our country. We have supported the President in the war against terrorism, giving him the full war powers that he has asked for. We provided for $40 billion in emergency funds and we have helped our aviation sector and stabilized that after it was literally shut down for days, which cost the aviation sector billions of dollars.

But we have also worked to respond to other situations that have occurred since the terrorist attack on September 11. The bottom line is, we have to get this economy moving again. That is why the points that the gentlewoman has made are so important, when she referred to in July when the House passed energy independence and energy security legislation to reduce our dependence on imported energy.

It was in October when the House passed and sent to the other body legislation which would stimulate this economy, reward investment and the creation of jobs, help displaced workers with unemployment benefits as well as health care benefits, give extra spending money to consumers. It was in November when the House passed the Farm Security Act, legislation to help our farm economy. Again, the House has been doing its job.

It was just this past week that the House moved in a bipartisan way to give the President the full negotiating power he needs to reduce trade and tariff barriers that stand in the way of American manufactured goods as well as farm products that we produce here on our soils. Mr. Speaker, 96 percent of the Earth's population lives outside of our borders. There is a tremendous amount of market, a tremendous amount of opportunity to move goods from the United States out of our work places and manufacturing places and our farms on to the tables of those who are hungry overseas, not only for our food, but for our goods and services.

The bottom line is, we have worked hard in this House. We have been on schedule. Energy in the summer, passed energy security legislation, we have given the President full trade negotiating powers, we have worked to stimulate this economy. Unfortunately, it takes 2 Houses to get the job done. My hope is that in the next few days that the other body will come together with the House and that we can work together to stimulate the economy and to help bring greater security to our country.

I want to thank the gentlewoman for her leadership and this Special Order.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PLATTS). The Chair is required under the House rules to remind Members that it is not in order to characterize action or inaction by the other Chamber, and would ask Members to comply with that rule.

Mrs. WILSON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Illinois for coming down here and joining me this evening. I also wanted to commend him for his leadership in the Committee on Ways and Means, not only on issues of economic stimulus and the committee and the gentleman have done a grade job, but on trade promotion, and particularly the things that affect our high-tech economy where the good-paying jobs are and we want those good paying jobs to be in America, and I want to thank the gentleman for all the hard work that he has done this year.

Today, the Congress had a tremendous success. We passed an education bill which is now on its way to the President that will implement his idea and his passion, that no child will be left behind in America. We have given the President legislation and money to fight the war on terrorism. The people who attacked America on September 11 underestimated the resolve of this Congress, this President, and this country. We will find those responsible, we will root them out, and we will destroy them. We are united in that resolve.

The House of Representatives has passed numerous measures to stimulate this economy. We have passed an energy bill that would give us 700,000 new jobs. We have passed an economic stimulus bill that would reduce the tax rates on middle-class Americans, put money in consumer pockets, and let small businesses invest and create jobs and restore confidence to our capital markets. We need to move forward and grow jobs in this country. Mr. Speaker, 700,000 Americans lost their jobs since September 11. We are in a terrorist-induced recession. Now is the time to act and get back to growing jobs.

IMMIGRATION REFORM AND CONTROL AND THE SECURITY OF OUR BORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. TANCREDO) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. TANCREDO. Mr. Speaker, although I can certainly agree with many of the comments of the previous speakers with regard to what this Congress has accomplished to date, there is an issue, of course, that I must bring to the attention of the Congress, of my colleagues, and the Speaker, that has not been dealt with. It is almost incredible to stand here and say this in light of everything that has happened since September 11. We have, indeed, prosecuted a war against the perpetrators of the September 11 tragedy, and we have prosecuted it successfully. I am immensely grateful to the President of the United States for his efforts to bring these people to justice. In many ways, I am pleased with what the Congress of the United States has done in efforts, as has been stated earlier, at least on the House side, in terms of enhancing the economic viability of the Nation, passing a stimulus package, and the rest.

However, while we focus on issues like those that have been described here, having just passed a massive education bill earlier this afternoon, we have abandoned, we have refused to deal with one of the most important, one of the most significant and uniquely Federal responsibilities given to us under the Constitution, and that is the issue of immigration control, immigration reform, and the security of our borders.

Amazingly, I say, we have refused to do that. Here we are approaching the end of this particular session of Congress. I would have hoped that all of our colleagues could have seen what most Americans see. Poll after poll after poll by Americans of every stripe, of every political philosophy, of every ethnic background, every single poll tells us something we evidently do not understand in this Congress, and that is the American people want immigration reform. They want us to do everything we can to gain control of our borders, to make them more secure, so that while we are bombing the people, al Qaeda and others responsible for the terrorist acts of September 11, while we are bombing them in Afghanistan, the people of the United States want to know that the Government of the United States is doing everything it can to protect them from more of these folks coming across these borders with the intent to do harm. Yet nothing has been done. Nothing.

