

aside. So today I call on my colleagues to join me in supporting bringing American jobs back to America.

With that, I yield the floor.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to proceed to calendar No. 453, S. 2569, a bill to provide an incentive for businesses to bring jobs back to America.

Harry Reid, John E. Walsh, Debbie Stabenow, Amy Klobuchar, Patty Murray, Bernard Sanders, Tom Harkin, Richard J. Durbin, Tom Udall, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Christopher Murphy, Tammy Baldwin, Jon Tester, Mark Begich, Sheldon Whitehouse, Carl Levin, Christopher A. Coons.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the motion to proceed to S. 2569, a bill to provide an incentive for businesses to bring jobs back to America, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 93, nays 7, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 240 Leg.]

YEAS—93

Alexander	Flake	Murkowski
Ayotte	Franken	Murphy
Baldwin	Gillibrand	Murray
Barrasso	Grassley	Nelson
Begich	Hagan	Portman
Bennet	Harkin	Pryor
Blumenthal	Hatch	Reed
Blunt	Heinrich	Reid
Booker	Heitkamp	Risch
Boozman	Heller	Rockefeller
Boxer	Hirono	Rubio
Brown	Hoeben	Sanders
Burr	Isakson	Schatz
Cantwell	Johanns	Schumer
Cardin	Johnson (SD)	Scott
Carper	Kaine	Sessions
Casey	King	Shaheen
Chambliss	Kirk	Shelby
Coats	Klobuchar	Stabenow
Cochran	Landrieu	Tester
Collins	Leahy	Thune
Coons	Levin	Toomey
Corker	Manchin	Udall (CO)
Cornyn	Markey	Udall (NM)
Crapo	McCain	Vitter
Cruz	McCaskill	Walsh
Donnelly	McConnell	Warner
Durbin	Menendez	Warren
Enzi	Merkley	Whitehouse
Feinstein	Mikulski	Wicker
Fischer	Moran	Wyden

NAYS—7

Coburn	Johnson (WI)	Roberts
Graham	Lee	
Inhofe	Paul	

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote the yeas are 93, the nays are 7. Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn having voted in the affirmative, the motion is agreed to.

CLARK NOMINATION

Mr. CARPER. Madam President, I urge my colleagues to vote to confirm Julia Clark to a second term as general counsel of the Federal Labor Relations Authority.

The Federal Labor Relations Authority oversees the program in place at the Federal Government to maintain fair and efficient labor-management relations at agencies across the government. The general counsel fulfills key responsibilities in these efforts, including investigating and prosecuting allegations of unfair labor practices.

Ms. Clark has served in this position for almost five years, and has fulfilled her responsibilities effectively and with distinction.

However, her term expires on August 7—just 15 days from today. If the Senate allows her term to lapse without reconfirming her, the position will become vacant and, by law, no one else can fulfill the functions of her office. Our inaction will cause a backlog of complaints and appeals to form.

This has happened before, and Ms. Clark spent much of her first year as general counsel clearing a backlog that developed because of a previous vacancy.

Ms. Clark is highly qualified, and we must fulfill our constitutional duty and confirm Ms. Clark today in order to allow her to continue doing her job.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF JULIA AKINS CLARK TO BE GENERAL COUNSEL OF THE FEDERAL LABOR RELATIONS AUTHORITY

NOMINATION OF ANDREW H. SCHAPIRO TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE CZECH REPUBLIC

NOMINATION OF MADELYN R. CREEDON TO BE PRINCIPAL DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR, NATIONAL NUCLEAR SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to consider the following nominations, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Nominations of Julia Akins Clark, of Maryland, to be General Counsel of the Federal Labor Relations Authority, Andrew H. Schapiro, of Illinois, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Czech Republic, and Madelyn R. Creedon, of Indiana, to be Principal Deputy Administrator, National Nuclear Security Administration.

VOTE ON CLARK NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There will now be 2 minutes of debate prior to the vote on the Clark nomination.

Who yields time?

The Senator from Delaware.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to yield back all time.

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

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Julia Akins Clark to be General Counsel of the Federal Labor Relations Authority?

The nomination was confirmed.

VOTE ON SCHAPIRO NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There will now be 2 minutes of debate prior to the vote on the Schapiro nomination.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to yield back all time.

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

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Andrew H. Schapiro, of Illinois, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Czech Republic?

The nomination was confirmed.

VOTE ON CREEDON NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There will now be 2 minutes of debate prior to the vote on the Creedon nomination.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to yield back all time.

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

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent on the nomination of Madelyn R. Creedon, of Indiana, to be Principal Deputy Administrator, National Nuclear Security Administration?

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motions to reconsider are considered made and laid upon the table and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BRING JOBS HOME ACT—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will resume legislative session.

The Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Madam President, I am pleased that today we were able to put aside the partisan politics and vote for what was right for the American people. I hope my colleagues will also vote for the final bill. We must protect American jobs and eliminate tax loopholes for corporations that move jobs overseas. Creating and supporting well-paying American jobs should be our top priority.

The debate about jobs in America and New Mexico is not about politics; it is about people. This past weekend I visited with some New Mexicans who are facing a very real and personal

challenge as far as their future and their livelihood.

In Questa, NM, miners have worked for nearly a century. But that mine is now closing—less than 2 weeks from today—and 300 people will lose their jobs. For the workers, for their families, and for local businesses, it is a hard time, with tough questions and uncertain answers.

Just this past Sunday I met with the miners to talk with them and, most importantly, to listen about what has happened in Questa and the future of a great community.

This is about more than Chevron Corporation's decision to close the mine; it is about workers who feel they were kept in the dark, who worry that help will be too little and too late. My office is working closely with the community for trade adjustment assistance to get the training and help they will need.

Folks there are struggling, but they are committed to mapping out a new future for Questa, a post-mining economy, including ecotourism and renewable energy.

Families have lived and worked in Questa for generations. They know hard work, grit, and determination. No one needs to tell them about that. They helped build our country. They support their community, and they follow the rules. They ask for one thing in return: a fair chance—that is all, just a fair chance.

Let's be clear. For the Supreme Court, for those who seem to be confused on this point, these miners are people, their families are people. Corporations are not people. Super PACs buying our elections—they are not people. They are special interests with a lot of money and a lot of demands, such as special tax breaks—tax breaks that make no sense to real people with real problems who are looking for real jobs.

We need to be doing all we can to create jobs, to keep building our economy. The Bring Jobs Home Act would help—a tax policy that brings jobs home, not one that rewards sending them away. Almost 2.5 million jobs have gone over the past 10 years, shipped overseas and paid for by the American taxpayers, by families such as those in Questa footing the bill.

The Bring Jobs Home Act would do two important things: First, it would end the tax loophole for outsourcing jobs. If corporations want to send a job overseas, they can do so but at their own expense, not at the expense of the American taxpayers. Second, it would create the right incentives, giving a tax credit for companies that bring jobs back home. This is a pretty simple idea. Let's reward what helps and stop rewarding what doesn't.

The Bring Jobs Home Act will do something else too. For the middle class in this country, for workers and families, it will say: We hear you. Your voice matters too. And all the super PAC dollars can't change that.

We can create jobs right here at home. We can keep growing our econ-

omy and help communities with a tax policy that builds them up and invests in the future. That is something to fight for. That is the kind of fairness folks want and deserve in Questa, in my State and in our country.

The mine will close in Questa. We can't change that. We can't bring it back. Some folks say that it will feel like a death the day that door closes, that it almost feels like a funeral, as if a part of them dies with the mine. And I am sure it does. It has been the lifeblood of the community for so many years and for so many generations of families. But folks there said something else too: When bad things happen, friends and family show up to do what they can to help.

We need to start showing up for the American worker, for the middle class, for towns all across our Nation where the factory closed, where the jobs went away. The Bring Jobs Home Act is a start to create jobs, to build our economy here at home, and to help communities in a world that is changing awfully fast. It is a step in the right direction, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Madam President, I thank my colleague from New Mexico for his compelling remarks about the importance of passing the Bring Jobs Home Act.

I am here to echo the need to pass this critical legislation, and I am certainly pleased we had such a strong vote to end debate on this legislation. I hope we can now come to some agreement and get the same kind of support for moving the bill forward. I am an original cosponsor of this common-sense bill.

As Senator UDALL said, this legislation would end incentives for companies to send American jobs overseas, and it would instead encourage companies to move jobs back to the United States.

Believe it or not, when a company moves jobs offshore, it can write off those expenses on its taxes. That doesn't make sense. The Bring Jobs Home Act would stop forcing taxpayers to foot the bill for companies when they ship jobs overseas. In addition, to encourage companies to move production back to the United States, the bill provides a tax credit for the costs associated with bringing jobs back home.

Not only is this legislation the right thing to do, but it also comes at a critical time as our economy struggles to recover. In New Hampshire and across the country—as Senator UDALL pointed out, in New Mexico with the closing of the mine and in that community—we are still feeling the effects of the great recession. Millions of Americans lost their jobs, and too many middle-class families are still struggling to make ends meet.

But sadly, even before the recession hit, the American middle class was

finding it hard to pay their bills, to pay their mortgage, to find the good jobs that allowed them to have opportunities. A big reason for that was the loss of so many good-paying American jobs that supported the middle class. Too many of those jobs were shipped overseas. Over the last decade, 2.4 million jobs were shipped overseas, and those 2.4 million families supported by those jobs had to find other ways to support themselves, and often they were in jobs that didn't pay as well.

Well, it doesn't have to be this way. In fact, many companies are now looking to move jobs back to the United States. As production costs rise overseas, these companies want the advantages provided by our American workers—the most productive workers in the world—and the ease of doing business in the United States.

I have heard from several companies that have already moved jobs back to the United States, and there are many more that are hoping to bring jobs back home if we have the right policies in place.

Let me give an example. Last year I met with Doug Clark, who is the CEO of a footwear manufacturing company, New England Footwear. When we think footwear manufacturing or shoe factory jobs, we don't think the United States anymore because while there are still some very good companies that manufacture footwear here, most of those jobs were sent offshore a long time ago.

I know that story very well because my father was in shoe manufacturing. The whole time I was growing up, I watched him struggle with the loss of those shoe manufacturing jobs that were being sent overseas and imports coming in to take the place of shoes made here in America and the jobs that workers here in America held.

Today about 99 percent of shoes sold in the United States are made abroad. But New England Footwear executives, who have years of experience in the shoe industry, are looking to bring those jobs back home—back to New Hampshire. The company currently manufactures in China, but as costs rise there, Doug believes he can bring higher paying jobs to the United States thanks to innovative technology that reduces manufacturing costs.

New England Footwear isn't alone. A Boston Consulting Group survey from last September showed that more than half of large U.S.-based manufacturers are planning or considering right now bringing production lines back to the United States from China. That is up 17 percent from just 2 years ago—17 percent. That is a big increase, a lot of jobs. The Boston Consulting Group projected that production reshored from China and higher exports due to improved U.S. competitiveness in manufacturing could create 2.5 to 5 million American factory and related service jobs by 2020. So by 2020 we could replace more than the jobs we lost in the

last decade. That is the kind of behavior we should be encouraging. That is exactly what the bill before us does.

We know it will work because a 2012 MIT forum on supply chain management found that providing tax credits for bringing American jobs back to the United States would be one of the most effective ways to accelerate that process, along with other commonsense measures such as enacting tax reform, which we all agree we have to do, providing research and development incentives, ensuring a highly educated workforce, and improving American infrastructure. Again, these are all challenges which I think the majority of us in this body understand have to be done.

I am very glad the Senate moved to this bill because our priority in Washington must be creating jobs and restoring the American middle class. Over the past few decades too many Americans have seen their jobs disappear or their incomes fall. The Bring Jobs Home Act is an opportunity to support those families by creating good-paying jobs in the United States and by helping our economy regain its competitive edge.

