

chicken-or-egg proposition. It is not a chicken-or-egg proposition. Reform of immigration can only take place after we have secured the border. The work it takes to secure the border is exactly the time period it takes to prepare for the new situation of legal immigration.

We are close to a great opportunity to respond to the American people and do what is right. I commend my colleagues who come to the Senate and support 6061. It will send a great signal. But it is only a promise. We need to deliver a reality.

I ask unanimous consent that this letter to me from Richard A. Smith be printed in the RECORD.

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

SEPTEMBER 5, 2006.

Hon. JOHNNY ISAKSON,
U.S. Senator.

DEAR SENATOR ISAKSON: I write to inform you of the grave concern I have with respect to both Houses failure to pass immigration reform legislation. I cannot imagine what more you and your colleagues require to motivate Congress to take action on this pressing matter of national security. More than a full year has passed and still not a shred of evidence that the House or Senate fully appreciate the concern this country has over illegal immigration. The impression is that government has completely failed its citizens on this pressing issue.

My vote and support, will go to the party that can address this critically important national security issue. The United States of America is being invaded by a foreign country without firing a single shot and our country's elected officials are apparently incapable of coming to agreement on a solution. I could not be more disgusted with Congress over this issue. You and your colleagues are urged to act on this pressing issue.

Very truly yours,

RICHARD A. SMITH,
Bernardsville, NJ.

Mr. ISAKSON. I will not read all of it, but this is an American citizen who wrote this letter today which I think illustrates the critical need for securing our border and ensuring it is done before we open the gates.

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I don't know how many letters have been written that contain thoughts almost identical to those of Richard Smith, but there have been lots of them. They are by far the preponderance of the communications to this Congress and this Senate.

Let's get H.R. 6061 up for a vote. Let's pass it. Let's make another promise toward border security. But let's come back in a timely fashion. Let's

secure our borders and make the commitment and the investment that will take place. Let's reform our immigration process so the way to come to America in the future is the right way, not the easy way because we looked the other way.

Anders Bengsten was the father of my grandfather, whose name was also Anders Bengsten. He was a potato farmer in Sweden. When the famine hit in 1903, he emigrated to the United States of America. In Scandinavia, you don't keep the last name you had there; you take your father's first name, Isak, and add to it "son." That is why most Scandinavians are Isakson, Ericson, Johnson, and Olson. He came to America and became Anders Isakson. He fled because of the potato famine. He landed on Ellis Island. He came legally. I have gone to Sweden and gotten the embarkation and legal papers. I have them at home.

My father was born in 1916, while Anders was still here legally but as an immigrant. My father is an American citizen today because of birthright citizenship. I am a citizen today because Anders Isakson bore that son in 1916. The proudest thing I have on my wall in my den at home is the May 3, 1926, documents that made Anders Isakson a U.S. citizen when he completed his process, 23 years after coming here legally as an immigrant, to become a citizen of the United States of America. There is not a person in this room who respects immigration and the right to come to America and the promise of Ellis Island more than I do. I am a living testimony to its promise.

It is time we return to a pathway to citizenship that is legal. It is time we stop looking the other way and letting people come to America the easy way and the soft way, and say to those who are learning our language, studying our history, those who are pledging allegiance to our country and disavowing their previous allegiance, those who are coming the right way ought to be the stars in the crown of American immigration. It is time we secure our border. It is time we reformed our immigration so the numbers coming reflect the demands of our economy. It is time we stop making promises. It is time we start delivering. America is too important. This issue is too critical to the American people.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

COMAIR FLIGHT 5191

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, the people of Kentucky are still reeling from a terrible tragedy that struck less than a month ago. On August 27, ComAir flight 5191 crashed shortly

after takeoff at Blue Grass Airport in Lexington. Forty-nine people perished.

Grief has descended on scores of families and into countless lives because of this devastating event. I know I am joined by all Kentuckians in extending sympathies and prayers to the families and loved ones of the victims.

As we continue to grieve, people throughout the Commonwealth are looking for answers. The National Transportation Safety Board has begun an investigation into the cause of this crash and what recommendations can be made to improve future aviation safety. I think we have an obligation to make sure their investigation proceeds smoothly and thoroughly and concludes in a timely manner so that all the questions can be answered as completely as possible. I have been personally briefed by the NTSB on the status of the investigation and intend to follow it very closely.

I spoke to the President about the crash, and he offered the entire State his prayers and is devoting the resources of the Federal Government toward the investigation.

I also expressed concerns to the Transportation Secretary nominee, Mary Peters. She is aware of our concerns and the need for a thorough investigation conducted in a timely manner. Today, she will have the opportunity to update the committee as well. We also need to hear what changes need to be made to our aviation system to prevent catastrophes in the future.

Mr. President, it is impossible to overstate the sorrow that has draped over so many lives in the Commonwealth of Kentucky. Most of the passengers on flight 5191 were from my State. In a variety of different places across the State, it is rare not to know someone who knew one of the victims.

As Kentucky continues to heal, we will take a deep breath, refrain from jumping to conclusions, and finish a thorough and complete investigation.

Kentuckians have drawn together during this crisis to lend each other strength. I am proud of the outpouring of aid and voluntarism that the residents of the Bluegrass State have shown their neighbors. Grief will be there for a long time to come, but sympathy and support will be there too.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. McCONNELL. 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.

SOLIDARITY WITH ISRAEL

Mrs. CLINTON. Mr. President, today, supporters of Israel are gathering in New York to show solidarity with our friend and ally, the State of Israel, and I am proud to join my voice with theirs