

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY FUNDING

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, it is only 17 days until the Department of Homeland Security of the United States of America runs out of funding—the Department of Homeland Security.

This is the Department we created after 9/11. We said: America needs to be safer. We have to put in place safeguards to make sure 9/11 never happens again. We created a new department, and it was done on a bipartisan basis. Joe Lieberman, a Democrat from Connecticut serving in the Senate, joined with SUSAN COLLINS, the Republican from Maine, on our side of the rotunda with like-minded people on the other side, and they crafted this new Department. They brought together 22 different agencies. They tried their best to achieve efficiency, to eliminate duplication, to save money but have a mission that would be accomplished in keeping America safe.

If you think about the departments of government, of course the Department of Defense comes to mind immediately when it comes to our safety, but not far behind is the Department of Homeland Security. So it was December when the Republicans of the House of Representatives, given a choice of funding the government for this year, decided they would pick out one department and not fund it on a regular basis. They decided that one department would be funded on what they call a continuing resolution, which means kind of grabbing last year's budget and trying to make it work this year. Now, what was that one department the Republicans decided needed to be handled differently and not properly funded? The Department of Homeland Security. That Department, in 17 days, will run out of money again.

What are they thinking? What is happening in those closed-door meetings when Speaker BOEHNER and the House Republicans or Majority Leader MCCONNELL and the Senate Republicans sit down and plot their strategy? Is there anyone in that room who says: You know, I think we may have picked the wrong department not to fund.

The Department of Homeland Security is one we think about instantly when we see the terrible things done by ISIS, these terrorists of extremism, and pray to God they are never visited on the United States and that this awful group comes to an untimely ending as quickly as possible. Yet this Department, Homeland Security, has been the target of the Republicans to really execute a political ploy, a political strategy. Here is what they said: The way to get the President's attention on immigration is to refuse to fund the Department of Homeland Security. Well, they not only have the President's attention, but they have the attention of the United States of America. People are asking: What are the congressional Republicans thinking?

In fact, the latest inquiry, just referred to by the Democratic leader, was an editorial yesterday in—of all things—the Wall Street Journal. The article is entitled: "Can the GOP Change?" It basically challenges the whole strategy of jeopardizing the funding for the Department of Homeland Security in order to make the point that they disagree with the President on immigration.

What we have offered, what the Wall Street Journal suggests is to have a debate on immigration but not at the expense of funding the Department of Homeland Security. That is what they have called for.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the February 9, 2015, Wall Street Journal article be printed in the RECORD at the conclusion of these remarks.

So what are these immigration provisions that have the Republicans in such a rage that they are willing to jeopardize the funding of the Department of Homeland Security? One of them relates to a bill I introduced 14 years ago—the DREAM Act. Over the span of 14 years, though, this has not become the law of the land. It has become shorthand for a challenge we have with our broken immigration system. Here is the challenge: There were infants, toddlers, and small children brought to the United States by their parents many years ago. They were not documented. They grew up in this country, and they went to school in this country. They speak English. They have dreams about what they will do with their future, but being undocumented they are unable to realize those dreams.

The DREAM Act said if they have a clean criminal record, have graduated from high school, are willing to serve in our military or go on to college, we will give them a path to legalization in America. These are young people who know no other country. These are young people raised in America, educated in our educational system—at the expense of our taxpayers, I might add. They have been successful in life and want to continue to be a part of America. They only know one flag—the one they pledge allegiance to every morning in their classroom, which is the same one we on the Senate Floor. They only know one national anthem. Yet they are being told by the Republicans they should leave.

How many are there? We estimate 2 million across our country. There are 600,000 who have signed up for President Obama's protection program, called DACA, which says that on a 2-year basis they will not be deported. What the Republicans have said is: We want to deport these DREAMers—2 million of them—and let's start with the 600,000 who have stepped up for protection from deportation. So they are risking funding the Department of Homeland Security in order to make their point that DREAMers have to go.

Well, let's at least take a look at one of these DREAMers and understand the

kind of people we are talking about. This is Johana Mejias. Johana was brought to the United States from Venezuela when she was a child. She grew up in Boulder, CO. She played on her high school softball team. She played viola in the orchestra and dreamed of becoming a doctor. Here is what Johana said about her childhood:

I've become a Boulderite in all aspects of that word. That town, with those beautiful mountains, is truly my home.

In 2011 Johana graduated from the University of Colorado at Boulder with a double major. I am going to try to describe her major, but as a liberal arts lawyer I may get lost in some of these scientific terms. Here was Johana's major at the University of Colorado: molecular, cellular, and developmental biology, and psychology-neuroscience.