I thank the Presiding Officer.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BALDWIN). The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

THE HUMANE ACT

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, in recent days I have come to the floor several times to talk about the humanitarian crisis on our southwestern border where a veritable flood of unaccompanied children, from Central America mainly, is appearing on our border and turning themselves in to the Border Patrol because they realize that ultimately they will be released to a relative in the United States with a notice to appear at a future court date. The vast majority of them will fail to appear for that court date and successfully end up staying in the United States, notwithstanding the fact that it does not comply with our law.

But in recent days a curious division has emerged from our colleagues on the other side of the aisle on a fundamental issue that I want to highlight. On the one hand, more and more Democrats are calling on Congress to reform this 2008 law that inadvertently has become a magnet for illegal immigration by Central American minors. On the other hand, Senate Democratic leadership is refusing to consider any such reforms. They just want the cash. They wanted the money the President has asked for. So they are asking Congress to simply throw more money at the problem. The figure they have now settled on is \$2.7 billion. The Associated Press has called this “problematic.”

If you have a humanitarian crisis and you need more money to deal with it, we all understand that. But if you are unwilling to take the step to fix the basic problem that has created the crisis, that strikes me as problematic, as the Associated Press says.

What is President Obama’s position? Well, I am afraid the President has shown a complete lack of leadership on something that he himself has called a humanitarian crisis. But there have been prominent members of his administration who have publicly expressed support for the type of reforms contained in the HUMANE Act, which is a bipartisan, bicameral piece of legislation I have introduced with my colleague HENRY CUELLAR from Laredo, TX.

For example, you will see on this chart Secretary of Homeland Security Jeh Johnson has said the administration wants to change the 2008 law at the center of the crisis so that U.S. authorities can “treat unaccompanied kids from Central America the same way as it does from a contiguous country”—in other words, from Mexico.

White House Press Secretary Josh Earnest, you can see on this next chart, has confirmed that the administration would support “changing the 2008 law” if it is necessary to resolve the crisis, as Secretary of Homeland Security Jeh Johnson says it is.

As tens of thousands of children continue to flood across our border, such changes are absolutely necessary. In fact, the cartels, the criminal organizations that are smuggling children into the United States, discovered this flaw and they have changed their business model to exploit it, because they are making money off of it.

The HUMANE Act, which we have offered as a solution is not the only solution. If other people have good ideas, we would love to hear them, but doing nothing is not an option.

The HUMANE Act would equalize the treatment of all unaccompanied minor children, regardless of where they come from. Treat them all the same. If it is good enough for children coming from Mexico unattended by parents, then it ought to be good enough for others.

All of our colleagues essentially voted for that proposition in 2008 with that law. This proposal we have would also expedite the removal process for those without a valid claim for legal status. In other words, there are claims for legal status in the United States that some of these children might qualify for. We do not touch any of those preexisting laws. In other words, if you are a victim of human trafficking, for example, you can qualify for something called a T visa while you cooperate with a law enforcement investigation.

If you have a credible fear of persecution in your home country based on certain other criteria, you could qualify for asylum or as a refugee. But finally, we would end the policy of catch and release by which these children or other immigrants are not detained

pending a hearing in front of a judge. We know from experience, given the surge of Brazilians who came in 2005 and 2006, that additional detention and speedy hearings and reprocessing back to the home country are essential to deter people from coming in the first place.

The HUMANE ACT would bring order and clarity to a situation currently marked by chaos and confusion. You would think that Members of Congress, Democrats and Republicans alike, would want to bring some clarity and end the chaos and confusion. But so far we have not seen that sort of bipartisan desire to embrace a solution. So I am happy to note that a number of Democrats do agree with us about the need to reform the 2008 law and establish an expedited removal process.

For example, Senator McCASKILL, the senior Senator from Missouri, has reportedly said: I think we should have the same law on the books for Central America as we have for Canada and Mexico.

That is precisely the point. She and I agree with each other 100 percent on that. That is what the HUMANE Act would do.

Meanwhile, the senior Senator from Delaware, Mr. CARPER—the chairman of the Homeland Security Committee, someone with a lot of knowledge about this, and somebody who I know has been in close consultation with Secretary Johnson—has argued that any supplemental funding should be paired with significant policy changes, saying, “the two should go together.” I agree with Senator CARPER.

So if the administration agrees with prominent Senate Democrats, as Jeh Johnson has said they do, and as Josh Earnest has said they do, if the administration agrees with these prominent Senate Democrats about the urgency of passing something like the HUMANE Act, and if plenty of Senate Republicans agree as well, why are we not having a vote? What is the holdup?

Well, as usual, the majority leader seems to be more concerned about good politics than good policy. He, incredibly to most ears, certainly to mine, declared that the border was “secure” a couple of days ago. I was shocked to hear him say that. In the midst of a humanitarian crisis, he says the border is “secure.” With 414,000 detained coming across the border last year alone from 100 different countries, the majority leader says the border is “secure.”

Here is what he said on Monday. He said: We need to get resources to our Border Patrol agents and others who are caring for these children.

This is at the same time he said the border is “secure.” I do not quite understand that tension between his positions. But this is what he said. He said: “We need judges to hear those kids’ cases and decide whether they need protection or need to be sent back home.” So here is my confusion. The majority leader has said he understands what needs to happen. The press

secretary for the President says he understands what needs to happen. Secretary Johnson, the Secretary of Homeland Security, says he knows what needs to happen. Prominent Democrats such as the Senator from Missouri and the Senator from Delaware say they understand what needs to happen. Yet nothing is happening.

The HUMANE Act, which would do everything the majority leader mentioned, is a bipartisan, bicameral piece of legislation that would alleviate a national emergency and a humanitarian crisis. It has received support across the political and ideological spectrum.

I would add that some on the left and some on the right have criticized it. Some have not bothered to read it or understand it. But if you are being criticized on both sides of the extremes, then you must be doing something that is actually doable and may be at least 80 percent part of the solution.

So I would urge the majority leader, the majority whip, the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, to heed the message conveyed by Secretary Johnson. I would urge all of us, particularly at a time of humanitarian crisis, to forget the politics and let's solve the problem. We have an opportunity to address a genuine crisis. I urge them to remember, as Mr. Charles Lane of the Washington Post has written recently:

The rule of law is one of the benefits immigrants seek in the United States. Step one in dealing with the border crisis should be to reestablish it.

Those are wise words.

In contrast, if we simply write the administration a blank check for \$2.7 billion without fixing the problem, we will find ourselves back here again and again as the numbers escalate from the 57,000 so far since October to the projected 90,000 the administration says could come across this year alone to the 145,000 who are projected to come next year.

I am, frankly, flabbergasted. Why can't we do this? Why can't we do it? Democrats agree with the need. Republicans agree there is a need. There is an escalating crisis on the border that is not going to go away with the change of the news cycle. We have the ability to deal with it so we should.

I actually agree with this statement by Senator REID: We need to get the resources to our Border Patrol agents and others who are caring for these children. We need judges to hear these kids' cases and decide whether they need protection or need to be sent back home.

I agree with the majority leader when he said that. So let's do it.

I yield the floor and 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. BARRASSO. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

HEALTH CARE

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, I come to the floor today because Democrats in Washington continue to put out misleading information about the President's health care law.

Last week the Senator from Connecticut came to the floor and said Republicans have, in his words, gone silent when it comes to talking about the health care law. He claimed there was a quiet acceptance that the law is working.

Well, I just want to correct the record and make it perfectly clear Republicans have not gone quiet because the health care law is not working.

The American people are not going quiet either. They are not going quiet when it comes to talking about the devastating side effects they are feeling from the health care law.

I hear it from people when I go home to Wyoming every weekend. I heard it last weekend. I heard it last night on a telephone townhall meeting, and when I travel I hear about it—even just passing through the airport in Denver on the way home, which I do each week.

As chairman of the Republican policy committee, one of my responsibilities is to study how policies that come out of Washington—like the President's health care law—affect people all across America, including States such as Colorado, where I change planes each week.

Last week the Denver Post had an op-ed written by Dr. Cyndi Tucker, an obstetrician/gynecologist who practices medicine in Thornton, CO, outside Denver. Her op-ed was published in the Denver Post, which is, of course, the statewide newspaper in Colorado.

The headline on the column in the Denver Post was: "Red tape isn't health care reform."

Now, remember the amount of regulations ObamaCare has created is a red-tape tower of paper over 7 feet tall. Dr. Cyndi Tucker, from one of the suburbs of Colorado, wants us to know about the health care law from her perspective as a practicing Colorado physician. What she has to say is that the prognosis isn't good. She writes:

At my practice, I've found that the ACA disrupts the doctor-patient relationship by drowning us both in paperwork.

ObamaCare authors—and the politicians . . . who voted for it—promised that it would provide quality, affordable health care to Coloradans. Yet it does exactly the opposite. For doctors, it makes health care more and more complex, more expensive, and increasingly more impersonal.

Not more personal, which is what we want as doctors, as somebody who practiced medicine for 25 years. She says it makes it more impersonal.

And for patients, it makes finding a cheap health plan or finding a doctor more difficult—not less difficult as the President promised, not cheaper, but more difficult, as the doctor points out. For me, that is a very damaging and maybe even life-threatening side effect of the President's health care law.

President Obama was in Colorado earlier this month. This week he is doing the same thing in Seattle and California. Instead of meeting with more campaign donors—which is what the President is doing—the President should meet with doctors and patients—and, specifically, doctors such as this obstetrician-gynecologist in Colorado. He should sit down with some of the women who are patients of this doctor. I think they would like to ask the President about these devastating side effects of his health care law and explain to him about how it is hurting them and hurting their families.

The disruptive impact the law is having on care is drowning patients and doctors in red tape. But that is not the only side effect of the law that is hurting American families. A recent Gallup poll earlier this month found that only 8 percent of Americans are spending less money on health care than they did a year ago.

President Obama promised the American people they would save \$2,500 a year per family under his health care law. NANCY PELOSI, the former Speaker of the House, was on "Meet the Press" at one point and said that everyone's rates would go down.

Well, Democrats in the Senate who voted for the law promised the same thing, and it just didn't happen. People are paying more all across America. People are paying more in Washington State and in California, where the President is visiting. Why is he there? He is meeting with campaign donors. He is collecting campaign money.

People are paying more all across the country. They are paying more for health care insurance in Wyoming. People are paying more in Colorado, where the doctor who wrote in the Denver Post is and where she sees patients.

There is a recent study that found health insurance premiums for an average 40-year-old woman in Colorado are 20 percent higher this year than last year. That was before she was forced on to the ObamaCare exchange.

President Obama says Democrats who voted for the law should "forcefully defend and be proud" of the health care law. When he was in Colorado a couple of weeks ago, did President Obama forcefully defend these premium increases because of the law? When he is traveling this week, is the President going to forcefully defend patients and doctors experiencing the exact opposite of what the Democrats promised? Are Democrats in the Senate proud that only 8 percent of Americans are spending less on health care this year than they did before? Costs are going up so fast that last month State regulators in Colorado decided to add another tax on every insurance policy in the State in order—get this—to bail out the State ObamaCare exchange. They added an extra tax on every insurance policy in the State in order to bail out the State ObamaCare exchange.

Now, that is not just on people buying the policy in the exchange. They are charging this new tax on every person in Colorado who buys health insurance just to cover those who buy it through the exchange. Well, that is a very expensive side effect for the families of Colorado as a result of the President's health care law.

So this health care law is bad for patients, bad for providers, the nurses, and the doctors who take care of those patients, and it is terrible for taxpayers. Every Democrat in the Senate voted for this health care law. Where are the Democrats willing to forcefully defend these costly and damaging side effects of their health care law?

