

America a consciousness of the sacrifice that has preceded in our own Nation. Hopefully that measure of sacrifice can be extrapolated into the challenges that face America today and the sacrifice now of over 800 young men and women who have died in the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq, primarily Iraq, and the many more thousands who have been wounded. Yes, that does not compare, certainly by way of numbers, with the over 400,000 in World War II, but in my heart it compares. Every soldier counts. Every sailor, every airman, every marine counts.

It is not just the total number. To the family who bereaves the loss of their loved one, it is painful, irrespective of the total. It is a big total in my judgment, a significant total, a serious total and a serious loss to the country. Each us in this Chamber deeply grieves those losses.

Coming together this weekend, focusing on the sacrifices, on where our Nation is today as the leader of the free world, I hope will better enable Americans to understand the sacrifice of these young men and women, be they killed or wounded, and the hardships to the family. It is worth it because it is all part of a long, step-by-step trek toward not only achieving freedom for other nations but maintaining our freedom here at home, freedom against terrorism and other threats throughout the world.

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. THOMAS. 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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.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. THOMAS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I may speak for 5 or 6 minutes in morning business.

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

SEASONAL WORK PERMITS

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, I want to take a minute this morning to talk about an issue that has been of some concern for us in Wyoming, as the Presiding Officer knows, for some time; yet we have not been able to move forward on it. It has to do with work permits that allow people to come and work for a seasonal time, for a relatively short time, in our case, generally, for the tourism around Yellowstone Park.

In that business, they have offered these jobs to anyone, of course, over the years, but they have been filled largely by people coming from other countries—mostly Mexico—for a fairly short period of time on what is called an H-2B visa. This is a category of visa that allows for seasonal and temporary nonagricultural workers to come. These workers are employed in all

kinds of industries that include fisheries, timber, hotels, restaurants, and others. Even ice skating shows have been talked about recently.

Businesses must file a petition with the State department of labor to certify that no local workers are available. They have always done that, of course. Workers are certified for a specific period of time. When that time has expired, they must return to their home country. I think this program has been in place for a good long time. I think it is one of the unique ones where there has been a record of re-turning.

One of the problems is—and this has come up as a problem, of course, in the last several months or a year—there has been a lot of conversation about illegal immigrants in this country, and properly so. There has been a great deal of conversation about outsourcing and paying less because you can get people to come from other places. Those things are true, but they are not applicable in this particular instance because, No. 1, these people are certified to be here. They go back when the time is over.

In the past, they have been able to come back on the same permit over a period of time. It has kind of worked that way. The wages have been reasonable wages paid in these particular areas. It is a fact and it is true that the jobs are not always the kind of jobs that a lot of young people want in our country. They are working in hotels and motels; nevertheless, they are jobs that are available and reasonably paid.

I think, though, because of the situation we have had and other kinds of problems with immigrants and illegals, this has become a more realistic issue than it would have been otherwise. This year, the number of H-2Bs was capped, and the number happened to be 66,000 per year. The fact is, this is really the first time that cap has been enforced. It is the first time people have ever thought in terms of a cap. Much of it had to do with the timing. People were talking, as our folks do in Jackson, about the summer season. They had not worried too much about doing this until the spring when they have traditionally done it; and it turns out that because of the cap, those numbers had been reached in other places. Therefore, it excluded the involvement of any more H-2Bs.

This is not an issue that is unique particularly to Wyoming. Other States, such as New Hampshire, Maine, Alaska, Virginia, Ohio, and North Carolina, have specifically spoken out as we have about the problem that exists in Wyoming.

Last year, they had petitions roughly for 1,800 workers in Wyoming. About 1,600 went, as I mentioned, to Jackson Hole. So we tried to find a solution to this situation because it seemed, more than anything, to be a question of timing. If we are going to have a limit, that is fine, but the limit ought to be known so that people, if they are going

to need workers in the summer, can make application at an appropriate time earlier in the year so that the timing is not an issue. That is the way it has been this year.

So for the last number of months, since we all heard about this—the first was in March before we even knew about the limit—the Senators and staff have been working to address this issue in a fair and consistent manner, to make good immigration policy. None of us are looking for illegal immigrants who are trying to extend illegal opportunities. This is a program that has been in place, has been useful, and has been legal. These are legal people who come and then they return, so the question of illegal immigration doesn't really fit in here.

So I need to make the point that this is something that we could proceed with. As a matter of fact, there have been opportunities in the Senate to move forward, and many suggestions that have been made are reasonable. I am trying to emphasize the fact that we need to move to do this and not simply write off the 2004 season. I will have to admit it is now very late and people are looking for other ways to fill these spots, and some of them can be, and that is fine.

I was in Wyoming this weekend at a place where they have similar seasons. They had set up a parking lot beside this motel where people could bring their trailers and their travel vehicles and stay there during the summer. These were older folks, pretty much retired, who wanted to work part time in the summer, and they would bring their trailer and stay. Some of the jobs can be filled that way, and they are. The fact is, businesses are going to be hurt if we don't do something. Certainly, we need to do that. There are some propositions that have been put forward on the Senate floor. We have had a couple folks objecting to them, so nothing has been done.

I think it is time. If people want to change the proposition, they can do that if they are comfortable with it. But we ought to move forward with the problem, which we can fix or require to be fixed or ask to be fixed, so that there is a reasonable opportunity for people to continue in the business of doing the same thing they have been doing, where now they are prohibited because of the timing proposition.

