

pickle. How is he going to pass a bill with just Republican votes? It is not easy. So they come up with this distorted, unfair proposal—unfair to so many people in the middle class who depend on our help.

Hopefully, House Republicans will change their tune, because even though a deal has eluded us for months, negotiators are now making significant progress. The Republican leader and I have been working together quite productively. Of course, there are still some outstanding issues to be resolved, but we are closer to an agreement than we have ever been.

I would like to express my appreciation to the Republican leader, in addition, for his invitation to address the McConnell Center next week in Louisville, which I have accepted.

As leaders, the two of us can work together to get things done around here, and the best opportunity to work together is the budget. It is an opportunity not just for us but for our country, not only to escape the terrible damage of sequestration but to condemn it to the past, and we should seize that opportunity.

RUSSIA INVESTIGATION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, now for a word on the Russia investigation, last night the House Intelligence Committee voted to release the contents of the Schiff memo. Now that the House Intelligence Committee has acted, President Trump should move—in conjunction with the DOJ and the FBI—and release the Schiff memo to the public. The American people deserve the chance to make their own judgment on the facts of this small piece of the broader case of Russia's interference in our election.

The President decided the public deserved to see the Nunes memo before he had even read it. So he ought to be just as eager for the American people to see this memo, which refutes—effectively, devastatingly—so much in the Nunes memo.

Given that the Schiff memo is based on the same underlying documents as the Republicans' partisan memo, there should be no question as to whether or not the President should approve its release. If he decides to keep the Democratic memo under wraps, the American people are going to be forced to wonder: What is the President trying to hide? What is he afraid of?

President Trump should release the Schiff memo—and quickly. It will illustrate what a sham the Nunes memo is. Then, we can all move on and, as some of my good Republican colleagues have had the courage to say—not enough, but some: Let Mueller do his investigation unimpeded, and let's see where the results end up.

We need to move on. The Nunes memo is only the latest in a long line of distractions manufactured by the most extreme elements of the Republican Party and the conservative media

to distract from the special counsel's investigation. It started with conspiracies about “deep state” leaks and unmasking requests, phone taps at Trump Tower, and Uranium One, and now it is this memo. They don't quit with all these conspiracy theories, with all these ridiculous fomentations. They don't quit, perhaps because they are afraid of what a real investigation, which Mueller is doing and will continue to do, will reveal.

What the American people want to know are three simple things: One, what did the Russians do to interfere in our elections; two, were there Americans involved in helping the Russians; and three, what are we doing to prevent the Russians from interfering in 2018 and beyond? To that point, Americans should be much more concerned about this administration's tepid response to Putin's interference in our election than about a memo of Republican talking points.

Any other administration, any other President, I believe, would have made punishing Putin and protecting our democracy a primary issue in the first term, but this President began his first year in office by downplaying Putin's involvement in the 2016 election, and then he repeatedly accepted Putin's words of denial over the consensus of the American intelligence community.

When the administration tried to wiggle out of existing sanctions against Russia, Congress overwhelmingly and almost unanimously passed legislation strengthening the existing sanctions and adding new ones to address the interference. We are still waiting for President Trump to implement the new round of sanctions. What is he waiting for? Why does he refuse to get tough with Putin? We look to the President of the United States to stand up for our democracy against all threats, but unfortunately and sadly—bad for America—President Trump has abdicated this responsibility when it comes to Putin.

I yield the floor.

I know my good friend from Illinois will have his usual thoughtful and articulate remarks to give.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I don't know if you want to announce the business of the day or if you have already done that.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate is in a period of morning business.

The assistant Democratic leader is recognized.

DACA

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to speak of an issue which really defines America. With the exception of Native Americans who preceded us, with the exception of many African Americans who were brought here in bondage, virtually all of the rest of us are the sons and daughters of immigrants to America, immigrants from literally all over the world who have come to this Nation

and made us different—different in a positive way. They have given life to this democracy. They have given hope when it comes to our future. They have inspired us.