People in Colorado and all across America received letters telling them their plans were being cancelled because of the law. People lost access to their doctors, like this OB/GYN physician who wrote her op-ed editorial for the Denver Post.

She says she has had to stop seeing Medicare patients because of the new redtape in the health care law. So people in Colorado lost their right to choose the health plan that works for them and their families.

Republicans are not going to quietly accept the terrible side effects of the President's health care law. We are going to keep coming to the floor. We are going to keep standing for American families who are being hurt by this law. We are going to keep offering new solutions—real solutions—for better health care without all of these tragic side effects.

That means patient-centered reforms that get people the care they need from a doctor they choose at lower costs. It means giving people choices, not Washington mandates. It means allowing people to buy health insurance that works for them and their families because they know what is best for them.

Democrats who voted for this health care law have failed to answer the real concern of the American people, which was affordable quality care.

American families will not go quiet about the harm Democrats have done to them with this health care law.

Madam President, I yield the floor and 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. CARPER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE 9/11 COMMISSION

Mr. CARPER. Madam President, I rise to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the final report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, also known as the 9/11 Commission Report.

As the chairman of the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee—a committee on which I proudly serve with the Pre-

siding Officer—I can tell my colleagues that this report has been and continues to be incredibly important to the work we do in the committee that Dr. COBURN and I are privileged to lead in this Congress.

Nearly 13 years ago, as we will recall, our Nation suffered the most devastating attack on U.S. soil since Pearl Harbor. Almost every American alive will remember where they were on the day the Twin Towers collapsed, when the Pentagon was hit, and when they saw the wreckage in the fields of Shanksville, PA.

We asked ourselves at that time, Why would anybody want to do this? How did this happen? What could have been done to prevent this tragedy?

In the months after this horrific attack, Congress and the President endeavored to answer these questions. Together they established an entity we call the 9/11 Commission.

Led by former New Jersey Gov. Tom Kean—our neighbor across the Delaware River—a Republican, and by former Indiana Congressman Lee Hamilton, a Democrat—one of my mentors in the House of Representatives—the Commission was charged with preparing a full and complete accounting of the circumstances surrounding these horrific attacks and recommending ways to make our Nation more secure.

This proved to be no small task. The Commission interviewed more than 1,200 people in 10 countries, including every single relevant senior national security official from not one but two administrations, and reviewed more than 2.5 million pages of documents. Despite the political tensions and partisan climate that engulfed our Nation at the time, the Commission put aside their own political differences and issued their final report 10 years ago today.

The 592-page report contained a full accounting of what happened before and after the attacks and included no less than 41 recommendations on how we could prevent another tragedy such as the one visited upon us on September 11. The report went on to sell more than 1 million copies and it was at the top of the national best seller list—numerous national best seller lists. Imagine that, a report—a Federal report—a best seller. It was a remarkable achievement, not only because of the depth and breadth of the Commissioners' findings but because all 10 Commissioners—5 Democrats and 5 Republicans—came to agreement on every single word of this report. Around here some days we can't agree if it is Wednesday, much less agree on every single word of a 592-page report.

In the months and years following the report's release, Democrats and Republicans in Congress worked together with the Bush administration to enact not one but two major laws to implement the report's recommendations. These laws were championed in part by our good friends Joe Lieberman of Connecticut and SUSAN COLLINS of Maine,

both of whom served as chair and as ranking member of the committee I now chair.

Among other things, these two historic bills created a new Director of National Intelligence to coordinate and oversee all information sharing and intelligence activities. These laws implemented a passenger prescreening system that has helped to ensure that terrorists aren't able to fly on aircraft, while also establishing a fully staffed Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board.

When we think about all of these accomplishments and more, I think it is safe to say that the 9/11 Commission report has proven to be one of the most important and influential efforts of its kind in recent history. We as a nation owe a real debt of gratitude to the Commissioners for their determined and clear-eyed approach to improving the security of our Nation.

We might ask ourselves: How did they do this? The Commission's leadership—Governor Kean and Congressman Hamilton—wrote in their own words on the 10th anniversary of the September 11 attacks about why the Commission was so special and so effective. Here is what they had to say:

First, because of the great damage and trauma the 9/11 attacks produced, the American public demanded action and had high expectations for measures and reforms that would improve the nation's security.

Importantly, the statutory mandate for the Commission was limited, precise, and clear—the Commission was authorized to investigate the facts and circumstances surrounding the attacks and to make recommendations to keep our country safe;

The Commission had an extraordinary non-partisan staff—

They truly did have an excellent staff—

the members of which possessed deep expertise and conducted their work with thoroughness and professionalism; the Commissioners—

Many of them I am privileged to know—

had deep experience in government and political credibility with different constituencies;

The final report was unanimous and bipartisan; families of the victims of 9/11 provided solid and sophisticated support throughout the life of the Commission and in the years since; and following the Commission, the Commissioners and staff continued to work closely with Congress and the executive branch to implement and monitor reform.

That is what they had to say.

In other words, they had the will to act. They had the authority and the responsibility to act. They had the support of great staff and of the Americans most directly affected by the tragedy; that is, the families who were affected. They had extraordinary leadership from Governor Kean and Congressman Hamilton, both of whom put aside partisan differences and built a trusting relationship for the betterment of our Nation.

Once, after having a hearing in Dirksen 342, where our committee meets now and where they were testifying before us, the Chair and Vice

Chair, Governor Kean and Congressman Hamilton, and I asked them: In a day and age when it is hard for us to agree on much of anything around here, how were you able to agree, the two of you and your Commission, on the entire almost 600 pages of this report?

I will never forget what they both said.

They said: Well, we didn't really know each other, but we were thrust into this and asked to serve in this capacity, and we got to know each other.

They said: We got to know each other very well, and out of all the time we spent together grew a trust that was almost without bounds and a very strong friendship—a real bond.

Sometimes we think about why we are so dysfunctional here. That is, in my judgment, a very big part of what is missing—a lack of trust and understanding of one another and having those kinds of personal friendships that go across all kinds of boundaries.

After 10 years, I still marvel at the trust developed between the Commissioners, and especially the Chairman and Vice Chairman. Perhaps most importantly, no other large-scale, 9/11-type attack on U.S. soil has occurred over these past 13 years. The improvements made to our intelligence, our law enforcement, and our security agencies as a result of the 9/11 Commission's work have undoubtedly contributed to that good fortune.

The response to the Boston Marathon bombing on April 15, 2013—just last year—was a shining example of how the investments we have made as a nation in training and equipment for our first responders have made us more capable, more resilient, and more secure than ever. But that attack itself showed us we cannot grow complacent. We must maintain our resolve and our commitment to the security of our Nation.

The Boston bombing, new threats to aviation, foreign fighters in Syria coming home—these are all stark reminders that we continue to face persistent and evolving terrorist threats.

Of course, one of the biggest threats our country faces is in cyberspace. That is why Dr. COBURN, our staffs, members of our committee, and I worked so hard to move three bipartisan cyber bills out of the committee this year and they now await action by the full Senate in this Chamber. These are just a few of the challenges our Nation continues to face.

We know there is still work to be done to fully implement the Commission's recommendations. So today, as we commemorate the release of this report, I think we would be wise to revisit and attempt to recapture the spirit of unity that made this bipartisan achievement possible by the 9/11 Commission.

As we seek to confront and to overcome the challenges before us on this day, we would be wise to consider again the example set by Governor Kean,

Congressman Lee Hamilton, and the other eight Commissioners, and we should be inspired by their example.

The people we are privileged to represent across the Nation are pleading with us to set aside what separates us—pleading with us—remembering what binds us together and do the hard work we need to do to keep our homeland secure in an evermore turbulent world.

Let me close by thanking once again the 9/11 Commissioners not only for their important work that they did all those years ago but for the enduring example they set for us a decade ago. Let's be inspired by them. Our country and its people are counting on us on so many different fronts. Let's not let them down.

I note the absence of a quorum. Thanks so much.

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

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

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, will the Senator yield for a unanimous consent request.

Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. President, I would be happy to yield.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be permitted to speak immediately following the remarks of the distinguished Senator from Pennsylvania.

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

Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. President, I would like to thank the Senator from Utah because I got here late and I am intruding on his time, but he has been kind enough to patiently wait for me to make a few points. So I will try to be brief, but I think it is really important that we address this issue, which is a very serious problem happening in America.

We see increasing numbers of what we call corporate inversions—American corporations establishing their headquarters overseas—typically through the mechanism of purchasing a company overseas and establishing that as the headquarters.

First of all, I just hate to see any American company choosing to not be an American company. It is very offensive to me at a deep level, most especially if it were to be a Pennsylvania company—but any company. Secondly, whatever little shred of faith any Americans have in our tax system is further undermined by seeing this. And, most importantly over time, this dynamic that is happening, if unaddressed, I think poses a very serious risk that we are going to lose jobs, we are going to lose corporate headquarters and all of the very substantial and good-paying jobs that are always associated with an American corporate headquarters, from senior executives, to secretarial folks, to the janitorial staff, and everyone in between. There are a lot of jobs that go along with where people decide to establish their

corporate headquarters, and I want it to be in America. That is my goal. That is my motivation.

So it is useful to start with posing the question: Why is this happening, that American companies that have subsidiaries overseas are deciding they had better be headquartered somewhere other than America?

I will tell you why it is happening. There is no mystery here. It is happening because we have a Tax Code that is driving them to do this. We have chosen to inflict on our workers and our businesses the highest marginalized tax rate in the industrial world, so we are systematically less competitive than any of our trading partners, the nations against which we compete.

In addition to having such a high marginal rate, we have chosen, quite foolishly, in my view, to adopt a system of taxation with respect to overseas subsidiaries that no one else in the world—virtually no one else in the world—adopts.

Let me drill down a little bit into this. Specifically, the difference between a high marginal rate and a low rate is pretty obvious. We have the highest. Other countries have much lower rates. Increasingly, they are reducing their rates. We used to be in the middle of the pack. Twenty years ago the American business tax rate was about the same as most of our trading partners and competitors. Today it is much higher. We stand pretty much alone with a very high rate. That is obvious. That is pretty straightforward.

The other piece, though, is how we deal with the tax—with the income of subsidiaries. That is very different. Here is what happens. Basically imagine that an American company has a subsidiary in Ireland. That subsidiary makes some profits. The profits are taxed by the Irish Government. They happen to use a 12½-percent tax rate, because they want to attract business. It is working, by the way, for them.

But be that as it may, the first layer of tax an American subsidiary operating in Ireland pays is the tax to the Irish Government, 12½ percent. Then here is what we do in America: We say, now if you want to bring that money home to America and invest it in America and build a new factory in Pennsylvania or in Delaware and hire lots of workers, if you want to bring the money home to do that, well, we have a punishment in store for you. We are going to look at our rate, which is among the very highest in the world at 35 percent. We will give you credit for the 12½-percent that you paid to the Irish Government. We will soak you for another 23 percent. That is the price we will charge you for investing in America. That is what we do. That is what our current tax system does.

Now what if this Irish company, this subsidiary operating in Ireland, what if instead it was owned by a company that is headquartered in Sweden or Switzerland or any other number of

European countries? Do you know what they do? What they do is say: Well, after you have paid your tax to the Irish Government, if you then want to bring it home to one of those countries, there is almost no additional charge. There is a very nominal toll, if you will, on bringing that money back to those countries.

What is the effect of this? The effect of this is that we put our multinational companies at a huge competitive disadvantage. It is an unsustainable competitive disadvantage. The other effect is that we end up trapping money overseas that would be invested in America but is not.

So what is the rational response of the corporate management and the board of directors of a business which has this Irish subsidiary that has made this money, it has paid its tax to the Irish Government? Unfortunately, the response typically is: Well, I cannot defend to my shareholders why I should bring that money home and get whacked another 23 percent. So instead, I would rather not do this, but I am forced to look at investing somewhere else in the world where I will not have to pay this tax. This is what I am being told—this is what is happening. The way to avoid all of this is to be headquartered somewhere other than America.