We have passed stimulus packages, we have passed education reform, we have done a number of things, again, that many people can be quite proud of; but amazingly, we have refused to deal with this issue.

Mr. Speaker, I used to stand up here on the floor of the House and talk about the need for immigration reform at a point in time when there were relatively few Members of this body who were interested in doing that. I recognize that it was not a popular issue to address. Many Members on both sides have very deep-seated feelings about this issue. Some of them revolve around the political imperatives that they face in their own districts, the recognition that to talk about immigration reform always puts one into the position of being attacked for a variety of reasons, all of them unrelated to the real issue of immigration reform. But I felt it was necessary to do so. But I also understood entirely the political dynamics of this body. I am a political person; I do understand what motivates individuals in terms of their voting record.

I recognize fully well that it would be difficult to ever move this issue forward in this session, the next session, or the one after that. That was several months ago that I had that impression and knew that I was fighting an uphill battle.

□ 1700

I used to talk about the importance of gaining control of our borders and the importance of security, and I would reference the fact that we have had several instances of terrorists doing

things in the United States, certainly not to the extent in terms of the damage caused by the September 11 events, but we have had similar events. We have had all kinds of warning signs that something like September 11 was coming.

In the spring of 1993, Mr. Speaker, a Middle East terrorist named Mohammad Salameh struck the first blow at the World Trade Center.

He, if Members will recall, detonated a bomb in the garage. It killed eight and it wounded many. The mastermind of the plot was a notorious Egyptian sheikh named Omar Abdul Rahman. The sheikh had been behind the assassination attempt or the assassination of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, had fled his own country, and was on the State Department's list of known terrorists.

However, recognizing his background, knowing who he was and what he was responsible for and what he wanted to do to us, all he had to do was to walk into an American embassy in Khartoum, claim refugee status because he had been driven out of Egypt for the murder of the President, and get it, get refugee status, and come to the United States of America, come specifically to New Jersey and begin recruiting terrorists, which he did, begin spouting his hatred of the United States, of this great satan, in the mosque in New Jersey; recruiting people into his organization, one of them being Mr. Salameh, the perpetrator of the crime in the World Trade Center.

That did not warn us? That did not tell us something about the nature of our immigration system, about the nature of our visa process, about our need to actually control the flow? That did not tell us something, that a man like this sheikh could get into this country by simply claiming refugee status, and then we, of course, open the door wide?

We now hand out refugee status like it was candy. Refugee status used to mean something. People used to have to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that their lives were in danger in the country they came from for political reasons, and that they were not, at the same time, a threat to the United States of America. It means nothing today. We hand it out like candy.

In fact, approximately 93 percent of the people who come to the United States who claim refugee status may not obtain it originally, but they simply walk away after they claim it, because at that time when you claim refugee status, you can stay while a process is under way to find out whether or not you get it, even though in New York City alone, the port of New York, at JFK, only a few thousand will be granted refugee status originally, but all the rest who claim it simply walk out the door.

They become, essentially, refugees in the United States because no one ever goes after them; no one has the slightest idea who or where they are. When one goes to the INS and asks them, where are the people who have come here as refugees, but you have denied refugee status to them, they do what I call this logo, and this should be the logo of the INS. It is simply this: a person standing there shrugging his shoulders, hands out, saying essentially, ''I don't know.''

For almost everything we ask the INS about in these kinds of situations, that is the response we get: ''I don't know; cannot tell you; I am not sure; I do not know; we have no figures on that; we do not keep records on that.'' That is the most constant refrain we get.

So in the spring of 1993, again, it should have told us something; but amazingly, it evidently did not, not enough to get this body and the administration to move in the area of border security.

Why? Because there is a fear of doing so. There is a fear of alienating a certain segment of the population in the United States, newly arrived immigrants, immigrant families, whatever; maybe the fear of alienating other nations, other countries, to tell them to try and please help us gain control of our borders.

Whatever it is, and there are plenty of reasons why we have refused to move forward, we did not. We did nothing.

In 1993, another asylum seeker entered the United States. His name was Mir Aimal Kansi, K-A-N-S-I. Mr. Kansi, as Members might recall, later shot and killed six people as they waited in their cars outside the CIA offices in McLean, Virginia. He fled back to Pakistan, probably with the aid of the Pakistani Government, and has never been seen since.

