, as every single day more and more kids fall out of status. That sounds like a legal term, but for them, it changes their whole life. These are kids who literally believed our government. They were told: You register. You sign up. We are going to allow you to stay.

And then, in one little moment and with a signature, that all changed. Their lives changed. So it is now our obligation in the Senate to get this done.

We have already seen the harmful effects of the administration's decision to end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Program, and the situation will continue to get worse until we take action. This is not just a small thing. I have met these kids. Ninety-seven percent of them either work or are in school. The average age they were when they were brought to this country is 6½ years old.

A few months back, I stood in front of a Catholic church with our archbishop of the Twin Cities, Archbishop Hebda, and a number of his parishioners and a number of the priests from that church to talk about what this meant in people's lives—kids brought over through no fault of their own.

My favorite example of a Dreamer, Senator KAINE and Mr. President, is Joseph Medina. He was brought over—and he didn't know this at the time—as a baby. His parents had died, and he was brought over to Sleepy Eye, MN, where he was raised. This was a long time ago. When he got to be the right age, he decided that he wanted to serve our country, and he signed up to serve in World War II.

Well, back then, he went to the military, to the Army, and said: I want to sign up.

They said: Well, it turns out—I don't know what term they used back then, but he was undocumented. And when I first met him at the young age of 99, as he explained to me, back then, all you did was you went to Canada for a day, with our country's OK, and slept in a hotel for a night, which is what he did, and then came back. Then he was made legal, and the Army signed him up, and he ended up going over and serving in the Pacific. He came back to this country, met his wife, got married, had a son, and that son served in the Vietnam war.

A few years ago, when he was 99, I got to bring him to Washington, and we stood in front of the World War II Memorial. There he stood. He had never seen it before, and he would never go again. He just died at the age of 103. He stood there with two Dreamers, suburban high school kids from Minnesota who wanted to join the Air Force, but they couldn't do it. They didn't have that right status. They were Dreamers too. They had been brought over as young kids.

To me, that just brought it all home. This is a war hero, someone who served our country, and this is the kind of person we are talking about when we talk about the Dreamers. His last act of patriotism in the last few years of his life was to continue to push so that other kids could serve their country just as he had and just as his son had.

While we have not reached an agreement yet on this bill, the reports on the bipartisan meeting are hopeful. But

time is ticking by. Time is ticking. The American public is with us. This is not one of these issues where the public says: What are they doing? This makes no sense. No. A recent poll found that 86 percent of Americans support action to allow the Dreamers to stay here in the United States. So I am very hopeful that we can come together on a bipartisan agreement.

The Dream Act was based on one simple principle, and that is that you should have the opportunity—this set of people, 800,000 people who came over here through no fault of their own, should have that opportunity to call this country home, as they have been doing for so many years.

Passing the Dream Act isn't just the morally right thing to do, it is the economically right thing to do. One recent study estimated that ending deferred action for childhood arrivals would cost the country over \$400 billion over the next 10 years. It would cost my State more than \$376 million in annual revenue. We are proud to be the home of more than 6,000 Dreamers.

Since it was established in 2012, it has helped, as I have noted, nearly 800,000 young people who have lived in the United States since childhood to have better lives. Think about that—800,000 people. As I mentioned, 97 percent of them are in school or in the workforce, and 72 percent of them are currently in school pursuing a bachelor's degree or higher. More than 100 students applied to medical school last year. Nearly 100 of them are currently enrolled in medical school at a time when we need more doctors, particularly in rural areas. Those are the facts.

I note that at the meeting at the White House, the President actually said that when this got done, he wanted to pursue comprehensive immigration reform. It is something that we have done before on a bipartisan basis in the Senate, and I believe that is where we need to turn now.

We talk about the economic sense of the Dreamers. Look at our country overall. Seventy of our Fortune 500 companies are headed by immigrants. Twenty-five percent of our U.S. Nobel Laureates were born in other countries. Immigrants have been an economic engine for this country.