This is terrible. This is outrageous. We are doing this to ourselves. It is madness.

I have to say, I am very disappointed with how we are responding in this body. We know this is a problem. This is very real. It is growing. We are not taking it seriously. What we are going to vote on later this week, I think, or whenever the vote comes up, is not a serious attempt to solve this problem. It is a completely political show vote, the Walsh-Stabenow bill. It will do nothing to stop these ongoing inversions. It does nothing about the fundamental underlying cause that is driving these inversions. It does nothing to encourage the repatriation of all of this money.

By the way, it is attached to a vehicle that is unconstitutional. We cannot originate a tax bill in the Senate. The Constitution forbids that. So if you are even pretending to be serious about tax reform, you take up a House-passed vehicle so it is at least constitutionally possible. Our Democratic friends chose not to even bother with that formality, so blatant is the fact that this is not a serious discussion. That is a shame. We ought to be having a serious discussion about this.

There is a more serious alternative bill that some of our friends on the other side are advocates for. That is a bill that basically would make it harder for you to achieve the inversion a company is attempting to achieve. It would require the number of foreign shareholders be quite high at the end of the transaction in order to qualify for it. So it sounds on the surface like: Oh, that might work and make it harder to do this.

But the problem still goes to it does not deal with the underlying fundamental driver of this problem, which is a Tax Code that makes it uncompetitive to be American. So if the Levin bill, which is the one I am referring to, were to be adopted, which I certainly hope it would not be, it continues to make it untenable for shareholders of a business to justify being headquartered in America. We will continue to see increasing numbers of startups and spin-off and growth overseas where the governments choose not to punish their businesses the way we punish ours.

I think the answer is to deal with the underlying cause, not the reaction to that underlying cause. I do not want to see any more of these inversions.

We are going to do that by lowering the marginal corporate tax rates so there is not a huge advantage in being anywhere else other than America, and to adopt a territorial system, a system where once a company pays the tax it owes to the country in which it is located, we do not punish them for bringing that money home and investing it in America. That is the answer. That is the solution. This is no great mystery. The rest of the world has figured this out. They are ahead of us on this.

If we would get serious about this very real problem and we made these reforms, what would the net result be? Up to maybe over \$1 trillion of money that is trapped overseas would be invested back in America. Can you imagine what that would do to our economic growth almost immediately—the surge in job creation, the surge in expansion of existing businesses.

You know, we have this tremendous renaissance in manufacturing that we are on the edge of, because we have such low-cost energy. It is an enormous advantage we have. We could release this pent-up demand and take advantage of this enormous opportunity if we had a Tax Code that made it rational.

I am standing here very frustrated, because I am watching us eke out this miserable sort of 1, maybe if we are lucky, 2-percent economic growth. Employment levels are way too low. Workforce participation is nowhere near where it should be. I know we could be booming. We could be growing at 4 percent. We could be creating many hundreds of thousands of new jobs every month. We could be bringing people back in the workforce. We could have the kind of strong economic expansion we have always had in the past after a severe recession.

But we are not getting there right now. It is partly because we have a Tax Code that is hampering us. It is driving up transactions that none of us want to see. So I hope after we get through the political exercise we are going to go through this week, we will get serious about solving the underlying problem: lowering the marginal rate so we do not stand out as the worst place in the world to establish a business, and moving to a territorial-based system so

that we stop punishing businesses that want to invest in America. That is my hope. I hope we will get to this soon, because, unfortunately, we are seeing the unfortunate consequences of this bad policy.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I am pleased to be in the same Senate with this wonderful Senator from Pennsylvania who does a very good job on the Senate Finance Committee and is, frankly, one of the brighter lights in the Senate. I appreciate him. I appreciate his efforts. I appreciate his leadership. I appreciate what he just got through saying.

Mr. President, soon we will begin debate on the so-called Bring Jobs Home Act. There are a number of serious problems facing our country. For example, our national debt currently exceeds \$17.5 trillion. That is trillion with a T. Our economy continues to struggle. In fact, the economy shrunk last quarter. We have an entitlement crisis that threatens to swallow our government and take the country down with it.

Of course, as has been widely discussed, we are seeing a parade of U.S. multinationals opting to move their legal domiciles to countries outside of our country, outside of the United States. During these difficult times what we are hearing from my friends on the other side of the aisle is not very good.

What are we hearing from these friends on the other side of the aisle? We are hearing talk about “economic patriotism.” I did not make up that term. It is the latest catchphrase coming from the Obama administration as they try to malign business models and investments they do not like during an election year.

Last week I received a letter from the Treasury Secretary calling for “a new sense of economic patriotism” as the administration pushed for legislation that would punitively and retroactively seek to limit corporate inversions. The President has repeated the line in some of his recent speeches. Of course, “economic patriotism” is not a new catchphrase. It was trotted out by the President during the 2012 election campaign. Now it appears to be making a comeback. Not surprisingly, this comeback is taking place in the midst of another election year. Apparently, as part of this recycled campaign, we are going to have to once again debate and vote on the Bring Jobs Home Act, the same bill the Senate rejected during the last election cycle.

If enacted, this legislation would deny the deduction for ordinary and necessary business expenses to the extent that such expenses were incurred for offshore outsourcing. That is, to the extent an employer incurred costs in relocating a business unit from somewhere inside the United States to somewhere outside the United States,

the employer would be disallowed a deduction for any of the associated business expenses. Wow. How antibusiness can you be? There are other ways of solving this problem.

The bill would also create a new tax credit for insourcing. That is, if a company relocated a business unit from outside the United States to inside the United States, the business would be allowed a tax credit equal to 20 percent of the costs associated with that relocation. As I said, this is a recycled bill.

The political talking points surrounding the bill are also recycled. This bill and the related talking points are based on the oft-repeated lie that there are special incentives or loopholes in the Tax Code that encourage businesses to move jobs overseas. No such loopholes exist.

As the Joint Committee on Taxation noted in its recent analysis of this bill:

Under present law, there are no targeted tax credits or disallowances of deductions related to relocating business units inside or outside the United States. Deductions generally are allowed for all ordinary and necessary expenses paid or incurred by the taxpayer during the taxable year in carrying on any trade or business. These ordinary and necessary expenses may include expenditures for the relocation of a business unit.

The truth could not be plainer. Yet the supporters of this bill still talk as though this legislation will end some kind of special tax treatment or deduction for companies that outsource. There is no special treatment. Under our Tax Code, relocation expenses are treated the same whether a company is relocating from a high-tax State in the United States to a lower tax State or if a company relocates some operations offshore.

As the nonpartisan congressional scorekeeper has made clear, there are no targeted tax benefits related to relocating business units outside of the United States. No credits. None. Zero.

As the Joint Committee on Taxation said:

There has always been a deduction allowed for a business's ordinary and necessary expenses. Expenses associated with moving have always been regarded as deductible business expenses.

That being the case, allowing a deduction for these expenses is not all that remarkable. It is the general rule. Disallowing or putting exceptions on this deduction, on the other hand, would be an extraordinary deviation from long-standing tax policy and would needlessly add yet another level of complexity to our already overly complex Tax Code.

Still, let's pretend for a moment this deviation is, in terms of tax policy, justified. It is not, but there is no harm in pretending, I guess. Even if we were justified, in terms of policy, the revenue generated by this proposal is minuscule.

According to JCT, the Joint Committee on Taxation, preventing businesses from deducting expenses relating to outsourcing would raise about \$140 million over 10 years. That is

about \$14 million a year—not \$14 billion with a “b,” but \$14 million with an “m.”

To put the puny amount of this proposal in context, we should compare this revenue number against the volume of business U.S. companies conduct overseas.

According to the latest available IRS statistics of income, in 2010 U.S. companies conducted about \$1.085 trillion in business abroad, and that is probably low, given the sluggishness of the economy at that time. On an annualized basis, the Bring Jobs Home Act would curtail deductions representing about \$40 million in expenses.

That represents four-thousandths of 1 percent of all overseas business conducted by American companies. Let me repeat that, four-thousandths of 1 percent—hardly perceptible.

As I said, we are talking about minuscule sums here. We are also talking about politics as usual in the Senate. Instead of facing these problems and facing them realistically, some prefer to play politics with it, and it is total BS.

Yet over the last few years we have heard countless claims from my friends on the other side of the aisle that “closing loopholes for businesses that move jobs overseas” will pay for all kinds of things.

Earlier this month, for example, President Obama claimed that part of his infrastructure plan could be paid for by making sure corporations shipping jobs overseas “pay their fair share of taxes.”

Well, if this bill is representative of this particular effort, the President doesn't plan on paying for very much. I would bet the \$14 million wouldn't even be enough to pay for a single high-speed rail car or a round of IRS bonuses. It is amazing to me what people will do for political advantage that is shameless. They should be ashamed.

Of course, all of this discussion only focuses on one section of the bill. When you add in the other part of the bill—the 20 percent credit for expenses associated with insourcing—the Bring Jobs Home Act actually loses revenue—loses revenue—adding \$214 million to the deficit over 10 years.

So why are we debating this bill? It is obviously not about raising revenue to pay for anything. It is clearly not about impacting business economic decisionmaking, and it is not about improving or simplifying our Tax Code.

Instead, this bill is about politics, pure and simple. It was all about politics the last time we debated this bill in 2012, and it is about politics this time around.

I, for one, am getting sick of it. I am so sick of this body not doing its job.

The Democrats, both in the Senate and the White House, think they gain some traction by talking about “economic patriotism” and trying to paint Republicans as the party of outsourcing. Give me a break. The bill is yet another election-year gimmick, pure

and simple, and they ought to be ashamed.

Quite frankly, the American people are tired of gimmicks.

What they want are serious solutions to the problems ailing our country. Sadly, they are not getting that from the Senate majority leadership these days.

If we are serious about bringing jobs home, we should try working on legislation that will actually make the United States a better place to do business. Let's make our country more attractive to do business.

We should try working on legislation that will actually grow our economy. But we don't do much of that in the Senate these days. In fact, we don't do much of anything in the Senate these days other than to continue to overbalance the Federal courts with this administration's suggestions.

Yes, we don't do much of that in the Senate these days. Instead, what we are seeing is an endless series of showboats designed to highlight whatever Democratic campaign theme is popular that week.

We have seen votes designed to highlight the supposed “war on women.” We have seen votes designed to make it appear the Republicans are indifferent to the plight of the middle class. Give me a break. Now we are seeing votes designed to demonize Republicans for their supposed lack of “economic patriotism.”

What a fraud. When does it end? From the looks of things, not any time soon.

I suspect as we debate the so-called Bring Jobs Home Act, the Republicans will offer a number of amendments that, unlike this bill, will actually create jobs in the United States. I plan to offer some amendments along those lines, and I am sure many of my colleagues will do the same.

This will be an opportunity to show whether the Senate Democratic leadership is serious about creating jobs and helping American workers and businesses as they claim to be. If, in fact, that is the aim of this legislation, then we should have a full and fair debate on it, including an open amendment process that will allow the Senate to explore alternative approaches and to discuss different ideas and how best to create jobs in this country. But I wouldn't hold my breath, watching how this Senate is being run these days.

Let's talk about actually fixing our Tax Code. Let's talk about growing our economy. Let's talk about real solutions to the real problems facing our Nation.

I hope that is the kind of conversation we will have on this bill. Of course, I am not naive. I know how the Senate operates these days. I have come to the floor numerous times—only yesterday, in fact—to lament the deterioration of this body under the current leadership. I am not under any illusions that things are simply going to change overnight.

I might add that the Senate leadership—these are friends of mine. I am just disappointed in the way they are running the place, and I think my disappointments are correct and accurate. But make no mistake, things need to change. For the good of our country, things need to be done differently around here.