Time and time again, we have been shown that we are vulnerable; that people coming into the United States, if we do not be careful, if we do not clear them, if we do not know for sure who they are and keep track of them when they are here, if we do not do that, we are putting ourselves in jeopardy.

We had all of these warning signs. There were many more, many more times when people were apprehended for totally separate events. There was a guy caught trying to come across to the United States, come into the United States through Canada with all the bomb-making equipment and that sort of thing; and just by happenstance, totally serendipitously, it turned out he was prevented from coming in. But we know, actually now we know that thousands of people are here in the United States who we suspect now of coming in here with devious intents.

Now, when I talk about these people, I am not just talking about the people who are here illegally; they just simply come across the borders of the United States, north, south, east, and west, and are here illegally pursuing their lifestyle, attempting to achieve a better life.

Everybody knows a story of someone who has a family member or something who has come here, even illegally, with the intent of essentially just making a better life for themselves and not with the intent of doing harm to the United States. But I am talking about a lot of other people who have come here for other reasons. We know they are here, and we are not sure where. We are rounding people up, we are detaining them and trying to go through now and trying to find them.

Just recently, we have indicted someone who we found was a co-conspirator or the allegation is that he is a co-conspirator with bin Laden and al Qaeda. Guess what? Guess what they got him on? Violation of his immigration status, violation of his visa.

Every single one of the people on the planes that were here in the United States on September 11, the 19 people who in fact perpetrated the crime, all of them were here on some sort of visa status. Most of them had, as I understand it, violated their visa status in some way or another and could have been thrown out before September 11, had we paid the slightest bit of attention to the people who come in here and why they come and where they come from.

But this was not the modus operandi of the INS. The focus of the INS at the time was to say that its real purpose had little if anything to do with the enforcement of our immigration laws, but it had everything to do with trying to make sure immigrants to the United States got services, benefits, as one of the individuals from INS told a radio audience in Denver when I was home not too long ago.

She said, yes, we have a responsibility to go out there and look. We do not do this rounding up of people anymore, and going to worksites and any of that stuff. We find illegal aliens, and we try to explain to them they are here illegally, and then how they can get benefits. This is what she considered to be the job of the INS.

We had great hopes that with the change of administration from the Clinton administration to the Bush administration there would also be a change in policy with regard to immigration; that we would be able to begin to control our own borders. A new person was put in place, Mr. Ziglar, who was appointed to head the INS. But again, I must say, Mr. Speaker, we have been disappointed, disappointed with the new director and with his lack of enthusiasm for the enforcement side of his job.

As it turns out, Mr. Ziglar has an extensive background in the area of immigration law because evidently, according to his own testimony in the other body, he had been a staffer for a member over there, Mr. Kennedy, and actually helped write some of the legislation that we are now trying to deal with in terms of immigration reform, legislation that created so many loopholes, ultimately, that even Mr. Ziglar

now says hampers their ability, the INS's ability, to actually get something done. He was actually a staff member of the committee, he told the committee he was testifying in front of the other day.

So it is apparent that we have someone now running that agency who has no difference in terms of philosophy or what he believes the direction of the agency should be, no difference from any of his predecessors. He thinks of the INS as a great social service agency whose duty and responsibility is to get as many people into the country as possible and to ''get them benefits as quickly as possible once they get here.''

Interestingly, one of the other pieces of legislation, major pieces of legislation that was passed by this body, by this House not too long ago, just yesterday, was the so-called voter registration reform bill.

After all of the problems we saw with regard to voting and the voting machines and the chads and all the rest of that stuff, there was a great clamour for some sort of reform in the process. So we are going to spend millions of dollars to help communities buy new machines and that sort of thing.

Fascinatingly, fascinatingly, when I went to the author of the legislation and asked if there was anything in there to prevent people who are here illegally, people who are not citizens of the United States, if there was anything in the bill to prevent them from voting, he said they really could not get that through, and that he was hoping that the other body would in fact do that; that we could somehow, somewhere, add to the bill the requirement that one be a citizen to vote, ''But we were fearful that that cannot be fixed.''

Now, Mr. Speaker, I ask Members, am I the only one here, and my colleague, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. TRAFICANT) often says, beam me up, beam me up, Mr. Speaker, because he cannot believe what is going on around here. I would have to add my voice to his. Beam me up, also.

Is it really true that this body cannot produce a piece of legislation that says one has to be a citizen in order to be able to vote? Much too controversial. The INS does not support it; the administration probably does not support it.