Everyone in this Chamber came from somewhere. Their relatives came from somewhere. My grandparents on my mom's side came from Switzerland, and on my dad's side my great-grandparents came from Slovenia. They worked in the mines. They worked so hard just to send my dad to college. They saved money in a coffee can in a basement. I am here today with great-grandparents who came straight from Slovenia, a grandfather who worked in a mine, a dad who grew up there and was the first one in the family to go to college and get a 2-year degree and then a 4-year degree, and I literally stand here on the shoulders of these immigrants.

On my mom's side, the Swiss side, my grandpa came over and ended up at Ellis Island when he was 18 years old, and they had reached the cap on Swiss immigrants. That might sound amusing, but that was the case. He then somehow got himself to Canada—I think he said he was going to live there—came back through—because he wanted to be in our country—came back through, ended up in Wisconsin, like all good Swiss, with my other relatives on my grandma's side, worked at a cheese factory, and was an alien for 20 years. He finally applied for citizenship when World War II was breaking out, and that is when they found out that, in fact, he maybe had come into the country two different ways. But back then, they listened to his story, and they gave him citizenship. Otherwise, he would have been deported—I think it was 3 weeks before the U.S. joined World War II—as a Swiss German. Instead, he married my grandma back then, they had my mom and my mom's brother, and here I am.

I am on the shoulders of those immigrants. So when I see these Dreamers, I see my own family, and I hope everyone in this Chamber sees the same thing—the American dream. That is why, Mr. President, I stand with the Senator from Virginia, Mr. KAINE, with Senator DURBIN, and so many of my colleagues who have been working on this for so long on both sides of the aisle. There has been leadership on both sides of the aisle. So let's get this done, let's pass the Dream Act, and let's never forget that we all come from somewhere.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. TILLIS). The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, a number of us are here today with a very simple, straightforward demand. We must act now to pass a Dream Act. Very simply, the honor and integrity of this Chamber are at stake.

The young people who would be covered under the Dream Act are Americans in all but name. They came here as children. They grew up as Americans. They go to our schools, serve in our military, and support our economy. They work hard and they give back and they believe in the American dream. Deporting Dreamers would be cruel and irrational, inhumane, and, very simply, repugnant to basic American values.

Just think of Jonathan Gonzalez-Cruz. He is a college student at Southern Connecticut State University. I had the privilege of meeting him in December. His story has stuck with me. His story haunts me when I think of the moral imperative of this Nation to pass the Dream Act.

Jonathan was born in Mexico. He came to this country when he was just 4 years old. The United States is home for him. It is the only country he has ever known. He received a full scholarship to attend Southern Connecticut

State University, and he is set to graduate this spring with an honors degree in economics and math.

His dream is to attend law school, but due to the uncertainty surrounding DACA, he has decided to delay applying, knowing he will be unable to receive scholarships without his DACA status. He could attend, but he can't pay for it with scholarships unless he has that DACA status.

Jonathan first became compelled to speak up and tell his story after his father was deported, and they were unable to even say goodbye. Despite his own struggles, Jonathan is a passionate advocate for his community, and he actively works for Connecticut Students for a Dream. That organization, Connecticut Students for a Dream, is a group of students who help empower and advocate on behalf of other undocumented students. In fact, today, Jonathan is in DC to help ensure that the voices of students are, in fact, heard. Jonathan is a volunteer peer mentor through that organization because he is so passionate about raising graduation rates and ensuring that all students like himself have the support they need to succeed.

During his senior year, Jonathan has been interning at an immigration law firm, and he is glad to be helping others gain legal status in this country. The irony is not lost on him—and should not be lost on us—that he, himself, could face deportation this year. If Jonathan is not permitted to stay—if Congress does not act and he loses his DACA protection—Connecticut and this Nation will be the losers. Connecticut and this Nation will lose an educated and compassionate public service-minded individual who gives back to his community, to his fellow students, and to our State. He is just one example of the estimated 10,000 like him in Connecticut—and at least 700,000 around the country—who could lose their status in March if Congress fails to act now.

Very simply, we have an obligation to do our job and provide permanent status and a path to citizenship for the Dreamers. The hopeful news is, there is broad bipartisan support for affording the Dreamers protection against mass, draconian deportation. Our challenge is to make sure that what we do here reflects that broad bipartisan support in this Chamber and around the country because America knows it has made a promise. It made a promise to those Dreamers, and great countries do not break promises.