Like I said, the American people are tired of political gimmicks. They are tired of the endless campaign. They want to see the Senate act in a way that will produce results.

Sadly, with this legislation before us this week, it looks as if we are in for yet another round of partisan gamesmanship.

We can do things differently and, once again, I hope we will. But as I have said many times before, I am not going to hold my breath. I just wish we could get together and work in the best interests of not only this body but our country.

I don't see the leadership at the White House either, nor do I think Secretary Lew's letter on this issue was a justifiable letter. In fact, I think it was pathetic, and I am very disappointed in him as a person and as a leader in this country for that letter.

Of course, I wrote one back to him, certainly, expressing my viewpoint.

U.N. DISABILITY TREATY

Yesterday the Foreign Relations Committee voted 12 to 6 again to report the U.N. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

This was similar to the committee vote 2 years ago. On December 4, 2012, the Senate voted 61 to 38 on the treaty, less than the two-thirds the Constitution requires for ratification.

I expect a similar result if the Senate takes up the treaty again. Yesterday afternoon the senior Senator from Iowa—a friend of mine, and a person for whom I have a lot of regard—spoke on the floor about the treaty, and as he has done many times, urged its ratification. I don't doubt his sincerity at all, and I admire him personally for the long service he has given to this country.

He called the concern that this treaty would undermine American sovereignty and self-government imaginary, hypothetical, and unreal. In fact he said:

Anyone who is hiding behind that issue does not want to vote for this treaty for some other reason. But it can't be the reason of sovereignty.

I will not speculate about what the Senator from Iowa meant by some other reason. He and I have worked hard together to promote the rights and opportunities of all persons with disabilities. I feel deeply about that issue. I feel as deeply as he does.

We were partners in the development and passage of both the original Americans with Disabilities Act in 1990 and the ADA Amendments Act in 2008.

I take a back seat to no one when it comes to legislation to help persons with disabilities.

But since I gave a speech on the floor 1 year ago explaining my concerns about this treaty's effect on American sovereignty and self-government, I have to respond to the charges by my friend from Iowa. I can only speak for myself, of course, but I am not hiding behind anything, including the sovereignty issue.

That issue is neither imaginary nor hypothetical, and it is certainly not cover for some hidden, unexpressed reason for opposing this treaty.

As I explained on July 10, 2013, this is a treaty not with other nations but instead with the United Nations itself. Ratifying it would create obligations across at least 25 different areas of social, economic, cultural and even political life. Article 8, for example, would even regulate the United States to "raise awareness throughout society, including at the family level, regarding persons with disabilities."

If this is all the treaty did, if it simply stated obligations, I might support it. It would then be generally similar to the treaty regarding child labor the Senate ratified in 1999. That treaty states that ratifying nations shall "take immediate and effective measures to secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labor."

But these two treaties are radically different and the difference is the very reason why the disability treaty threatens American sovereignty and self-government and the child labor treaty does not.

The difference between these treaties is who has authority to determine whether ratifying nations are in compliance. The child labor treaty leaves that up to the ratifying nations themselves.

The disability treaty, however, gives authority to determine whether ratifying nations were meeting their treaty obligations to the United Nations. That is considerably different and very dangerous. Each nation must submit compliance reports to a U.N. committee of experts which uses its own criteria and standards to determine compliance and makes whatever recommendations it chooses.

Treaty advocates say this U.N. committee will not have actual legal authority to require changes to domestic laws and that even if it did, we would not have to change a thing.

I have three responses to that. First, as I explained in my speech last year, American sovereignty and self-government are not so narrow they can only be undermined by the United Nations literally assuming legal and political control of our country. America is a republic under a written constitution, and in this system of government the people must have the last word on everything because the people are sovereign over everything.

The American people and their elected representatives, not a U.N. committee, must have the last word not only on our laws and regulations but

also on our priorities, our values, and our standards.

Ratifying this treaty would endorse a formal, ongoing role for the United Nations in evaluating virtually every aspect of American life. It would say that the U.N.—not the American people—has the last word about whether the United States is meeting its obligations in these many areas.

That undermines American sovereignty and self-government. The United Nations hardly needs a legally binding treaty to opine on aspects of American life and public policy. It does so all the time. Ratifying this treaty, however, would formally endorse the right of the United Nations to do so and, even worse, subject ourselves to their evaluation. That is serious. We should think twice before we allow something like that to happen.

Second, we may already have the world's most expansive disability laws and regulations—and I know because I helped bring them about—but this treaty goes far beyond that.

The U.N. Web site says this treaty legally binds any nation ratifying it to adhere to its principles, and the treaty spells out what that adherence will require. Ratifying nations agree to enact, modify, or abolish laws and regulations at all levels of government—federal, state, and local—that are inconsistent with the treaty's principles, but the treaty also requires evaluating and changing any social customs and cultural practices that are inconsistent with those principles. Anyone who has followed the United Nations knows that a U.N. committee is not likely to look as favorably on American customs and practices as it might on our laws and regulations.

Third, even though the U.N. disability treaty appears to have been modeled after the Americans with Disabilities Act, it utilizes a very different concept of disability.

For more than four decades, American laws in this area have defined a disability as an impairment that substantially limits a major life activity. The disability treaty, however, states that "disability is an evolving concept" involving barriers that hinder "full and effective participation on an equal basis with others." In other words, the U.N. committee would use a subjective fluid concept of disability to evaluate compliance with the treaty of U.S. laws that utilize an objective, functional definition of "disability."

I am pleased to note that, even without U.S. ratification, no less than 34 nations have ratified the U.N. disability treaty since it was sent to the Senate on May 17, 2012—15 of them since I last spoke here on the treaty a year ago.

Yesterday the senior Senator from Iowa asked for someone to explain to him why the disability treaty before us today raises concerns about sovereignty but the 1999 child labor treaty did not. Well, I think I have done that here today. The disability treaty gives

the last word on whether a nation is in compliance to the U.N.; the child labor treaty leaves that entirely up to each nation.

I understand Senators have different understandings or concepts about such things as American sovereignty and self-government, but it is wrong to say that if I take a different view on that than the senior Senator from Iowa, I must somehow be hiding my real reason for opposing this treaty. In our system of government, legislation and treaties are profoundly different ways of addressing public policy issues with profoundly different effects on sovereignty and self-government.

I will continue to be a champion for disability legislation, but I cannot support this disability treaty. I will support those who have disabilities, who have difficult times, as I did back then.

Frankly, I still remember my great friend from Iowa and myself walking off the floor to a whole reception room filled with persons with disabilities, all of whom were crying and happy that we had done this in America.

America leads the world in our quest toward disabilities issues. In all honesty, I don't want to lose our sovereignty in this issue, nor do I want to turn over our rights and our own self-interests to the United Nations, as good as it may be from time to time. But I have also seen where it hasn't been so good from time to time as well.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to talk about the Bring Jobs Home Act, which is the bill that would stop big corporations from getting a tax break for sending jobs overseas while rewarding businesses that invest in bringing jobs here, back home.

I thank my colleagues Senator WALSH and Senator STABENOW for leading the way on this important legislation, and I am glad we now have the opportunity to debate it. I hope our Republican colleagues will take a serious look at the Bring Jobs Home Act and work with us in the coming weeks and months on other efforts to create jobs and long-term economic growth.

Our economy has changed a lot over the last few decades. Prices have risen for everything from college tuition to health care, and the shifting realities of the global economy have really made it harder to find the kinds of jobs on which workers used to raise their families.

As we all remember, for far too many families the financial crisis and the recession that began in December of 2007 was the last straw. It pulled the rug out from under workers and small businesses across the country. We have come a long way since then, but it is clear there is much more we need to do to create jobs and broad-based economic growth so that hard-working families in our country get a fair shot.

At a time when too many families are still struggling to make ends meet,

there is absolutely no reason taxpayer dollars should go toward helping big corporations send jobs overseas. That is why I was very proud today to vote in support of the Bring Jobs Home Act.

I think most Americans would agree they don't want their taxpayer dollars spent on helping corporations outsource jobs. It really should be a no-brainer.

Unfortunately, over the last few years we have spent far too much time avoiding crises rather than legislation like the Bring Jobs Home Act that would help our workers and businesses. Government shutdowns, default threats, and last-minute deals took up a lot of oxygen here in Washington, DC, and made workers and families really question whether their government could get anything done.

So when Chairman RYAN and I were able to reach a 2-year bipartisan budget agreement, I was hopeful we would be able to move beyond the cycle of governing by crisis, and I hoped we could build on that bipartisan foundation established in that 2-year budget deal and work across the aisle to create jobs and grow our economy. The Bring Jobs Home Act is exactly the kind of legislation I wanted to see us debate and work together on.

While we all know Republicans and Democrats have very different views on the best ways to encourage economic growth, we have taken some bipartisan steps that show we should be able to work together on this and other job-creating legislation. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, which Senator ISAKSON from Georgia and I were able to work together to finish, is a great example. That bipartisan legislation shows what is possible when Members from different parties and different States and different Chambers come together to get things done for the American economy. I have heard from countless businesses and families in my home State of Washington who have told me how much they rely on effective workforce programs. So I was really thrilled yesterday to stand next to President Obama as he signed more than a decade of hard work and negotiation into law when he signed that legislation.

I am glad we were able to go beyond governing by crisis and reach a bipartisan agreement to thoroughly and responsibly improve our workforce development system. We need to do the same thing—go beyond simply avoiding crises when it comes to commonsense steps such as the Bring Jobs Home Act.

I would also note that this is true for the highway trust fund. I hope we will be able to not only avoid a construction shutdown short-term but that we will work together to strengthen our transportation infrastructure in a comprehensive way.

Construction workers and businesses absolutely deserve the certainty of knowing we are going to avoid the shortfall in the highway trust fund and keep our critical transportation

projects moving forward. But they actually deserve more than that. They, along with every other American family and business that uses our roads and bridges, deserve a long-term solution—one that not only shores up the highway trust fund but also provides a plan for smart investments throughout our entire transportation system.

My colleagues Senator WYDEN and Senator BOXER have been leading the way on avoiding this unnecessary crisis and addressing our transportation infrastructure challenges not just for next year but for years to come, and I thank both of them for their efforts.

I know conventional wisdom is that Congress will not be able to get anything done from now until November, but I don't see any reason at all why that ought to be the case. Families and communities rightly want us to solve problems. Just avoiding crises isn't enough.

I am very hopeful that in the coming weeks and months we can not only avoid a construction shutdown but also lay the groundwork for smart investments in our country's roads and bridges and waterways.

I am glad my Republican colleagues are making it clear that they don't want another fight over keeping the government open. I think we should build on that by working together to replace more of the harmful sequestration cuts we are going to face in 2016.

Instead of simply avoiding self-inflicted wounds to jobs and the economy, we should be taking important steps, such as the Bring Jobs Home Act, that encourage our companies to invest and hire right here at home.

Of course, there is much more to do as well, and I never meant to suggest that any of this would be easy. As we all know, compromise is not easy. But legislation such as the bipartisan Budget Act and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act show us that when both sides are ready to come to the table and make tough choices, we can make real progress.

We have a lot of work to do over the next weeks and into the fall, and I hope we will take the bipartisan path that leads us to real solutions and goes beyond just simply avoiding the next crisis. That is what our constituents rightly expect, it is what they deserve, and it is what I hope we can all work together on to deliver.

Mr. President, I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COONS). The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

VETERANS' AFFAIRS

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, as chairman of the Senate Committee on

Veterans' Affairs, I want to take a few minutes to update Members of the Senate as to where we are on some very important issues that impact veterans all over this country.