Mr. Speaker, we have not changed our attitudes, even though there are over 3,000 dead in New York, even though a plane crashes into the Pentagon just a few miles from where we stand tonight, and even though the perpetrators were all themselves noncitizens of the United States; even though we know that time and time again people have come across our borders with the intent to do us harm and have carried out many actions; and even though we know that we cannot pass anything in this body that even remotely reflects our concern for the security of our border.

Beam me up. Beam me up, Mr. Speaker. It is absolutely beyond my ability to understand why we are so fearful, why it has taken us so long, why we have yet to deal with this issue, and why there are still people who, although they will not say as much, they will not be quite as open, quite as vociferous, quite as demanding and visible today as they were prior to the September 11 about their desire to see open borders, people who still have a desire to provide amnesty for all the people who are here illegally.

Although we do not get them saying that so often, we know that they are really still in control.

□ 1715

I go back to Mr. Ziglar's testimony just the other day in front of the Senate committee. This is the INS commissioner, John Ziglar. When he fielded a question asking whether the administration is still considering an amnesty for Mexicans and why, if the INS needs more money, does not Congress pass 245(i) extension?

Let me explain 245(i). This is simply another bureaucratic term for the process of amnesty. That is all, providing amnesty for people who are here illegally. This is a big issue in the Congress. We cannot do anything about border security, but they are still hoping that somehow, someway, we are going to be able to get an extension of 245(i) to provide amnesty to millions of people here illegally, to give them a reward for breaking the law.

They are still trying to figure it out. They are still determining whether or not they can put it on to an appropriations bill, whether or not they can hide it in one of the bills we are going to be dealing with here next week, one of the three, two or three final appropriation bills we have in front of us, because if they can stick it in a huge package of legislation, it will be less likely for us to be able to defeat it, those of us who are opposed to it, and it will be much easier for people to vote for it because people will say I had to vote for the defense appropriation, did I not. So they are trying to figure out ways to do that.

As we stand here tonight, they are trying to figure that out. They are not dealing with the issue of border security itself, amazing again, incredible, but true, but here is the commissioner of the INS, appointed by this administration. Remember, this is not a Clinton appointee. When he was asked about this, he responded regularization, this is a euphemism, regularization, this is a euphemism for amnesty, regularization has taken a back seat, but he said the President has not abandoned it, it is just going to be on a slower track until the climate dies down. Until the climate dies down, until we no longer have our sensitivity as acutely honed as we do today to the problems with illegal immigration into the country. When it is quieter, they will sneak it by us, that is what he is saying. This is the new commissioner of the INS. Someone ought to be beamed up and he is one.

We have over 300,000 people, Mr. Speaker, approximately 318,000 that we can identify, 318,000 people who have been ordered to be deported from the United States over the last several years. We have about 100,000 go through this process every year, and some of them are actually deported, but 300,000 of them walk away. They simply walked out of the courtroom and into American society.

Please understand, Mr. Speaker, these are people who did not simply overstay their visas. These people oftentimes have committed crimes against the United States. That is how they got caught. No one gets caught for simply overstaying their visa. No one gets caught for not having a visa. So no one should be surprised that no one goes after visa violators. When we ask the INS, how many people violate their visas every year, visa status? They go into their logo stance, I do not know, got me, probably a lot, we do not know, we do not keep track of them.

Well, these 318,000 that we have found to be out there and only, by the way, after we pressed the INS for quite some time, did they release this information, when we brought every time we could possibly make the point, I would try, others would try to use this as an example of the problem, that 300,000 people were out there already, walked away and they had been ordered deported. No one had the slightest idea where they were, what they were doing.

The other day the INS finally decided they would, in fact, allow other agencies access to the names, that they would put them into the crime database. So that now if a policeman in Jefferson County, sheriff in Jefferson County, Colorado, just happens to pull somebody over for drunken driving or running a red light or whatever and enters their name into the database in the computer, it may come up and say this guy, this person is here illegally, was ordered deported.

That is a good step. I am very happy the INS did this, of course, do not get me wrong. This is what they considered to be, however, a major reform effort, putting the names into the database. I agree they should do that, do not get me wrong. The question now becomes one of what they will do once in a blue moon when somebody does, in fact, get arrested and are found to have been ordered deported, what will the INS do?

Will they do what they have done up to this point in time when they are called by local officials who say we have got a bunch of people here we just rounded up, they are all here illegally, we just stopped a car on the road because it did not have any taillights, any headlights, broken windshields, and we found out there were six people hidden in the trunk, there were was a van with 19 in there and they are all here illegally, and what will the INS tell them? I do not know what to do, let them go. Hey, what the heck. We have not got time to come out there. They are just here illegally.