Last night, a Federal district court issued a preliminary injunction ordering DHS—the Department of Homeland Security—to resume accepting renewal applications. Once again, the courts have served as a bulwark for basic rights under rule of law, but this reprieve is no final remedy. We must redouble our determination to protect these young people from draconian, mass deportation—a continuing threat as long as President Trump refuses to

reverse his cruel, unconscionable policy.

A Federal judge has struck down President Trump's order as unconstitutional, but a Dream Act is no less necessary today than it was yesterday. Congress should waste no time in swiftly passing clean legislation—a clean Dream Act to protect these young people.

When DACA was adopted in 2012, it changed the lives of young people like Jonathan. It opened new vistas. It provided Dreamers with the opportunity to get driver's licenses, to attend college, to become productive members of our economy.

Importantly, when DACA was adopted, we made that promise to these young people. We promised that if they came forward and provided the United States of America with information, some of the most personal information any of us have—information about their addresses, employment, dates of birth, their families—we would not use that information against them. They had a place here under DACA. They had rights—moral, if not legal. That promise is now about to be broken.

Great countries keep those promises. The United States is the greatest country in the history of the world. It should not be breaking promises to innocent young men and women who know only this country, who believe in the American dream, who believe in America's promises, who believed those promises when they offered that information and now are relying on the good faith of America. The rescission of DACA threatens to tear apart families, destroy lives, create disarray, and derail futures. We are a country that is better than this rescission. We are a country that keeps promises, and Congress must now act to protect these young people.

DACA protections are set to expire in 2 months. Already, tens of thousands of DACA recipients are estimated to have lost their protection from removal. The longer Congress takes to act, the longer these young people, who were promised the American dream, continue with anguish, with targets on their backs.

Continued waiting means instability to the job market because companies are forced to hire replacements for DACA recipients and train new workers in anticipation of the March deadline. It could mean a massive ejection of qualified, hard-working people vital to our economy.

This kind of massive deportation by plane, by boat, by car, by foot would be unprecedented. We have never seen anything like it before. As I have said repeatedly, this kind of mass, draconian deportation would be a humanitarian nightmare, a betrayal of America.

If Congress fails to pass the Dream Act, we will lose nearly \$500 billion over the next 10 years. Let me repeat. We will lose \$500 billion over the next 10 years. We will lose \$25 billion in

Medicare and Social Security taxes alone. In my home State of Connecticut, we stand to lose \$300 million in economic benefits a year.

Now is the time to abandon the myth that the Dreamers work on the sidelines of American society. They are part of the fabric of this Nation. Their lives are woven into the great tapestry of America. They drive our economy. They give back to our communities.

The administration has thrown a ticking time bomb into their lives, but it is also a ticking time bomb in this Chamber. We have the power to defuse it. In doing so, we can give hope to hundreds of thousands of members of our society and reaffirm the greatness of our country. At stake is nothing less than the character of our country, and that is why there is such bipartisan support for the Dream Act, as evidenced yesterday in the Cabinet Room when the President met with Members of the Congress on both sides of the aisle.

In the Dreamers, we see ourselves. We see relatives who came to this country years ago, many of them as teenagers. My father fled Germany at 17 years old with nothing more than the shirt on his back, speaking no English, knowing virtually no one here. Like him, they believe in America's promise, America's dream, and we should believe in the Dreamers.

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 bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to speak about the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Program, known as DACA. That was an Executive order of President Obama's which provided temporary legal status to immigrant students and young people if they registered with the government, paid a fee, and passed a criminal and national security background check. It was for 2 years and renewable.

Young people who are protected by DACA are known by some as Dreamers. They came to the United States as children. They grew up singing the "Star Spangled Banner" and pledging allegiance to our flag. They believed that they were Americans, but legally, they are not. The average DACA recipient came to the United States at the age of 6 and has been here for approximately 20 years.