Johana finished at the University of Colorado without any government assistance because she is undocumented. She made it through these challenging majors, graduating with this double major. Her dream? To become a doctor. It was a dream she thought might never come to be because she is undocumented. She literally has no country. Then something happened. In 2012 President Barack Obama signed an Executive order called DACA, and Johana heard there was actually a medical school that was willing to admit students who qualified under this DACA protection—Loyola University Stritch College of Medicine in the city of Chicago. She couldn't believe it, and she applied quickly. Johana was accepted because she is an extraordinarily bright and promising young medical student.

Like many States across the country, my home State of Illinois faces a shortage of physicians in some communities. Loyola University decided if a DACA-protected young graduate is willing to come here and qualifies in the competitive field of admissions to medical school, they can come to Loyola medical school if they promise to give 1 year of service after they are doctors for every year of medical school, and if they promise to go to an underserved area in the inner city or rural areas where there are not enough doctors. Johana signed up for that. She said it was worth it. She would give 1 year of her life for each year of medical school if she was just given a chance to become a doctor.

This DACA loan program we have created is one that allows these students to receive the loans they need to finish at Loyola medical school. Last fall Johana began medical school at Loyola. I was there on one of her first days, and I met her. She is even more impressive than anything I could say in this speech. After she graduates, she has agreed to stay in my State of Illinois to help people who need a doctor.

Here is what she wrote to me in a letter about her life experience:

When the year 2012 came along, my life changed. My dreams of becoming a doctor became a possibility again because of DACA.

I was now able to apply to medical internship programs, take the medical school intern exam, and apply to medical school, all because of my DACA status. DACA has defined my path. DACA has relit a fire within to succeed and continue to pursue my dreams.

Isn't that an amazing story—that a young girl would come here, realize she was undocumented, fight her way through for a bachelor's degree in these challenging subjects, continuing to keep alive the dream that maybe, just maybe something would happen to give her a chance to become a doctor? Then the President signs this Executive order, and now she is in medical school.

Because this medical school is in Chicago, my State is going to benefit when she becomes a doctor because she will go to one of my down-State communities that is begging for a doctor. She will go to one of the inner-city neighborhoods in Chicago and serve people who are struggling to get basic medical care.

What an amazing story—an amazing story that will come to a bitter end if the Republicans have their way on this bill.

The Republican answer to Johana is: After all of your life's work, after all of your dreams are fulfilled, leave—leave America. They are prepared to deport her and 600,000 others just like her. They think America will be a better nation if we get rid of someone like Johana. What are they thinking?

They are challenging the very funding of the Department of Homeland Security with this strategy of deporting the DREAMers. It doesn't make any sense. Whether you are conservative or liberal, this makes no sense—to spend \$9,000 to deport her instead of finding \$9,000 to help her finish medical school and be part of America's future.

We are a nation of immigrants. My mother was an immigrant to this country, and I stand on the floor of the Senate proudly representing the State of Illinois. That is my story. That is my family's story. That is America's story.

Those who have devised a strategy—what I consider to be a divisive, negative, hateful strategy—toward young people such as her are not thinking clearly about who we are as Americans. We are a nation of immigrants. People from all across this world have had the courage to pick up and come to America, to work some of the toughest, dirtiest, hardest jobs so their kids, such as Johana, would have a chance for a better future. That story has been repeated over and over millions of times. Republicans, with their strategy, their anti-immigration strategy, would kill that dream, kill that story.

I hope we have the good sense to fund the Department of Homeland Security. If there is going to be a debate about the DREAMers and their future, count me in. I want to be part of it. I want to come to the floor and tell these stories about real lives affected by these political decisions, and I trust in the outcome in the Senate. But don't stop the funding for the Department of Home-

land Security in the meantime. Let us make sure we are committed to our heritage as a nation of immigrants and to our future where young people like Johana can be a bright part of tomorrow for so many needy people across America.

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

[From the Wall Street Journal, Feb. 9, 2015]
CAN THE GOP CHANGE?

Republicans in Congress are off to a less than flying start after a month in power, dividing their own conference more than Democrats. Take the response to President Obama's immigration order, which seems headed for failure if not a more spectacular crack-up.

That decree last November awarded work permits and de facto legal status to millions of undocumented aliens and dismayed members of both parties, whatever their immigration views. A Congressional resolution to vindicate the rule of law and the Constitution's limits on executive power was defensible, and even necessary, but this message has long ago been lost in translation.