Do my colleagues know what a previous INS assistant director said when he was speaking to, just a short time ago, just last year I think it was, speaking to a group of people who were here illegally? They were probably giving them a party, for all I know, probably like a cocktail party thrown by illegal aliens for the INS. It would not surprise me. It certainly should because I guarantee my colleagues they have nothing to worry about and they do owe a great deal to the INS, and the INS, this person, I wish I had the name in front of me, I have used it before on the floor, told the assembled group of illegals that being here illegally was not against the law. Now, I do not know if the people to whom he was speaking understood the English language well enough to understand the perversity of that statement. Yeah, he said being here illegally is not against the law.

So this is what we have to deal with. Should we be surprised then that it is so difficult to get the INS to change their philosophy because we have got the same people, essentially the same ideas about who we are and what we are.

I assure you, Mr. Speaker, that they will come in and say when we have asked them, why do not you try to do something about that? They will say, well, it is the resources. It is the fact that Congress has passed laws tying our hands. That is absolutely true. Plenty of dumb laws have been passed by the Congress. Plenty.

Again, I do not know where to start. There are so many goofball things we have done here to try and encourage massive immigration into the country of illegals. But combine that stupid activity and the stupid actions of Congress over the past 10 years with the incompetence and the lack of willingness to enforce immigration laws that is inbred into the INS, and it is no wonder we have a disaster of the nature that we have faced and that we are still facing, we have faced on the 11th and we are still facing.

Is there any Member of this body, is there anyone in the United States of America who does not think that there are still people either in the United States or trying to get into the United States but with the purpose of continuing the jihad against us? Is there a human being here who thinks that? Does anybody believe that even if we bomb Afghanistan into dust that our worries are over within terms of terrorist activity in the United States of America? Does anybody believe that?

I cannot imagine there is anyone, certainly in this body, and I cannot imagine that there is a thinking person in the United States that would agree that all we have to do is destroy the al Qaeda network in Afghanistan and we are all going to be okay.

So then what is it that we can and should be doing to ensure our safety in this Nation besides bombing Afghanistan? We should, of course, be defending our own borders. We should, of course, be using the National Guard to defend the borders and every State that is adjacent to the border of Canada and/or Mexico. We should be using technology to help stop people from coming.

Now we will never be perfect. We cannot be perfect. I recognize that fully well. We will work and work as hard as we can to make sure our borders are not porous and we will never be able to make it perfect. But on the other hand, does that mean that we do nothing because we are afraid of the political ramifications of saying we are going to clamp down on immigration. We are afraid that the Hispanic community in the United States would vote against us.

But I will say again, Mr. Speaker, the fascinating thing about this topic is that we can see by poll after poll after poll that those Hispanic Americans that have been here for generations, some of them a lot longer than my family has been in the United States, legal Americans, people who have been here, people who have recently immigrated to the United States legally and are of Hispanic descent, by large majorities they agree with us that the border should be enforced, the border immigration laws should be enforced.

Seventy-three percent in a recent poll said, this is Hispanic Americans, said that employer sanctions ought to be enforced for people who hire illegal immigrants. It is fallacious to think that the entire community of Hispanics living in this country today would automatically in a knee jerk fashion vote out anybody who dared suggest that we should actually try to maintain integrity of our own borders.

I will say, I would say, that regardless if I faced that kind of political problem which I may very well do. I mean, I get plenty of mail, I assure you, that suggests that my political days are numbered because of the position I have taken vis-a-vis immigration. So what? So what?

Is it not our responsibility in this body to provide for the protection of the life and property of the people in the United States? Is not that primary? Is not that the most important thing we are here for? Is not it even more important than the education bill? Is not it even more important than the economic stimulus package? To protect the life, the property of the people of the United States. How do we do that if we ignore the fact that our borders are porous, that people can come into this country at will and do harm?

How do we ignore this? Yet, we have.

We are coming to the end of this session. We have ignored the most sacred responsibility we have as Members of this body. We have done so because of our fear, our fear that our actions would be either misinterpreted or for whatever reason, we will suffer political consequences.

We have refused to do so because Members on the other side of the aisle recognize that massive immigration into this country, both legal and illegal, eventually turns into votes for them. That is what they believe. It may be true. It does not matter. It is more important to keep this Nation safe than to worry about our political future. Because, frankly, what does it matter what our political futures are if our Nation is being destroyed around us. And there are many ways that that destruction can come.