The first point I want to make is some good news. The committee had a hearing yesterday to hear testimony regarding the confirmation of Robert McDonald to be the new Secretary of the VA. I think I can speak for the whole committee in saying we were very impressed by what we heard from Mr. McDonald both in terms of his passion for the needs of veterans and also his administrative knowledge, his management skills, as the former head of one of the large corporations in America. I think he left us with a very strong impression. The result was that today, a few hours ago, by a unanimous vote, the Senate committee voted to confirm Robert McDonald as our new Secretary of the VA, and I hope very much his nomination will get to the floor as soon as possible. I think that is good news because the VA needs stable leadership. Sloan Gibson, who has been Acting Secretary, is doing an excellent job. He has already accomplished a lot. But it is important that we have a new permanent Secretary on board, and I hope the Members here see fit to confirm him as soon as we possibly can.

On an additional issue, I think as all Members of the Senate know, about a month or so ago we voted by a vote of 93 to 3, almost unanimously, to make sure the veterans of our country get quality health care in a timely manner, that we bring a new level of accountability to the VA, and I am very proud of the support that legislation, which was introduced by me and Senator JOHN MCCAIN, received. I thank again Senator MCCAIN for his very strong efforts to make that happen and for his continued support of the veterans community.

Senator MCCAIN made a statement the other day—I think it was yesterday—published in CQ, which I personally could not agree with more. He spoke in terms of the conference committee that we are in right now trying to merge the Senate bill and the House bill and come up with something that can pass in both bodies. He said and I quote: "We've got to sit down and get this done, because we cannot go out for recess in August without having acted on this bill."

I think he is exactly right.

Let me, picking up on that theme, relay to my colleagues what the VFW, which is having their annual convention in St. Louis, said:

The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States is demanding that Congress immediately pass a compromise bill to help fix the Department of Veterans Affairs before they adjourn for five weeks at the end of the month. "Pass a bill or don't come back from recess," said VFW National Commander William A. Thien of Georgetown, IN. "America's veterans are tired of waiting—on secret waiting lists at the VA and on their elected officials to do their jobs."

I could not agree with the VFW more on that issue.

There was a bill a month ago that passed here. The CBO said that bill would cost \$35 billion, and we voted for that for emergency funding because the Members here understood that taking care of veterans is a cost of war as much as spending money on tanks and guns and missiles—\$35 billion in emergency funding. The House passed its bill which was later assessed by the CBO at \$44 billion. But here is the good news—and without divulging the kinds of negotiations we are having with Chairman MILLER in the House—and Chairman MILLER is a serious man. I think he wants to get a bill passed. I don't want to go into all the details here, but I think it is fair to say the cost of that bill will be significantly less than what the CBO originally estimated.

A few minutes ago I and others received a letter from the major veterans organizations on an issue of important consequence. Again, without going into great detail about the nature of the negotiations which the House and Senate are having on the veterans bill, I think it is fair to say one of the stumbling blocks is that I agree and the House agrees it is imperative we pass funding to make sure that veterans who are in long waiting lines right now get the quality care they need now, and that means if the VA cannot accommodate them in a timely manner, they will go out to private doctors, community health centers, or whatever, and the VA will pay that bill. That is what we have to do because it is unacceptable that veterans remain on long waiting periods and not get health care. There is a general agreement on that. There is debate about how much that is going to cost over a 2-year period, but I think we can reach some resolution.

Here is where the difference of opinion lies—without divulging anything, and this has been in the newspapers—Sloan Gibson, the Acting Secretary, came before the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee last week and he made it very clear that while we have to deal with the emergency of long waiting periods and get people the contracted care they need, simultaneously, we must make sure the VA has the doctors, the nurses, the medical personnel, the IT, and the space they need in order to deal with this crisis so that 2 years from now we are not back in the same position we are, and he came forward with a proposal that, in fact, costs \$17.6 billion. I think we can lower that amount of money, because some of that request is not going to be spent this year or even next year.

But the issue here is we have to strengthen the VA, their capacity, so that veterans do not remain on long waiting periods and that we can get them the quality and timely care they need.

Now, what I wanted to mention was an hour or so ago I received and Chairman MILLER, who is chairman of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, got the letter, RICHARD BURR, who is

the ranking member on the Senate committee, MIKE MICHAUD, the ranking member at the House—we received a letter from a variety of veterans organizations, virtually every major veterans organization, and they are the Disabled American Veterans, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the VFW, the Paralyzed Veterans of America, the Vietnam Veterans of America, the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, the Military Officers Association of America, the U.S. Coast Guard Chief Petty Officers Association, and many other organizations.

I want to take a moment to read what they say, because this is terribly important. What they are saying in essence is yes, we need emergency funding to make sure that veterans tomorrow get the health care they need from the private sector or anyplace else, but we also need to strengthen the VA so that over the years they can provide the quality and timely care veterans are entitled to. I am going to read this letter because it is important that Members of the Senate and the House understand where the major veterans organizations are coming from.

Last week Acting Secretary Sloan Gibson appeared before the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee to discuss the progress made by the Department of Veterans Affairs over the past two months to address the health care access crisis for thousands of veterans. Secretary Gibson testified that after re-examining VA's resource needs in light of the revelations about secret waiting lists and hidden demand, VA required supplemental resources totaling \$17.6 billion for the remainder of this fiscal year through the end of FY 2017.

As the leaders of organizations representing millions of veterans, we agree with Secretary Gibson that there is a need to provide VA with additional resources now to ensure that veterans can access the health care they have earned either from VA providers or through non-VA purchased care. We urge Congress to expeditiously approve supplemental funding that fully addresses the critical needs outlined by Secretary Gibson either prior to, or at the same time as, any compromise legislation that may be reported out of the House-Senate Conference Committee. Whether it costs \$17 billion or \$50 billion over the next three years, Congress has a sacred obligation to provide VA with the funds it requires to meet both immediate needs through non-VA care and future needs by expanding VA's internal capacity.

And I continue. Again, this is a letter from almost every major veterans organization:

Last month, we wrote to you—

They wrote to the chairmen of the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees—

we wrote to you to outline the principles and priorities essential to addressing the access crisis, a copy of which is attached. The first priority "must be to ensure that all veterans currently waiting for treatment must be provided access to timely, convenient health care as quickly as medically indicated." Second, when VA is unable to provide that care directly, "VA must be involved in the timely coordination of and fully responsible for prompt payment for all authorized non-VA care." Third, Congress must provide supplemental funding for this year and additional

funding for next year to pay for the temporary expansion of non-VA purchased care. Finally, whatever actions VA or Congress takes to address the current access crisis must also “protect, preserve and strengthen the VA health care system so that it remains capable of providing a full continuum of high-quality, timely health care to all enrolled veterans.”

I ask unanimous consent that this letter be printed in the RECORD.

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

JULY 23, 2014.

Chairman BERNIE SANDERS,
*Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, Wash-
ington, DC.*

Ranking Member RICHARD BURR,
*Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, Wash-
ington, DC.*

Chairman JEFF MILLER,
*House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, Wash-
ington, DC.*

Ranking Member MIKE MICHAUD,
*House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, Wash-
ington, DC.*

CHAIRMAN SANDERS, CHAIRMAN MILLER, RANKING MEMBER BURR, RANKING MEMBER MICHAUD: Last week, Acting Secretary Sloan Gibson appeared before the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee to discuss the progress made by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) over the past two months to address the health care access crisis for thousands of veterans. Secretary Gibson testified that after re-examining VA's resource needs in light of the revelations about secret waiting lists and hidden demand, VA required supplemental resources totaling \$17.6 billion for the remainder of this fiscal year through the end of FY 2017.

As the leaders of organizations representing millions of veterans, we agree with Secretary Gibson that there is a need to provide VA with additional resources now to ensure that veterans can access the health care they have earned, either from VA providers or through non-VA purchased care. We urge Congress to expeditiously approve supplemental funding that fully addresses the critical needs outlined by Secretary Gibson either prior to, or at the same time as, any compromise legislation that may be reported out of the House-Senate Conference Committee. Whether it costs \$17 billion or \$50 billion over the next three years, Congress has a sacred obligation to provide VA with the funds it requires to meet both immediate needs through non-VA care and future needs by expanding VA's internal capacity.

Last month, we wrote to you to outlining the principles and priorities essential to addressing the access crisis, a copy of which is attached. The first priority “. . . must be to ensure that all veterans currently waiting for treatment must be provided access to timely, convenient health care as quickly as medically indicated.” Second, when VA is unable to provide that care directly, “. . . VA must be involved in the timely coordination of and fully responsible for prompt payment for all authorized non-VA care.” Third, Congress must provide supplemental funding for this year and additional funding for next year to pay for the temporary expansion of non-VA purchased care. Finally, whatever actions VA or Congress takes to address the current access crisis must also “. . . protect, preserve and strengthen the VA health care system so that it remains capable of providing a full continuum of high-quality, timely health care to all enrolled veterans.”

In his testimony to the Senate, Secretary Gibson stated that the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) has already reached out to over 160,000 veterans to get them off wait

lists and into clinics. He said that VHA accomplished this by adding more clinic hours, aggressively recruiting to fill physician vacancies, deploying mobile medical units, using temporary staffing resources, and expanding the use of private sector care. Gibson also testified that VHA made over 543,000 referrals for veterans to receive non-VA care in the private sector—91,000 more than in the comparable period a year ago. In a subsequent press release, VA stated that it had reduced the New Enrollee Appointment Report (NEAR) from its peak of 46,000 on June 1, 2014 to 2,000 as of July 1, 2014, and that there was also a reduction of over 17,000 veterans on the Electronic Waiting List since May 15, 2014. We appreciate this progress, but more must be done to ensure that every enrolled veteran has access to timely care.

The majority of the supplemental funding required by VA, approximately \$8.1 billion, would be used to expand access to VA health care over the next three fiscal years by hiring up to 10,000 new clinical staff, including 1,500 new doctors, nurses and other direct care providers. That funding would also be used to cover the cost of expanded non-VA purchased care, with the focus shifting over the three years from non-VA purchased care to VA-provided care as internal capacity increased. The next biggest portion would be \$6 billion for VA's physical infrastructure, which according to Secretary Gibson would include 77 lease projects for outpatient clinics that would add about two million square feet, as well as eight major construction projects and 700 minor construction and non-recurring maintenance projects that together could add roughly four million appointment slots at VA facilities. The remainder of the funding would go to IT enhancements, including scheduling, purchased care and project coordination systems, as well as a modest increase of \$400 million for additional VBA staff to address the claims and appeals backlogs.

In reviewing the additional resource requirements identified by Secretary Gibson, the undersigned find them to be commensurate with the historical funding shortfalls identified in recent years by many of our organizations, including The Independent Budget (IB), which is authored and endorsed by many of our organizations. For example, in the prior ten VA budgets, the amount of funding for medical care requested by the Administration and ultimately provided to VA by Congress was more than \$7.8 billion less than what was recommended by the IB. Over just the past five years, the IB recommended \$4 billion more than VA requested or Congress approved and for next year, FY 2015, the IB has recommended over \$2 billion more than VA requested. Further corroboration of the shortfall in VA's medical care funding came two weeks ago from the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), which issued a revised report on H.R. 3230 estimating that, “. . . under current law for 2015 and CBO's baseline projections for 2016, VA's appropriations for health care are not projected to keep pace with growth in the patient population or growth in per capita spending for health care—meaning that waiting times will tend to increase. . . .”

Similarly, over the past decade the amount of funding requested by VA for major and minor construction, and the final amount appropriated by Congress, has been more than \$9 billion less than what the IB estimated was needed to allow VA sufficient space to deliver timely, high-quality care. Over the past five years alone, that shortfall is more than \$6.6 billion and for next year the VA budget request is more than \$2.5 billion less than the IB recommendation. Funding for nonrecurring maintenance (NRM) has also been woefully inadequate. Importantly,

the IB recommendations closely mirror VA's Strategic Capital Investment Plan (SCIP), which VA uses to determine infrastructure needs. According to SCIP, VA should invest between \$56 to \$69 billion in facility improvements over the next ten years, which would require somewhere between \$5 to \$7 billion annually. However, the Administration's budget requests over the past four years have averaged less than \$2 billion annually for major and minor construction and for NRM, and Congress has not significantly increased those funding requests in the final appropriations.