It was 7 years ago that I sent a letter to President Obama. I was joined in that letter, incidentally, by Senator Dick Lugar, a Republican from Indiana. In that letter, I asked President Obama: Can you find a way to protect these young people?

We passed the Dream Act on the floor of the House. We passed it on the floor of the Senate. We have never managed to pass it in both Chambers in the same year. And the President created the DACA Program.

The DACA Program has been a success. Approximately 800,000 Dreamers have come forward and received DACA protection. Let's allow them to be part of America as teachers, as nurses, as engineers, as first responders, and even serving in the U.S. military.

But on September 5 of this last year, 2017, Attorney General Jeff Sessions announced that the Trump administration was setting out to repeal DACA, to put an end to it. That same day, President Trump called on Congress to come up with a solution to legalize DACA. He challenged us. He said to the U.S. Senate and House: Pass a law. If this is a good idea, pass a law.

It has been more than 4 months since the President issued that challenge. The Republican leadership of Congress has not proposed any legislation to legalize DACA as the President asked.

The deportation clock is ticking for these young people who are protected. Already, 15,000 have lost their DACA status. Beginning on March 5—the deadline that initially was imposed by President Trump—every day for the next 2 years, 1,000 DACA young people will lose their ability to work legally in the United States and will be subject to being deported from this country.

Who are they? Some 20,000 of them are teachers in our schools who would lose the right to work legally and have to leave their classrooms. Nurses would leave their patients. First responders would leave their posts. And 900 soldiers would lose their ability to volunteer to risk their lives for America's future.

This isn't just a looming humanitarian crisis; it is an economic crisis. More than 91 percent of DACA Dreamers are gainfully employed and paying taxes. Many of them are students; yet they are still gainfully employed because they don't qualify for Federal assistance for higher education, so they have to work jobs, sometimes many jobs.

The nonpartisan Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy reports that DACA-eligible individuals contribute an estimated \$2 billion a year in State and local taxes. The Cato Institute, a conservative operation in Washington, estimates that ending DACA and deporting DACA recipients will cost the economy \$60 billion and result in a \$280 billion reduction in economic growth over the next decade.

Poll after poll shows overwhelming bipartisan support for the Dreamers. FOX News found that 79 percent of Americans support a path to citizenship for Dreamers, including 63 percent of Trump voters.

The answer is clear. It was 16 years ago that I first introduced the DREAM Act—bipartisan legislation to give these young people a path to citizen-

ship. In July of last year, I introduced the most recent version with my colleague, Senator LINDSEY GRAHAM of South Carolina. We need to pass the Dream Act, and we need to do it now, before January 19.

Over the years, I have come to the floor to tell the story of the Dreamers. I can give a pretty nice speech here, but these stories tell the story of this issue more than anything I can add to them. These stories show what is at stake when we consider the fate of DACA and the Dream Act.

Today, I want to tell you about this young lady. Her name is Evelyn Valdez-Ward. This is the 107th Dreamer story I have told on the floor. Evelyn was 6 months old when her family brought her from Mexico to Houston, TX. She was quite a good student. She graduated 11th in her high school class of 650. She took all advanced placement classes and was a member of the National Honor Society. She was a member of the color guard in the marching band and regularly volunteered at homeless shelters and animal shelters.

It wasn't until she began to apply for college that she finally learned her immigration status. She wasn't like the other students with whom she had grown up and shared classrooms and experiences. Evelyn is undocumented, but it didn't stop her—she was going to pursue college.

One of her teachers believed in her because she was such a bright student and wrote her a letter of recommendation to go to college. She was accepted into the University of Houston. She received multiple awards while in college, including the Excellence in SI Leadership and Mentoring Award, the American Society of Plant Biology Award for Outstanding Research, and the Outstanding Biology Leadership Award.

The summer after her freshman year, she was offered a great research opportunity through the National Science Foundation. Because of DACA, she was allowed to work legally in the United States, and she was able to pursue this important research. That opportunity was in plant water transport research in California. This is where Evelyn fell in love with ecology and plants.

She graduated magna cum laude in 2016 with a bachelor of science in biology. Today, she is a second-year Ph.D. student at the University of California, Irvine, in the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology. She is researching the effects of climate change on the interactions between plants and soil. Evelyn's dream is to continue her research as a scientist and to become an advocate for strategies to mitigate climate change.