It can come as a result of the bombs that people place in buildings, or the planes they turn into bombs and drive into buildings. And it can come from the disintegration from our own society that can happen as a result of massive immigration. Forty-five million Americans today do not speak English, cannot speak English. Forty-five million Americans cannot communicate with their fellow Americans in the language of this country. Forty-five million Americans, therefore, are inhibited from achieving full integration into this society. Many of them, of course, choose not to integrate.

□ 1730

And many of them have no reason, they think, to do so, because essentially their culture, their ideas, their language came with them and now everybody in their community speaks a language other than English and so it is quite comfortable.

And our schools, our schools continue to push bilingual education. Even today, when we passed this massive education reform bill, and this is one more thing to go on that list of incredible but true, because if we said to everyone in this Nation, if we asked everyone the following question, do you believe that a parent should have the right to determine whether or not their child should be placed into a bilingual education program, what do you think the response would be? I wonder, Mr. Speaker. I think, overwhelmingly, people would say, yes, absolutely. Seems only right. Yet we could not get that reform into this bill.

Today, even after we passed this reform bill, children all over America will be placed, involuntarily, into bilingual education classes, classes so that they will be taught in a language other than English. Therefore, their ability to achieve success in our schools and, therefore, later in life in our system, is severely jeopardized. But they will be placed there, and then it will be incumbent upon a parent to go through the hoops to try to get them out. And that is what we call reform.

But, of course, many of these parents do not understand the process all that well and are very, well, intimidated by the process; but they know in their hearts what is best for their children. They know that it would be good for the children to actually be taught in English, and to be taught English quickly, to be immersed in English, to move out of a language other than

English and into the language of commerce, into the international language of commerce and trade. They know that in their hearts; yet their children will be placed in bilingual programs without their permission. This only helps the disintegration of the culture I have described.

As I say, we can be attacked in a lot of ways, Mr. Speaker. It does not just have to be by bombs. And I believe there is a threat to the Nation that is represented by massive immigration, especially of illegal immigrants, that has to be addressed by this Congress.

I am happy to see that one of my colleagues has joined us on the floor of the House, and I would definitely yield to the gentleman for his remarks on this subject.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Speaker, I think it is very apropos that my colleague is talking about the danger of out-of-control immigration to our country.

My staff was recently looking at some of the statements that I made back in 1997 in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. On September 29, 1997, there was a debate about extending 245(i), which was basically a provision which suggested that if someone was in the United States illegally, instead of having them have to go back, which they traditionally have had to do, to their home country in order to change their status and then stand in line and become a legal applicant, 245(i) would have permitted them just to give $1,000 and to stay in the United States of America and to have their status adjusted here.

During that debate, I stated, and I think it comes right down to the safety of the country, and we are talking about immigration policy: ''Extending 245(i) also raises serious national security questions.'' This is back in 1997. ''Unlike those who enter the United States legally, 245(i) applicants are not required to go through the same criminal checks, history checks, as they do when they go through this check in their home country when they are waiting to come to this country legally. The consular offices located in the applicant's home country, along with foreign national employees working for the State Department, are in the best position to determine if an applicant has a criminal background or is a national security risk.''

Again, this is in 1997. ''Consulates abroad are more knowledgeable, they speak the local language, they know the different criminal justice systems in the country, and they are the ones who should be screening the people before they come to the United States so that we do not have criminals and terrorists coming to the United States, not being screened, and ending up just paying $1,000 to be put in front of the line. Allowing these lawbreakers to apply for permanent status in the United States rather than having them returned to their home countries to do so circumvents a screening process that has been carefully established to protect our country's security.''

Now, that was back in September of 1997. And let us note that any one of the September 11 hijackers who was here in this country would have been eligible then to find a sponsor or to marry somebody, just with the restrictions that they wanted to tweak this 245(i), that would have permitted them to stay in this country. And the general idea of 245(i), had that been totally accepted, which was being pushed in 1997, none of those guys would have had to go home to get their status changed. Every one of the terrorists that slammed into those buildings and was involved in this conspiracy to kill thousands of Americans would have been given an avenue to stay right in this country legally.

Now, when we have policies, when we have people advocating this type of policy that we are going to change the way we do things around here, and this is the policy change, and it is so evidently nonchalant about the national security of our country, something is wrong.

And I would like to applaud the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. TANCREDO) for the leadership he is providing on this overall issue of immigration, because what we have here is immigration out of control. And an immigration policy that is out of control is bound to do great damage to our country, to our people, and to the national security of our country.