I will be the first to admit that I do not come to this debate without strong personal feelings. Like millions of Americans, I am the son of an immigrant. In 1911—107 years ago—my grandmother came to this country with three little kids. One of those kids was my mother. She was 2 years old when their ship landed in Baltimore. My grandmother didn't speak a word of English, but somehow she managed to take those three kids and make her way to join my grandfather in East St. Louis, IL.

On the credenza behind my desk in the Capitol is my mother's naturalization certificate. I keep that as a reminder of my heritage. That is my story. That is my family's story. That is America's story. Because of my family history, I really believe in immigration. I believe it has been a positive force in America.

I remember going to Jurbarkas, Lithuania, which was a tiny village in 1911, and being taken on a tour of my mom's birthplace. She never made it back there, but I was able to see the church where she was baptized. They pointed out the well in the town square which people used. I thought to myself what it must have been like that evening when my grandparents called their friends and relatives together to tell them the news: They were leaving their home in Lithuania. They were leaving the church that had served their family for generations. They were leaving all of their friends and relatives. They were leaving behind every stick of furniture, the dogs, the cats, the chickens—everything—to go to a place where they didn't speak the language. They were going to this place called America. They had heard great stories about the land of opportunity, and they had heard about some Lithuanians who had gone to the city of East St. Louis, IL, and that is where they were headed.

I am sure those friends and relatives, walking away from that meeting, turned to one another and said: What ever got into their minds? They are giving up everything to go to a place where they don't even speak the language. They will be back.

Well, they never returned. Like millions and millions of Americans, they had the courage to come to America and to weather crisis after crisis in our family and to build a future. I stand here because of that decision.

How can you tell when a country is in decline? When immigrants stop wanting to come to that country, when they can't wait to leave that country. Many other developed countries have had this experience and watched their economies decline as a result. That has never been our experience in the history of America.

Look at our history. In every generation, immigrants have come to our

shores from around the world and made us a better and stronger nation. Immigrants are not a drain on America; immigrants are the future of America. They are hard-working men and women who leave behind everything they know to build a new and better life for themselves and their children. They breathe new life into our country and help revitalize the American dream.

You have heard the stories. They go to Silicon Valley and take a look at some of the best and brightest when it comes to high-tech, and they marvel at how many of them were immigrants to this country who were finally able to take that great idea and turn it into a great business with a lot of well-paid employees, helping this country move forward.

It was 17 years ago that I introduced a bill called the DREAM Act. It was bipartisan legislation that gave a path to citizenship to immigrants who came to the United States as children. These young people have come to be known as Dreamers.

I know the President went to a Republican retreat last week and mocked the term “Dreamers.” He did the same in the State of the Union address. I will tell you, I am proud of the term “Dreamers.” Before this bill was introduced, if you asked about Dreamers and who they were, most people would answer: Isn’t that a British rock group? Today, Dreamers symbolize something in America—young people brought here who have grown up pledging allegiance to that flag, singing the only national anthem they ever have known, who want to be part of our future. Those are Dreamers.

Eight years ago, I sent a letter to President Obama. Dick Lugar, Republican Senator from Indiana, joined me in signing that letter. On a bipartisan basis, we asked for President Obama to find a way to protect the Dreamers. The President responded to our request. He established the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Program, better known as DACA.

DACA provides temporary legal status to Dreamers if they step up, identify themselves, register with the government, pay a \$500 filing fee, and submit themselves to a criminal background check and then a national security background check. If they passed all of those things, under DACA, they were given temporary, renewable 2-year protection to stay in the United States, not be deported, and have the legal right to work.

DACA has been an extraordinary success. Almost 800,000 Dreamers have come forward and received DACA protection. It has allowed them to contribute more to this country that they love, as teachers and nurses and engineers and first responders and members of our military. Yes, these DACA individuals have stepped up, even though they do not have the legal rights of citizenship, raised their hands, and sworn to put their lives on the line for America. How many of us have done

that? We should admire them for their commitment to this country. Instead, on September 5, Attorney General Jeff Sessions announced that the Trump administration was putting an end to this DACA Program. That same day, the President called on Congress to “legalize DACA.”