In September, the American Association for the Advancement of Science wrote a letter opposing the White House decision to rescind DACA. Here is what they said:

Many DACA students make significant contributions to the scientific and engineering enterprise in the United States . . . high-

achieving young people in DACA contribute in many ways to our nation. Many are studying to become scientists, engineers, medical doctors and entrepreneurs. Given the administration's decision, we urge Congress to craft legislation that provides long-term protection for these young people who seek to continue their education and contribute to society. . . . Our nation needs an immigration policy that advances U.S. innovation and prosperity, and stays true to foundational American goals that seek contributions to society from all.

The Presiding Officer and I had a unique invitation yesterday. I would just say that as a Member of the House and of the Senate, I have never been invited to a meeting quite like the one we had yesterday with the President in the Cabinet Room of the White House. It was the President's idea. I don't know if it was a spur-of-the-moment idea, but it is one that came together very quickly in a few days.

I think there were almost 26 of us—Democrats, Republicans, House and Senate Members—who were called together by President Trump. I was kind of surprised, but there I was sitting right next to the President of the United States. It was only the third time we had ever spoken. The other two times, incidentally, were about DACA and the Dream Act, as you can probably guess. He invited me to sit next to him as we talked about this issue.

Then he did something that was really unusual. I have been to some meetings with the President in the Cabinet Room with President Obama and President George W. Bush. Usually, what happens is, the cameras come in, the President says a few words, then the staff tells them to leave, and they reluctantly pull out and leave. Yesterday was quite different. The President told the press they could stay, and they did, for almost an hour. The conversations between the President of the United States and Members of Congress were shared with the American people. I had never seen anything quite like it.

I kind of liked it, to be honest with you. I think there was a lot of candor in the room. People were expressing their points of view, and there were many different points of view, but I think I came away from that meeting with more hope than ever that we can do something about DACA and the Dream Act. The President told us he would like to see it done. He added, though, there were things he wanted to be a part of it. One of them dealt with border security, which has been a priority for all of us from the beginning.

We want to establish—both political parties want to establish that we are committed to border security, and we are. How you define it, what it costs, and how it is implemented—some of these things we can define in our agreement; others will be left to future efforts by Congress and the President.

Then he talked about the family unification, and that is an issue that is very delicate. It is one that, as my colleagues can imagine, really hits home.

It is very personal as to whether a member of a family can bring someone they love—some relative in their family—to the United States. Even if they decide to bring them—incidentally, they may be waiting 30 years, in the case of those who are seeking entry into the United States through family visas; 80 years, from China; 160 years from Mexico. Some of these things are unrealistic and will never happen, but to talk about family unification really strikes home with a lot of families.

I want to hear the President's point of view, but I want to deal with this in the most sensitive and sincere way. We don't want to flood the United States with people who are any danger to us, No. 1, or nonproductive citizens, but we certainly want to see families unified.

There is a question about diversity visas. I will not go into it because it is a long story—the creation of this program, where it is today, and where it might be in the future.

Here is what I do believe after yesterday's meeting. I believe President Donald Trump called for that meeting because he wanted to let the American people know he was serious. He wanted to show them he could be a President presiding over a table with 24, 25 Members of Congress from both political parties and tackle a sensitive, delicate, challenging issue. He wants to show the American people he can lead. I want to help him lead if the goal is to make sure DACA and the Dreamers ultimately have their chance to be part of America's future.

I am willing to work in good faith with the President to compromise, whatever it takes, to bring this forward. There are so many lives hanging in the balance, and this is one of them—this wonderful, brilliant young woman who wants to make not only the world a better place but America a better place. She simply wants the chance to be here and be part of America's future. We can give her no less.

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.

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.

REMEMBERING MATT HILLYARD

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, today I wish to pay tribute to a remarkable man whose smile and beautiful soul touched the lives of everyone he met. Matthew Hillyard passed away peacefully at his family home on January 4, 2018, to the grief of not only his family and close friends but to everyone who knew him in the Utah Legislature.