So I am hopeful we can continue to take a look at it. If it is too late for this year, I am sorry, but we ought to fix it now. But if we are not able to fix it this year, we will know what we are faced with for the next year. I understand the system in the Senate, but it is too bad when we have something that affects most people, and it can be held up and not allowed to even be discussed and moved forward. I think this is under the leadership of the Senator from Utah.

Mr. President, I wanted to share some thoughts on that issue instead of waiting and letting this continue to be

a problem in another season. Perhaps there is still time in some cases to be of assistance in this season. It is a plan and a program that has been in place and has worked over the years. We need to continue to allow people to participate in that plan.

I urge us to move forward and address the problem and make some kind of solution and not let it just die out and impact visitors, as well as employees and employers, in places such as Jackson, WY, and other places where people come for the summer.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. As a Senator from the State of Wyoming, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now stand in recess until the hour of 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:27 p.m., recessed until 2:17 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. VOINOVICH).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. In my capacity as a Senator from the State of Ohio, I observe that a quorum is not present.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. ALLARD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be dispensed with.

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

MORNING BUSINESS

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

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

Mr. ALLARD. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. ALLARD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be dispensed with.

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

UNITED STATES AIR FORCE ACADEMY

Mr. ALLARD. Mr. President, I rise today to report to you and our colleagues on the latest Board of Visitors meeting for the U.S. Air Force Academy.

Ordinarily, I don't do this, but in light of what has been happening for the last year and several months as far as the Air Force Academy, I feel compelled to give a report to the Senate to keep it updated on how matters are progressing at the Air Force Academy.

The Board of Visitors primary responsibility is advisory at the Academy. But in the process of monitoring the administration of the Academy and to be a voice for the students at the Academy, the Board of Visitors meets in mid-May at the Academy to review the activities of the Academy, assess current programs, discuss current disciplinary issues, and address proposed congressional legislation impacting the Academy and the Board of Visitors.

First, let me say I was pleased by the attendance and contribution of the board members and welcomed involvement of the board's newest members, including Senator MARK PRYOR. It is clearly apparent that the board is united in its purpose and serious about its responsibilities.

The meeting we had here was probably the best board meeting we have had since I have had the honor to serve on the Board of Visitors at the Air Force Academy.

Let me also say that Governor Gilmore continues to provide exceptional leadership and has done an excellent job of keeping the board on track and focused.

During the meeting, Air Force and Academy leaders briefed the board on several important issues. First, the board discussed the retention rates of the Academy graduates. Based on the statistics provided by the Air Force, it appears the Academy graduates have high retention rates, including in some professions rates of nearly 50 percent. Retention rates for Academy graduates continue to be higher than ROTC and OTS graduates.

Next, we discussed recent climate surveys. The Academy is wisely surveying faculty, civilian staff, and administrative staff, as well as the cadets. The Department of Inspector General also surveyed the cadet body in April. The result of the surveys is expected in July.

The Academy did share some preliminary results which include improvements regarding respect for women, the use of alcohol, and improved response to sexual assaults.

The new officer development program currently being implemented appears to be making a difference. Under this new system, cadets are taught leadership skills each year instead of just in their first years. This new system is consistent with that being used at the West Point and the Naval Academy.

Lastly, the board discussed three legislative proposals. I plan to work with the leadership on these proposals, perhaps as amendments, sometime during the deliberations on this bill. The first proposal would require the dean of the faculty for the Air Force to have some

prior military service. The second proposal would repeal the requirement that the Academy superintendent retire after serving the Academy. The Board of Visitors indicated its support for these two proposals.

The third proposal would have structured the Board of Visitors. At this time, this proposal requires additional work. I look forward to working with Chairman WARNER on refining that particular proposal.

I take a moment to compliment the superintendent of the Air Force Academy, Superintendent Rosa, and also his commandant, General Weida, who stepped in at a very difficult time at the Air Force Academy. They have shown exemplary leadership in working with the student body and charting out a new course for the Air Force Academy. It is a course that will allow oversight bodies, including members of the Armed Services Committee in both the House and the Senate, the Secretary of the Air Force, the President, and the members of the Board of Visitors, to review what is happening at the Academy. In other words, they have put a system in place that is much more accountable, which will make it easier for those who have the responsibility of oversight at the Air Force Academy to follow what is actually happening.

I thank the Congress for its concern about the welfare of the students at the Academy and for the opportunity to discuss the latest Board of Visitors meeting.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

HAITI

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, last week, my wife and I had the opportunity to spend 3 days in the troubled country of Haiti. I want to take a couple of minutes to report to my colleagues about the situation in Haiti. I believe it is particularly of importance because the United States still has troops in Haiti, and we had the opportunity to visit with a number of these wonderful young men and women.

Our trip coincided with the horrible flooding that occurred last week in Haiti and the Dominican Republic. In fact, I had the chance to fly out with our troops to a village in Haiti, Fonds Verettes, about 35 miles east of Port-au-Prince. I saw our troops doing a tremendous job to take food and water and shelter to the Haitians who had been devastated by this flooding.

Our trip was also timely because it is during this period of time that our troops are beginning to leave Haiti, or were scheduled to begin to leave Haiti,