Already we have seen what that means just in terms of traditional national security, and that is we have lost almost 4,000 of our citizens to a terrorist attack because we did not have proper control of our borders. We had people here in our country that should not have been here, not to mention of course the failure of the CIA, the FBI, and the National Security Agency, which of course was a failure as well, but now we are just talking about specific policies.

In my State, okay, we have not lost 4,000 people to a terrorist, but we have criminals who are let loose every day in my State because we have a policy of, what? If someone is arrested and they are here illegally, that does not automatically mean that they are sent home to the country from which they come.

Mr. TANCREDO. It is called the catch and release policy.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Imagine that. We are turning loose criminals, people who have been arrested for crimes in our country and just turning them loose among our citizens. This is outrageous.

And why are we doing this? We are doing this because Americans have good hearts and we are afraid to do things that would cause great hardship and discomfort to very good people. Ninety-five percent of the illegal immigrants, much less the legal immigrants, but 95 percent of them are wonderful people, and we are afraid to do something that would cause them hardship.

Well, who are we representing, anyway? Who are we supposed to represent? We are supposed to represent the people of the United States, the people who happen to be of all races and all ethnic backgrounds. The people of the United States are not one race. We are not representing a racist point of view or one ethnic point of view. We are representing the patriotic interests of every American, no matter what color he or she is, or what religion he or she is.

We should have no apologies that to whomever it is we are saying, ''I am sorry, because you are not here legally, you have to go home,'' or ''you are here illegally and you cannot get benefits to take away from our citizens,'' we should not be afraid to do this.

Mr. TANCREDO. The gentleman is so correct. And let me say, first of all, that long before I came to the Congress of the United States, there was an individual, maybe more than one, but one I know of who has been such a stalwart on the issue of immigration, the safety of the American people brought about through the defense of our borders, and it is definitely the gentleman who has joined me on the floor tonight, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROHRABACHER). I am proud that the gentleman is here and that he is a strong supporter of our efforts.

When we talk about who are we representing, it is fascinating, because most of the immigrants into this country, legal immigrants, people who are here relatively recently and have just come into the country, most of them support our desire to try and reform immigration. So when the gentleman says, who are we representing, it is true that it is as if the majority of the body is actually representing people who are not American citizens and who are attempting to come into the country illegally. That is what it seems like we are representing here instead of our own constituency, instead of the best interests of the country.

David Letterman said on TV not too long ago in his opening monologue, he said, ''The Taliban is on the run and don't know where to go. Pakistan doesn't want them. Iran doesn't want them. Of course, they will have no problem getting into this country.'' And he is absolutely right. Unfortunately, it is true.

I do not know if the gentleman from California heard when I was talking earlier about the INS and their attitude about 245(i), but even after everything that has happened, the gentleman who is the commissioner of the INS, James Ziglar, was speaking in front of a Senate committee and said essentially that ''we've not abandoned this idea of 245(i) extension.'' He says, ''We're just going to be on a slower track until the climate dies down.''

Mr. ROHRABACHER. If the gentleman will yield, I take it the gentleman did remind everyone that on

the morning of September 11, 245(i), and the extension of it, was scheduled to be voted on right here in this body. How ironic that on the day that we suffered this horrendous attack, this monstrous atrocity that was committed against our people, that we had an attempt to open up 245(i)'s wedge into the door, open up a little more.

We were going to vote on that ''reform'' that day, and of course, because of the attacks, we were not able to hold a session that day. Conveniently, that proposal has been shelved recently and has not even been brought up since then. But just the insanity of the fact that people are still considering that type of thing, again making the wedge into the door a little bit bigger so people can squeeze through that opening. It is just insanity.

Now we are paying the price for this, and we are paying it in a big way. Number one, on these people who died. The people who are victims of criminal attacks. Also, our working people who are now working at less wages because illegal immigrants in particular are willing to come in and work for anything. Yes, we have a huge class of people who have benefited, and even the upper middle-class people benefited from having this great expansion in the last 10 years. But guess what, a lot of working people did not because they were competing against people who came here illegally from another country.

Now, do we really care about those people? Yes, we should care about our citizens at that income level who now have a lower standard of living. And we can be proud that, yes, the upper middle income in our country, those people benefited greatly and now they have three cars and now they have houses that are so expensive. Yes, let us feel proud that so many of our citizens, 10 percent of our citizens, can live like that.

□ 1745

What about the other 25 percent of our citizens that are working class people and have found their wages stagnated for a whole decade because people come in from all over the world and undercut them in their attempts to seek higher wages.