Now the deportation clock is literally ticking on these young people. As we gather here today, more than 18,000 of these young people have lost their protection under DACA. Beginning in less than a month, on March 5 of this year, every day for the next 2 years, 1,000 Dreamers will lose their work permits and be subject to deportation because of President Trump’s decision.

The administration itself has warned us that if we do come up with legalization of DACA, they need time—maybe as long as 6 months—to make it work. What has Congress done in response to this challenge, in response to the fact that thousands of young people are losing this protection? The answer is one word: nothing. Nothing. Not a single bill has passed the Senate or the House in response to the President’s challenge, despite the fact that every single day 122 of these Dreamers, because of President Trump’s decision, lose the protection of DACA. Teachers—almost 20,000 of them nationwide who are DACA recipients—are going to be in a situation where they have to leave behind their classrooms and their students. Nurses will be forced to leave behind their patients because of President Trump’s decision. First responders, who have written an enviable record of courage in serving their communities, will be forced to leave those posts. Soldiers willing to die for America will be forced to leave the Army—forced to leave the Army they have volunteered to serve.

This isn’t just a looming humanitarian crisis; it is an economic crisis as well. More than 91 percent of DACA Dreamers are gainfully employed and paying taxes to our government. 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 think tank, estimates that ending DACA and deporting DACA recipients will cost \$60 billion and result in a \$280 billion reduction in economic growth over the next decade. Are the DACA protectees a drain on society? Not according to the conservative Cato Institute. They are a plus for America, a plus for our economy.

Poll after poll shows overwhelming bipartisan support for the Dreamers. Even FOX News—no liberal media outlet—found that 79 percent of Americans support a path to citizenship for Dreamers. That includes 63 percent of those who identify as Trump voters.

When the Trump administration shut down the DACA Program, the President called on Congress to legalize the program. We have done nothing. The

day after repealing DACA, President Trump reached a tentative agreement on DACA and border security with Senator SCHUMER, the Senate Democratic leader, and NANCY PELOSI, the House Democratic leader. President Trump said: “Chuck and Nancy would like to see something happen, and so do I.” But very quickly, President Trump walked away from those words.

In October, the White House released 7 pages of what they called “Immigration Principles”—their wish list when it came to immigration. It was a list of hard-line, anti-immigrant proposals, many of which have been opposed by both political parties in Congress. Then, 4 weeks ago, I was invited to a meeting on January 9 at the White House, to sit next to President Trump and about two dozen Members of Congress. The President said at that meeting, broadcast on live television, that he wanted to protect DACA recipients and he would sign any bipartisan bill that Congress sent to him. The President said: Send me a bill and I will sign it, and I will take the political heat. I heard it. So did America. He also said that Congress should first pass DACA legislation and that other immigration issues should wait for “phase two, which would be comprehensive.” That was good news for me and good news for Senator LINDSEY GRAHAM, a Republican from South Carolina. We had been working for 4 months on a bipartisan plan.

We came back to the Hill after that meeting on January 9. That evening and the next day, we hammered out an agreement—six Senators, three Democrats and three Republicans. We called the President on January 11. I personally called him to tell him we had a bill, a bipartisan bill. I wanted him to hear about it, to know the details, and I hoped that it would solve the problem and challenge that we faced. It was a real compromise. The day after we finalized that agreement, after the House meeting, we addressed all of the priorities that the President had laid before us, including protection for the Dreamers and a significant, multibillion-dollar downpayment on our border security.

The President said he looked forward to Senator GRAHAM’s briefing him on that plan and would be back in touch with me. Then I received word, within minutes, that the President wanted me to join Senator GRAHAM in going to the White House. Two hours later, Senator LINDSEY GRAHAM and I were at the White House, hoping that the President might embrace our bipartisan plan, but we were surprised and disappointed when we entered the Oval Office. In a matter of an hour and a half, five of the congressional hard-liners on immigration had been invited in to shoot down our plan. The President’s views, in a matter of less than 2 hours, had changed radically.