Taking into account the progress achieved by VA over the past two months, and considering the funding shortfalls our organizations have identified over the past decade and in next year's budget, the undersigned believe that Congress must quickly approve supplemental funding that fully meets the critical needs identified by Secretary Gibson, and which fulfills the principles and priorities we laid out a month ago. Such an approach would be a reasonable and practical way to expand access now, while building internal capacity to avoid future access crises in the future. In contrast to the legislative proposals in the Conference Committee which would require months to promulgate new regulations, establish new procedures and set up new offices, the VA proposal could have an immediate impact on increasing access to care for veterans today by building upon VA's ongoing expanded access initiatives and sustaining them over the next three years. Furthermore, by investing in new staff and treatment space, VA would be able to continue providing this expanded level of care, even while increasing its use of purchased care when and where it is needed.

In our jointly signed letter last month, we applauded both the House and Senate for working expeditiously and in a bipartisan manner to move legislation designed to address the access crisis, and we understand you are continuing to work towards a compromise bill. As leaders of the nation's major veterans organization, we now ask that you work in the same bipartisan spirit to provide VA supplemental funding addressing the needs outlined by Secretary Gibson to the floor as quickly as feasible, approve it and send it to the President so that he can enact it to help ensure that no veteran waits too long to get the care they earned through their service. We look forward to your response.

Respectfully,

Garry J. Augustine, Executive Director, Washington Headquarters, DAV (Disabled American Veterans); Homer S. Townsend, Jr., Executive Director, Paralyzed Veterans of America; Tom Tarantino, Chief Policy Officer, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America; Robert E. Wallace, Executive Director, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States; Rick Weidman, Executive Director for Policy and Government Affairs, Vietnam Veterans of America; VADM Norbert R. Ryan, Jr., USN (Ret.), President, Military Officers Association of America; Randy Reid, Executive Director, U.S. Coast Guard Chief Petty Officers Association; James T. Currie, Ph.D., Colonel, USA (Ret.), Executive Director, Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service; Robert L. Frank, Chief Executive Officer, Air Force Sergeants Association; VADM John Totushek, USN (Ret.), Executive Director, Association of the U.S. Navy (AUSN); Herb Rosenbleeth, National Executive Director, Jewish War Veterans of the USA; Heather L. Ansley,

Esq., MSW, Vice President, VetsFirst, a Program of United Spinal Association; CW4 (Ret.) Jack Du Teil, Executive Director, United States Army Warrant Officers Association; John R. Davis, Director, Legislative Programs, Fleet Reserve Association; Robert Certain, Executive Director, Military Chaplain Association of the United States; Michael A. Blum, National Executive Director, Marine Corps League.

Mr. SANDERS. Essentially what the letter goes on to talk about is that many of these organizations have been looking at this issue for years, and in their independent budget have noted that the VA needs more space, because you have many hospitals where there are not enough examination rooms and that slows down the ability of doctors and nurses to treat patients, and we need more doctors and nurses. So for many of these organizations this is not new news. They have known it for years.

Here is where we are. The good news is that I think we can bring forth a bill which deals with emergency contracted-out care for veterans today on long waiting periods. I think we can deal with the issue that Senator MCCAIN feels very strongly about and that is making sure that veterans who live 40 miles or more away from a VA facility will be able to go to the private physician of their choice, and I think we can also strengthen the VA in terms of doctors and nurses and information technology and space so that we don't keep running into this problem year after year. It is going to take the VA time in order to bring in the doctors and nurses and do the construction. I don't want to get into the details of the discussions we are having with the House, but I did want to make veterans, and, in fact, Members of Congress aware of where I believe we are at this moment.

With that, I will yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I rise to address the legislation we are debating, the Bring Jobs Home Act, but before I do so, I wish to note how much I appreciate the leadership of the Senator from Vermont in fighting for quality care and quality programs for our U.S. veterans. This is incredibly important. Our sons and daughters and husbands and wives are coming home from Iraq and now from Afghanistan. They have stood for us and we need to stand for them. BERNIE SANDERS is leading that effort, and I appreciate him for doing so.

I wish to address the legislation we are debating, the Bring Jobs Home Act. Earlier today the Senate voted on whether to debate this legislation to help bring manufacturing jobs back to America—to onshore these jobs. I was very heartened to see a 93-to-7 overwhelming bipartisan majority say: Yes, let's turn to this bill and work on increasing manufacturing jobs in America. This is a much better result than we had just 2 years ago when some of my colleagues combined to thwart the ability to close debate on the motion

to proceed and we were unable to get on to this bill.

We are in an economy where jobs have been returning, but quality living-wage jobs remain elusive. Indeed, 60 percent of the jobs we lost in 2008 and 2009 were living-wage jobs, and of the jobs we are getting back, only 40 percent of those are living-wage jobs. The difference between those two numbers means that millions of families who had a strong foundation just a few years ago, while they may have employment today, do not have a strong foundation because they are chasing part-time jobs, minimum-wage jobs, near-minimum-wage jobs, and jobs with low to no benefits, and that is not a foundation on which a family can thrive.

This bill is important. The Bring Jobs Home Act does two simple things: It closes tax loopholes that ask the American people—currently—to subsidize the costs for corporations to ship jobs overseas; second, it creates a new tax incentive to encourage companies to bring jobs home with a tax credit that covers 20 percent of the costs of relocating those jobs back to the United States.

I am an original cosponsor of this legislation because this is an item of huge importance to my home State of Oregon. Manufacturing is a tremendous driver of Oregon's economy. In fact, if we look across the Nation and we look at what share of the State economy is driven by manufacturing, Oregon is often first or second. Manufacturing matters a great deal. When manufacturing thrives, the Oregon economy is going to do well, and when it dies, the Oregon economy is not going to do well.

If we look at this from yet another perspective, we can see that States have been losing manufacturing jobs over the last 10-plus years in sizeable numbers. In the period of about 2001 to 2011, that 10-year period, we lost approximately 5 million manufacturing jobs. To put it differently, we lost 50,000 factories. Well, what would we do today to have those 5 million living-wage, family-wage, good-paying jobs? One is we should pass this bill and to quit subsidizing the export of our jobs overseas.

These tax breaks, which were put through by powerful special interests for the benefit of a few multinationals, have done enormous damage to the United States of America and to our families, and this is our chance to reverse that.

One study—the Economic Policy Institute study of 2012—looked at the number of jobs that were created in this dynamic between additional sales overseas versus additional imports. Those additional imports, of course, reflected jobs lost. In their estimate, Oregon gained about 9,100 jobs from additional exports and we lost about 59,000 jobs. That differential of 50,000 jobs has an enormous impact on the State of Oregon. We can put it this way: It is about 2 to 3 percent of the number of jobs in our State economy, so it is an issue which really hits home.

I know Oregon is not alone. For every single State—West and East, urban and rural, and, yes, Democrat and Republican—this has been the story in which jobs lost have exceeded jobs gained. That is why I strongly hope this body of folks—representing the West and East and North and South and urban and rural, the blue and red—can come together to get this job done for the American people.

Think about it this way for a moment. Under our current Tax Code, we are asking working families who are paying income taxes to subsidize the exportation of their own jobs. That makes no sense. If you went out on the street in Eugene or Pendleton or Medford—cities across my State—and asked people what they think about that, you would probably hear a common theme. One person might say: That is absurd. Another person might say: That goes against our own economic self-interest. A third person might simply say: That is wrong and it hurts families. All of them would be right. Let's right this wrong, this inflicted wound on living-wage jobs and on our families.

Over the last few years we have started to see a bit of improvement in that manufacturing jobs have started to grow. But we need to nurture that trend. We need to encourage that direction. I know that for the Oregon families who are at the heart of the manufacturing economy, whether or not their jobs stay here in the United States of America means everything. It will affect the quality of life they will have as adults, and it also affects the quality they will bring to their jobs as parents and raising their children to seize opportunities of the future.

Let's continue to work together to keep jobs here in Oregon and here in America. Let's take on this issue of offshoring that has deeply affected millions of Americans. This is a problem that is within our power to fix, and we are now on the bill that starts us down the path of fixing it. Let's not get stalled. Let's make sure we have the majority to close debate, to get to a final vote.

If anyone has anything to say and you don't feel you have had time to say it, come and say it tonight, say it tomorrow, say it tomorrow evening, but get down here and make your notions known so that you don't have to say that you need more time when it comes time to shut down debate and actually vote on this bill.

Paralysis has been the practice that has so hurt this Chamber's ability to address major issues affecting America, and that is not right.

I encourage my colleagues, whatever you have to say, come down here and say it. Don't once again obstruct the ability of this Chamber to take on a major issue affecting families across this land.

I thank the Presiding Officer for the time and opportunity to speak on this bill. I know the Presiding Officer has been championing a whole collection of bills designed to nurture manufacturing. That collection of bills could do great work and would be a logical additional step as we take on these provisions to stop offshoring and increase onshoring.

We should turn to some of the other bills the Senator from Delaware has put together. One of the bills he has put together is a bill I sponsored. It is called the Build Act. I have gone on a manufacturing tour in my State of Oregon and visited a large number of manufacturers, and the common issue I hear from those who are managing the factory floor or from the CEOs is this: We need more folks coming out of high schools and community colleges who have both the aptitude for using tools and the desire to use tools.

It used to be, when I was growing up—this simply came because we had a habit of building things in our garages. Our garages were full of tools in a working-class community. My garage is still full of tools, but I can tell you that my children are not likely to find themselves out in the garage making things because that is not the culture today. If they are going to learn the joy of making things, they are going to have to have the opportunity of shop classes. It has a fancy name now—“career technical education.” I think “shop classes” gives a better visual impression—metal shop and woodshop and bringing items home where you can say, hey, I made this dustpan or this carving or this mask.

I have been to some shop classes in Oregon where the students are not making the simple things that I made. They are making some of the most incredibly gorgeous furniture you have ever seen, with sophisticated skills in using tools. We need more of those shop classes to help feed and nurture the manufacturing economy. It is a win-win for our children, it is a win-win for our economy, and it is a win-win in terms of creating living-wage jobs that are a strong foundation for families to thrive.

I thank the Presiding Officer.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Under the previous order, the time until 4:30 p.m. will be controlled by the Republicans.

LNG EXPORT APPROVAL

Mr. HOEVEN. Thank you, Mr. President.

I come to the floor to offer a compromise on the LNG export issue. I will

put up my first chart. I think this is both a solution and a compromise to LNG exporting.

The reality is we need to be able to construct LNG export facilities. There has been debate in this body as to how that approval process should work. Some want to take the Department of Energy completely out of the process and just allow companies to build LNG facilities—let the market work—and that is actually an approach I advocate and I have joined with others on that type of legislation. That legislation has bipartisan support. I think we could get it to the floor and we would have more than the 60 votes it needs to pass. Others have advocated a more cautious approach, which is essentially continuing the current state of play wherein DOE can take years before they make a decision on these LNG export terminals. So what I offer today is the LNG Certainty Act, which I believe is a compromise between those two points of view. It would provide for an expedited process but would do it in a way where we keep the Department of Energy in the equation.

Why is it so important that we act now? This is a bill that is very much about jobs. Right now we are on a motion to go to a bill that purportedly would create jobs. I don't think that bill will create jobs; I think it will create more regulation and more costs for companies that are trying to create jobs. So instead why don't we bring up some of these energy bills that will not only create jobs but accomplish much more as well, such as economic growth—economic growth that will generate revenues to reduce the deficit and the debt without raising taxes or increasing regulatory burdens? Why not pass some of these energy bills that will provide better environmental stewardship? LNG production certainly would provide job growth, economic growth but also better environmental stewardship, and it will also help provide national security—national security for us and for our allies. That is a very big reason it is so important that we act now.