Mr. TANCREDO. Mr. Speaker, there is a program called the H–1B program, and I am sure the gentleman is well aware what it is about. You can obtain a visa to come into the United States because your skill is so great and there is such a need that we cannot find American workers. Therefore, Congress has increased the ceiling on H–1Bs to 195,000. They usually go into the area of high tech. Most of these people are working in the computer industry, computer programmers and the like. That industry has suffered the largest decline in this recession.

Hundreds of thousands of people have been laid off, but we in Congress continue to allow H–1B workers to come into the country and take the jobs that would be there for American citizens. Get this, we found the other day another thing for the list of incredible but true. Remember I said these are high tech, skilled workers. When we talk to people in the industry, they say we cannot find these people here. They have Ph.D.s in esoteric areas. We have to get special permission to bring them in.

Mr. Speaker, get this. Five hundred visas are specially set aside for models. Super models. You know, ladies that walk around; models. This is high tech? I mean, I think we have enough beautiful people in the United States, do we really need a special visa category. There are 500 H–1Bs for super models coming into the United States. Believe me, there are a lot of people who I think could take those jobs. But it is just a tiny example of how idiotic this whole thing is.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. If the gentleman would yield, ''idiotic'' is a mild word to describe this insanity. It is bizarre. It is surrealistic to see the type of immigration policy we have and the people who, with a straight face, will come and advocate these insane policies as if they are, in some way, respectable.

Frankly, I do not see how, if I was hiring myself out, like a lot of people who are advocating these things, such as former congressmen who take PR contracts, I do not see how you can advocate for this. The 24–I example and the H–1B visas, this is insanity.

I remember that debate so well because they kept saying we cannot find people to take these high tech jobs in the computer industry. I said we should try to, for example, go into the schools in the inner city and offer to pay entire college tuition for any kids who will agree to work for this high tech corporation when they get out of school. I am sure there are a couple hundred thousand kids that would love to have some type of scholarship program.

I said, what about disabled people? We are talking about computer work, after all. How much work has been done by the computer industry to recruit disabled people who can still work with their hands and be able to do that job? Well, nobody had taken that really into consideration, either. But the easy answer is, of course, to hire somebody from the south part of Asia who will come in who is 25 years old, and come in and work for $30,000 less a year than our own people will work or than will cost us to train our own people to come in and do these jobs. In other words, it is no consideration for the Americans at all. None.

Mr. TANCREDO. Reclaiming my time, the gentleman is absolutely correct. Study after study, even from those kinds of institutions that are pro immigration, study after study shows that the people hurt most by illegal immigration into the country are people at the bottom rung of the ladder, people who are working for minimum wage. The millions of people coming in without skills end up competing for those jobs.

Today I heard the report of the unemployment rate, and it is going up. High tech got hit first. Now we are seeing a major increase in the unemployment rate for people with low job skills, people who are often brought to our attention by the other side of the aisle, the homeless rate is going up, the number of people seeking welfare and food stamps is going up. All of that discussion about all those people, but never once have I heard those Members stand up and say we have at least 11 million people in this country illegally who are competing for those jobs. Nobody cares about that because that is part of their voter base.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. If the gentleman would yield, during this time when we do need some working people in these jobs, it is a fact, that is, when wages rise because employers are competing for better workers. During that time period, we might have created a situation where employers needed employees, and that they would have bid to get their services. We might have ended the problem of our own citizens not having health care coverage, for example, because the employers in order to get people to wash their dishes and wait on the tables, maybe they would have had to then offer those workers a health care plan. Maybe they would have had to talk to the people washing the cars and handling the parking lots, maybe they would have had to offer those people a health care plan.

Instead, we let that opportunity to raise the standard of living and help our people get those benefits from the private sector get away, and it ends up a burden on the taxpayer, not only of those other people but of the illegal immigrants as well.

Mr. TANCREDO. Mr. Speaker, as we bring this discussion to a close, I want to let individuals know there is a way to contact us about this issue, especially people who want to know more about the impact of illegal immigration and what they can do about it. This is the e-mail address and fax number. It is a way in which people can get connected to this subject and perhaps help convince their congressman of the need for reform. We desperately need a change. I thank the gentleman for joining me.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Speaker, I salute the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. TANCREDO). This issue would not be discussed without the effort put out by the gentleman.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. GONZALEZ (at the request of Mr. GEPHARDT) for today on account of personal business.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut (at the request of Mr. GEPHARDT) for today on account of a death in the family.