During our meeting, the President demanded \$20 billion to build a wall on our southern border. He kept saying

over and over: Give me \$20 billion. I will build this wall in 1 year. The President reacted negatively to the agreement that we had reached in terms of protecting immigrants from Haiti from deportation and ensuring that immigrants from Africa would be permitted to come to our country. What I heard at that meeting had nothing to do with security and American jobs. It was a sad commentary by the President on his vision of immigration.

Then, 2 weeks ago, Senator SCHUMER, our Democratic leader, made another good-faith attempt to work with the White House. He made a generous offer to President Trump to fund the border wall, but after a promising meeting, within 2 hours, the President called and withdrew any offer. That was the third time Senate Democrats had offered to fund President Trump's wall in exchange for the Dream Act. In other words, we have been willing to support a broadly unpopular and partisan proposal—the wall—in exchange for a broadly popular and bipartisan proposal—the Dream Act. The President will not take “yes” for an answer. It is no wonder that Senator SCHUMER has said that trying to reach an immigration agreement with the President is “like trying to negotiate with Jell-O.”

Two weeks ago, the White House released a 1-page “Framework on Immigration Reform & Border Security.” The White House claims this is a compromise because it includes a path to citizenship for some Dreamers. I might add that it is an issue that is supported by the overwhelming majority of American people. The plan would put the administration's entire hard-line immigration agenda on the backs of these young people.

For example, the White House wants to dramatically reduce legal immigration by prohibiting American citizens from sponsoring their parents, siblings, and adult or married children as immigrants. We are talking about, literally, millions of relatives of American citizens who have done the right thing, followed our immigration laws, and have been waiting patiently in line for as long as 20 years to come to the United States.

Listen to what the Cato Institute says about the White House proposal:

[I]n the most likely scenario, the new plan would cut the number of legal immigrants by up to 44 percent or half a million immigrants annually—the largest policy-driven legal immigration cut since the 1920s. Compared to current law, it would exclude—[the President's proposal]—nearly 22 million people from the opportunity to immigrate legally to the United States over the next [50 years].

This proposal would gut the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act, which established our current immigration system, with its focus on reuniting families.

When you think about the bedrock principles of America—faith, family, love of country—why would we assault this effort to unify and strengthen our families in America with those who are following this process in a legal manner?

The 1965 law, which this would change dramatically, replaced the strict national origin quotas of the 1924 immigration law. The 1924 immigration law was written to specifically exclude people whom the Congress and President, in those days, thought should not be part of America's future. They were focusing on people from my part of the world. My family came from the Baltics. They focused on the Baltics and Eastern European countries—to restrict their immigration to this country. Luckily for me, my family got over before the 1924 law. They also wanted to exclude Italians in their belief that we had had enough from that country, and they wanted to exclude Jews. That is what that 1924 National Security Act was about.

When President Lyndon Johnson signed the 1965 law, he said: “It corrects a cruel and enduring wrong. . . . For over four decades the immigration policy of the United States has been twisted and distorted by the harsh injustice of the national origins quota system.”

Listen to what Presidential Calvin Coolidge said when he signed the 1924 law, the last major reduction in legal immigration in America:

There are racial considerations too grave to be brushed aside. Biological laws tell us that certain people will not mix or blend. The Nordics propagate themselves successfully. With other races, the outcome shows deterioration on both sides.

I cannot understand why Attorney General Sessions, at one point, praised that 1924 law and said it was “good for America.”

The President's immigration framework would also fast-track the deportations of women and children who come to our border in their fleeing gang and sexual violence. Since our tragic failure during World War II to aid Jewish refugees who fled the Holocaust, the United States has led the world, since then, in providing a safe haven to people who flee war, terrorism, and persecution. Now we are in the midst of the worst refugee crisis on record, with 65 million people worldwide being forcibly displaced, including child refugees from Central America, the Northern Triangle, who are fleeing horrific violence.

Consider the opinion of General John Kelly back in 2015, the current White House Chief of Staff, when he headed the U.S. Southern Command. General Kelly said then that the children from Central America who are arriving on the U.S.-Mexico border are “the direct result of our drug consumption” in the United States. General Kelly said, “In many ways [parents] are trying to save their children” from the violence in their own countries. General Kelly was right in 2015.