The Republican leadership funded the rest of the government in December's budget deal but isolated the Department of Homeland Security that enforces immigration law. DHS funding runs out this month, and the GOP has now marched itself into another box canyon.

The specific White House abuse was claiming prosecutorial discretion to exempt whole classes of aliens from deportation, dumping the historical norm of case-by-case scrutiny. A GOP sniper shot at this legal overreach would have forced Democrats to go on record, picked up a few supporters, and perhaps even imposed some accountability on Mr. Obama.

But that wasn't enough for immigration restrictionists, who wanted a larger brawl, and they browbeat GOP leaders into adding needless policy amendments. The House reached back to rescind Mr. Obama's enforcement memos from 2011 that instructed Homeland Security to prioritize deportations of illegals with criminal backgrounds. That is legitimate prosecutorial discretion, and in opposing it Republicans are undermining their crime-fighting credentials.

The House even adopted a provision to roll back Mr. Obama's 2012 order deferring deportation for young adults brought to the U.S. illegally as children by their parents—the so-called dreamers. The GOP lost 26 of its own Members on that one, passing it with only 218 votes.

The overall \$40 billion DHS spending bill passed with these riders, 236-191, but with 10 Republicans joining all but two Democrats in opposition. This lack of GOP unity reduced the chances that Senate Democrats would feel any political pressure to go along.

And, lo, on Thursday the House bill failed for the third time to gain the 60 votes needed to overcome the third Democratic filibuster in three days. Swing-state Democrats like Indiana's Joe Donnelly and North Dakota's Heidi Heitkamp aren't worried because they have more than enough material to portray Republicans as the immigration extremists.

Whatever their view of Mr. Obama's order, why would Democrats vote to deport people who were brought here as kids through no fault of their own? Mr. Obama issued a veto threat to legislation that will never get to his desk, and he must be delighted that Republicans are fighting with each other rather than with him.

Restrictionists like Sens. Ted Cruz and Jeff Sessions are offering their familiar ad-

vice to fight harder and hold firm against "executive amnesty," but as usual their strategy for victory is nowhere to be found. So Republicans are now heading toward the same cul de sac that they did on the ObamaCare government shutdown.

If Homeland Security funding lapses on Feb. 27, the agency will be pushed into a partial shutdown even as the terrorist threat is at the forefront of public attention with the Charlie Hebdo and Islamic State murders. Imagine if the Transportation Security Administration, a unit of DHS, fails to intercept an Islamic State agent en route to Detroit.

So Republicans are facing what is likely to be another embarrassing political retreat and more intra-party recriminations. The GOP's restrictionist wing will blame the leadership for a failure they share responsibility for, and the rest of America will wonder anew about the gang that couldn't shoot straight.

The restrictionist caucus can protest all it wants, but it can't change 54 Senate votes into 60 without persuading some Democrats. It's time to find another strategy. Our advice on immigration is to promote discrete bills that solve specific problems such as green cards for math-science-tech graduates, more H-1B visas, a guest-worker program for agriculture, targeted enforcement and legal status for the dreamers. Democrats would be hard-pressed to oppose them and it would put the onus back on Mr. Obama. But if that's too much for the GOP, then move on from immigration to something else.

It's not too soon to say that the fate of the GOP majority is on the line. Precious weeks are wasting, and the combination of weak House leadership and a rump minority unwilling to compromise is playing into Democratic hands. This is no way to run a Congressional majority, and the only winners of GOP dysfunction will be Mr. Obama, Nancy Pelosi and Hillary Clinton.

AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, we continue to debate the Affordable Care Act. The Affordable Care Act, of course, is the effort we passed in the Senate to try to make America a better place for those who need health insurance.

Our goal was accessibility, to make sure more and more people would have access to affordable health care. Our goals tried to transform health care into something that was more preventive, something that reduced the likelihood that someone would be hospitalized or have a serious disease. Our goal was to try to make certain we created incentives within the practice of medicine—for quality care, not the most expensive care. And we have achieved many of those goals in the first year.

Some 10 million Americans now have access to health insurance through the Affordable Care Program, and yet the Republicans in the House, as late as last week, for the 56th time voted to repeal the Affordable Care Act.

Now we might ask ourselves: What do they want to replace it with? They surely wouldn't just walk away from it. And the answer is: They don't have a replacement. They are so determined to kill this program. I will say to their credit that two Republican Senators have stepped up and said: Here is what