Matt, the loving son of Lyle and Alice Hillyard, was born with Down syndrome. His parents were told he would not live past adolescence; yet he defied the odds and packed a lot of life into 42 years on Earth. Matt never let his disability define him; instead, he shared his special light with everyone who caught his eye.

Matt's father, Lyle, has served as a Utah lawmaker since 1981. The father-and-son duo became a fixture of the Utah Legislature. When things got tense on the senate floor, Matt's innocence stood as a light to other lawmakers, defusing tension and stress during the most heated debates. He made friends with people from all walks of life—be they legislators, security guards, or schoolchildren visiting the capitol. Matt's smile and his big hugs were legendary, and people would often line up to be the recipient of his affection.

I had the privilege of enjoying Matt's hugs and greetings on many occasions, and I never left his side without feeling I had been in the presence of a truly remarkable son of our Heavenly Father. Legislative bodies across our country would be well-served with the steady presence of someone like Matt, a kind soul who gives love and unwavering friendship to all.

I believe there is a special place in Heaven for Matt, who personified the pure love of Christ. He lived a life of sweet innocence, friendship, and love. His warm embrace and sweet smile will be greatly missed by all. It is my greatest hope that his family and all who knew him will find joy and peace in the memories we have shared with this extraordinary man.

LANDMINES

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, according to Landmine Monitor, which is the world's best source of data on the production, use, export, stockpiling, and clearance of landmines, cluster munitions, and other unexploded ordnance, 2016 was a terrible year for casualties caused by mines and other UXO.

In 2016, the Monitor recorded 8,605 casualties, of which at least 2,089 people were fatalities. That is the highest number since 1999, and it includes the most casualties of children ever recorded. Civilians represented 78 percent of recorded casualties in 2016. There are still 61 countries that are known to be contaminated with landmines.

On the positive side, approximately 232,000 landmines were destroyed in 2016, and 66 square miles of land were

cleared of mines and other UXO. International donors and UXO affected countries increased support in 2016 for UXO clearance programs by \$40 million above the previous year to \$564.5 million. The United States was, like previous years, by far the largest donor.

It is also encouraging that, since March 1, 1999, when the international treaty banning antipersonnel landmines came into force, 163 countries have joined. That is an extraordinary achievement for a treaty that owes its existence to the vision and perseverance of hundreds of advocacy, human rights, arms control, humanitarian organizations, and journalists, around the world, and the leadership of former Canadian Foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy; yet despite this progress and substantial declining in the past few years, the number of innocent people maimed and killed by mines has steadily increased.

There are several explanations for this. Rebel groups like ISIS routinely use landmines and other improvised explosive devices. The wars in Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Yemen have been largely responsible. It may never be possible to completely eradicate the use of landmines by rebel groups, for the weapon is so cheap to manufacture while causing such harm.

But the major powers that have not joined the treaty—the United States, Russia, China, Pakistan, and India—also share the blame. Antipersonnel landmines, which are designed to be triggered indiscriminately by the victim, whether an unsuspecting farmer or an enemy or friendly combatant, have no place in the arsenals of modern militaries. It is hypocrisy to claim on the one hand, as our military does, that it uses every precaution to avoid harming civilians and prides itself on its precision weapons, and on the other hand to insist on the right to use a weapon that is the antithesis of precise and overwhelmingly harms civilians.

I have spoken more times than I can count about the scourge of antipersonnel landmines and the need for the United States to join the Mine Ban Treaty so we are no longer an excuse for other countries not to join. Our military has not used landmines for more than two decades. In fact, U.S. policy now strictly limits the use of antipersonnel mines to the Korean Peninsula, but we do not need them. What we need is the best protection for our troops to maneuver safely through minefields. We should have banned these indiscriminate weapons a long time ago, and we would have if landmines were blowing off the arms and legs of children in this Nation the way they are in others, but we have learned that the Pentagon is not in the habit of giving up weapons, even if they are weapons that deserve to be relegated to the dustbin of history. That decision will only be made by a President who is willing to do what is morally right.

Landmines have been aptly described as weapons of mass destruction in slow