In the past, Democrats have supported some of the President's proposals, like changes in our family immigration system and eliminating the diversity visa lottery. I might remind my colleagues that that was all part of

a significantly comprehensive immigration reform bill.

I was part of the Gang of 8 that drafted the original bill—four Republicans, four Democrats. We brought that bill to this floor in 2013 and won a vote—68 to 32. The bill was a product of months of negotiations and compromise. Unfortunately, the Republican leadership in the House of Representatives refused to even consider it.

Now we are being asked to accept this administration's proposals with no conditions and no give-and-take. If the administration wants to reform our legal immigration system, we have some priorities that we care for as well.

If we are talking about protecting national security, why aren't we closing the loopholes in the Visa Waiver Program? There are 20 million people from 38 nations who travel to America every year on the Visa Waiver Program—one-third of all of the visitors to the United States. They arrive in American airports without undergoing biometric checks or consular interviews. Zacarias Moussaoui, the so-called 20th hijacker of 9/11, tried to enter the U.S. through the Visa Waiver Program. So did Richard Reid, the Shoe Bomber. We should strengthen the Visa Waiver Program by requiring biometric checks of travelers before they land in America so that we know who they are before they board the airplanes.

If you are really sincere about the security of our Nation, this is an obvious need. Congress should also close the loophole that lets people enter the United States through the Visa Waiver Program. Remember, there are 20 million a year. We allow them to buy guns, even assault weapons, even if they are on the FBI's terrorist watch list. When it comes to security, that is an obvious loophole that needs to be closed.

With the President's failing to lead, the responsibility to fix the DACA crisis falls on our shoulders here in Congress.

I see my colleague from Texas, Senator CORNYN. He and I have talked extensively about this. I still hold out hope that we may be able to find some way to resolve this in a bipartisan fashion. We have to do it because, to date, Congress—the Senate and the House—have done nothing.

Three weeks ago, a bipartisan group of Senate Republicans and Democrats finally persuaded Senator MCCONNELL, the Republican leader, to commit to addressing DACA. I salute him for doing that. He made a statement on the floor twice, unequivocally, that we would bring this measure up if we had not reached an agreement by this Friday and that we would consider starting with what he called a level playing field—amendments on both sides—on the issue of immigration and DACA. We haven't seen that kind of debate on the floor of the U.S. Senate in over 1 year.

If it comes to that, I look forward to it. I would like to see the Senate work its will, and I hope that we will come up with a positive and constructive compromise. We have only 3 days from today for that process to start, and I hope that we can make some progress. Bipartisan legislation to protect the Dreamers has been pending in Congress, and it has overwhelming support from the people we represent, including President Trump's own voters. It would pass on a strong bipartisan vote in both the House and the Senate if Republican leaders would bring it to a vote.

I look forward to that debate.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip.

FUNDING THE GOVERNMENT

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I spoke yesterday about the deadline we have coming up in 2 days. The question is, Are we going to fund the Federal Government? Are we going to keep the lights on, the parks open, the military protecting us, the Border Patrol protecting our borders, or are we going to shut down the government again over an unrelated issue?

I listened to my friend, the Senator from Illinois, talk at some length about DACA. I do want to respond to that, but there is no reason we have to do DACA first, because we are engaged in good-faith negotiations, and, indeed, the majority leader has promised that he would take up a bill on the floor of the Senate in our failing to reach an agreement.

The fact is that our friends across the aisle have, basically, shut down the government and are now threatening to hold hostage a number of very important measures, which I will talk about momentarily, over this issue that is unrelated to the funding of the government or to these other matters.

So what have we had to do?

We have had to pass short-term continuing resolutions. We have had five of them since September alone. The impact of these continuing resolutions was brought home to me again yesterday.

Usually, I would think about our military and General Mattis, who has pleaded with us to help provide the additional resources that are necessary to make sure that our military is ready, is trained, has the equipment it needs in order to fight and win wars but, hopefully, to maintain our strength so that we will never have to fight a war. That is how Ronald Reagan viewed it. I agree with General Mattis: Peace through strength is the right formula.

Yet, when our adversaries look at us with our military—just a pale reflection of what it used to be in terms of readiness because of the lack of funding we have provided—that is a provocation or, at least, an invitation for others to step in and fill the void, and it leads to a more dangerous world.

As I said, the harm caused by these continuing resolutions was brought home to me again yesterday when I had a number of people with the Texas Association of Community Health Centers come visit. These community health centers are a vital link and safety net for many Texans and many Americans who don't otherwise have a place they can go for their medical care. They treat people based on a sliding scale, based on the ability to pay, so they are accessible to virtually everyone.

What my constituents with the Texas Association of Community Health Centers told me was because of the funding cliff with the continuing resolutions, they don't know how to plan. Their doctors, their medical assistants, and other support staff don't know if they are going to have a job after Thursday, February 8, when the current continuing resolution expires.

They don't know whether the patients they treat will actually have a place to go to get that treatment. This is a miserable way for Congress to do business, and it should not continue. We need to provide more certainty and predictability.

General Mattis himself said that this basically wastes money because we have to plan to shut down portions of our activities if, in fact, government does shut down. So then we have to restart it again—stop it, start it. It is a waste, it is inefficient, and it is unnecessary.

Our friends across the aisle need to release another hostage, too, in addition to the spending caps agreement and the funding needed for our military and the funding needed for community health centers and all the other important functions that are served by the Federal Government. They need to release the hostage of disaster relief.

In December, the House passed an \$81 billion relief package, but so far our Democratic colleagues have refused to allow us to bring that disaster relief bill up. Again, why? Because of DACA, this unrelated immigration issue that they think is more important than all the people who were hurt by Hurricane Maria, Hurricane Harvey, and the wildfires out West.

We do need to address DACA, and we will, but why hurt the victims of these natural disasters in the interim by holding this disaster relief hostage? It is time we stand up in a bipartisan fashion and show these folks in Texas, Florida, the Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, and out West that we remember, and we are going to help them. Why should they have to wait any further? There is no good answer to that question, but I think it is important that somebody come out on the floor of the U.S. Senate and ask the question.

IMMIGRATION

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I said I wanted to talk about the issue our Democratic colleagues shut down the

government over last month, and that issue is immigration and the path forward on DACA. DACA, again, is Deferred Action on Childhood Arrivals. This is something President Obama did unilaterally, circumventing Congress, assuring that in a new administration, it would be called into question, not only in the courts but also by the new administration.

President Trump, recognizing that the courts had effectively said what President Obama tried to do was illegal, basically continued it for a time to give Congress a chance to try to respond, and he has given us a deadline of March 5. I heard my friend from Illinois blame President Trump for trying to fix a problem that was caused by an overreach by the previous administration. Don't take my word for it, take the courts which struck down the DACA Program.

President Trump has continued it long enough to give Congress a chance to fix it. That is the appropriate response. It is not helpful just to engage in the blame game. We actually need to step up and not just give speeches on the floor of the Senate; we need to actually enter into a good-faith negotiation.

To date, President Trump has issued a reasonable framework that will not only give protection to those who were brought here illegally by their parents as children but also fixes other gaps in our broken immigration system—border security, the diversity lottery visa, and ensures that people who are waiting in line patiently can be unified with their family by narrowing the scope of family-based immigration in the future. That is prospective only. One proposal has been to plow those additional green cards into accelerating the passage of people who are patiently waiting in line—some as many as 10 and 20 years.

President Trump has done something President Obama never did. He has offered 1.8 million young adults who are currently DACA recipients and DACA-eligible an opportunity to get on a pathway to American citizenship. That is three times more than the young adults who were addressed by the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Program that President Obama did unilaterally. That is an incredibly generous offer.

What has the President requested in return or in addition? He said: Secondly, I want to secure our borders, and I want to address legal loopholes in the current law. That is important because we have to protect our citizens and regain the public trust. One of the very reasons this President was elected is because people are angry that the Federal Government has failed them when it comes to securing our borders and enforcing our laws. I believe the second pillar of what President Trump has talked about, border security, is really a system of physical infrastructure—fence, walls, barriers—but also technology and personnel; that those