We have a President who is talking about what Vladimir Putin and Russia should do and what they shouldn't do. He is talking about it, but we need to go beyond talk to action. What is that action? We need to impose stronger sanctions on Russia. I think there is broad bipartisan support in this Senate to impose stronger sanctions on Russia, but for those sanctions to be truly effective, we need the European Union to join with us in imposing those sanctions. We can have a meaningful impact on what Putin and Russia do, but we have to act and we have to get the European Union to act with us.

So why aren't they acting with us? The reality is Vladimir Putin has them over a barrel—literally. European countries are dependent on Russia for their energy. So they are very reluctant to impose sanctions when they have to get their energy from Russia.

Here is a graph that shows how much all of these different European countries get in terms of their energy, their natural gas from Europe. We can see in some cases it is 100 percent, 60 percent, 50 percent. For some obviously it is less. But for many European countries, they are dependent on Russia for this natural gas.

Here is the pipeline network coming in from Russia. Here we see Russia and all of these pipelines coming into Europe through the Ukraine supplying natural gas. Obviously, these countries are very worried about imposing sanctions which, of course, would create difficulty for them from an economic perspective as well as Russia, but they are very concerned about energy supply. That is why we have to act and we have to act now to make sure they have another supply of energy so they can join with us in meaningful sanctions against Russia.

So how does the LNG Certainty Act work? Quite simply, it provides that the Department of Energy must make a decision on whether to approve an LNG export application within 45 days of that company completing its preliminary application to the FERC—the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. So understand, right now companies have to apply to both the Department of Energy and to the FERC—the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. They have to apply to both in order to get approval to build an LNG facility.

When we talk to these companies we learn that the FERC has a fairly rational process that they know they can step through in an orderly fashion. It is pretty dependable, pretty certain. It takes a certain amount of time, covers all the bases, but they know they can get through it. The DOE—the Department of Energy—on the other hand, doesn't have any specific timeframes or criteria on how or whether they will give approval to these companies, so it creates uncertainty and it creates real delay.

As I said, some people want to take the Department of Energy out of the equation completely; others want to continue just as it is. That is why this act truly is a compromise in that we keep the Department of Energy in the mix, but we require that within 45 days after the preliminary application to the FERC is approved, which takes about 6 months, up to as much as 1 year—within 45 days after that preliminary application is filed with the FERC, the DOE then has 45 days to make a decision. So we still have whatever safeguards some people feel need to be in there, as far as the DOE. The DOE is still in there. They still have that safeguard, but we have a reasonably expedited process and a reasonably certain process for these companies that are applying to try to get approval.

Right now we have on the order of 13 different companies—1 has conditional approval but 13 different companies—

seeking approval to build LNG facilities. Many of these companies have been waiting for over 1 year—some 1 to 2 years—and they are not even through the Department of Energy process yet. So while we need to start moving natural gas to Europe, since Europe needs that source of supply so they can stand with us in sanctions against Russia, these applications continue to sit in limbo. How does that possibly make sense? Why aren't we acting? Why is it adequate or satisfactory for the President to just talk about what should be done instead of doing something? This is action we can and must take.

I will give my colleagues an example of a project showing what we are talking about. I am showing my colleagues 13 different projects that are in limbo.

Here is one right here where we take a specific example. This is the Golden Pass project. It is a project ExxonMobil wants to build. They are ready to invest \$10 billion—\$10 billion—today and save these taxes to build an export facility that will move liquefied natural gas from this country to Europe. Why would we want to sit and hold them up?

Here you see a timeline. They have been in this process already for more than 1 year. It looks to me as though they do not even figure they are halfway done yet, and there is no certainty from the Department of Energy when they will be done. Yet here is a \$10 billion project that is sponsored by a company—ExxonMobil—that certainly has the ability to build it, that will take LNG, liquefied natural gas, to Europe. What is the rationale for holding them up, for just making them wait? Aren't we moving to a so-called jobs bill? How many jobs do you think will be created in building a \$10 billion facility? A lot of jobs.

This is just 1 example of the more than 13 I just showed that are sitting in limbo.

That is exactly why I have joined with Senator McCAIN, Senator MURKOWSKI, and Senator BARRASSO and we proposed the North Atlantic Energy Security Act. The whole focus of this act was to streamline oil and gas production, to build the gathering systems we need, move it to these LNG facilities, and give companies the approval and the authority to build those LNG facilities so they can move that gas to our allies.

All of these steps create jobs. They all create jobs. We create jobs in all of these steps: producing more gas, building the gathering systems, and building the LNG facilities. But instead of doing this—in this picture we have an oil well, which is flaring off gas, meaning burning it off. This picture is an example in my State of North Dakota where we are flaring off \$1.5 million worth of gas a day. So instead of just burning up that gas, we would actually have a market for it, so we can capture it, move it to the LNG facilities, and export it to our allies, not only strengthening our national security and their national security but creating a market for our gas.

Right now we produce 30 trillion cubic feet of gas a year in this country, and we use 26 trillion. So gas is flared off instead of captured and sent to market.

If we want to talk about job creation, if we want to talk about economic growth, if we want to talk about environmental stewardship, if we want to talk about working with our allies to actually do something in response to Russian aggression, do we want to actually do something or just keep talking about it?

So while we are considering jobs bills, why don't we consider this jobs bill? Why don't we consider the LNG Certainty Act. The reason I have introduced this compromise bill is so we can do this: move natural gas from the United States, through facilities, to our allies to deter Russian aggression. It is that simple. That is what it is all about.

That is why, again, I joined with Senators McCAIN, MURKOWSKI, and BARRASSO to introduce the North Atlantic Energy Security Act. But if that is too heavy a lift—if that is too heavy a lift—then let's take up the LNG Certainty Act and just approve the ability to build these facilities. Let's at least take that first step.

There are other bills we can take up as well that are true job creators, real job creators, where we empower companies across this great Nation, large and small, to create jobs, to create more energy, to create better environmental stewardship, and to strengthen national security—energy bills that myself and others have introduced: the LNG Certainty Act which I am talking about right now, the North Atlantic Energy Security Act which I have referenced as well, Keystone—the Keystone XL Pipeline. Why aren't we building that right now to make sure, with Canada, we produce more oil than we consume so we can tell the Middle East we do not need any oil, we have it covered or the Domestic Energy and Jobs Act, which is a whole series of bills that have been passed in the House that I have introduced in the Senate that would cut the regulatory burden, increase the amount of energy we produce in this country both onshore and offshore or the Empower States Act, where we give States the ability to take a primary role in regulating hydraulic fracturing so we have the certainty to continue the investment that is producing an energy renaissance in this country.

All of these acts have been filed. All of these acts create jobs. Why are they being held up so we can consider a bill that increases regulation, increases taxes on companies in the country, and will have the impact of reducing jobs and reducing economic growth rather than accomplishing all of the things we are talking about—not just jobs, not just economic growth but national security and actually working with our allies to accomplish something instead of just talking about it, making Putin

tow the line rather than just telling him he should.

With that, I know my colleagues are here to propose additional job-creating ideas as well, and at this time I yield for the outstanding Senator from the State of Georgia.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from the Dakotas for yielding the floor to me. Before he leaves, I wish to say something about what the Senator just said. In fact, I was sitting here listening to him. I am going to prove I was actually listening to his speech. I don't think we always do—sometimes I think we don't—but I did that because he was right on target.

But my thought process went back to the 1970s. In the 1970s, OPEC and the Arab oil embargo basically held the United States of America hostage. I remember lines where we would wait for an hour and a half to get \$10 worth of gasoline because we had a limited supply.

Now we sit here in a country, some 40 years later, that has unlimited resources available to us if we will just take the political moves and the regulatory moves and the practical moves to exhibit our power and extract those resources.

For example, the Keystone Pipeline that the Senator talked about—not a single molecule of carbon will be generated by bringing that petroleum underground through a pipeline from Canada to Houston. We will refine it more soundly and more environmentally than the Chinese would or anybody else would, and then we will have an almost infinite supply to take care of our own country internally and also use it as a part of our soft power around the world.

The Senator is absolutely correct about Germany and about the Ukraine and about Russia. If we become the surrogate and we replace Russia in terms of supply of natural gas to that part of the world, we take away the only asset Russia has. As Senator McCAIN has so often said, Russia has relegated itself to being a gas station with a flag. If we become the competitive gas station down the line, we can lower our price by nine-tenths of a cent, we can sell more gas than they can, and we can use the soft power of our natural resources to bring back what we need in terms of peace and stability in that part of the world. The byproduct of doing that is not just energy security, it is not just better diplomatic and international policy, but it is jobs for Americans—jobs to build the pipeline, jobs to operate the pipeline, jobs to extract or frack the natural gas out of Haynesville and Marcellus.

We are sitting on a ham sandwich, starving to death as a country with our assets because governmental policy will not let us do some of what we ought to do.

So I came to the floor to talk a little bit about job creating and bringing

jobs home. The bringing jobs home bill is a \$214 million bill, which is a rounding error in terms of the way we do business around here, and will do nothing except penalize companies for doing what they have to do and offer a reward that is not a carrot at all to bring jobs back.

I thank the Senator from the Dakotas for his speech and for his continuing and persistent emphasis on our energy and our energy power and our energy independence. It is voices such as his that need to be heard more and more in this Chamber so we can create jobs for the American people and solve the economic problems we have.

I commend the Senator from South Dakota—thank you—from North Dakota.

Mr. HOEVEN. Yes, sir.

Mr. ISAKSON. I apologize. I am a southerner, so I slipped up on that.

Mr. HOEVEN. I thank the good Senator and I appreciate it very much.

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I rise to talk for a minute about the issue of the day that is before us, the bring jobs home bill. I appreciate any effort to bring jobs home and to create new jobs at home, but I want to talk about how we are making a false promise and giving idle hope to people about bringing jobs back because we are not doing the things we should be doing.

If you ask me to make my choice, what should we do in the Senate, on the floor of the Senate, in this body as legislators to create as many jobs as we can as fast as we can, a tax credit for bringing jobs home will not do it and a tax penalty for taking jobs overseas will not do it, but approving the Keystone Pipeline will do it and giving the President of the United States trade promotion authority will do it. Both of those are pending on the floor of the Senate right now before us. We could take them up tomorrow. If we did, we could make a massive impact on job creation in America and further empower our economy.

I happen to be the ranking Republican on the Finance Committee's subcommittee on trade. We have two major trade agreements pending in the United States of America that we are a part of current negotiations—one of them is the Trans-Pacific Partnership, one is the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, called TTIP.

Those two trade agreements are free-trade agreements with our biggest trading partners—Asia and Europe and Scandinavia—but the Asians and the Scandinavians both ask me, when I talk to them in meetings discussing trade: When are you going to give your President trade promotion authority? Because we know until the U.S. Congress gives the President that authority, you are not serious about negotiating trade deals.

I first came to the Congress of the United States in 1999, 1 year after we gave President Bill Clinton trade promotion authority. Then we had a plethora of free-trade agreements that

passed at that time because of the negotiation power we gave the President. Trade promotion authority just means we give the President the authority to negotiate the trade agreement, and then the Senate gets an up-or-down vote on the agreement. But we do not get to vote on amendment after amendment after amendment, we get a vote on the totality of the agreement. In other words, we give sincerity to our foreign trading partners that what we say is what we mean and that we are going to give our President the authority to negotiate those deals, and we will make them subject to our ratification in the Senate. Trade promotion authority is important for America, for jobs, for our economy, and it is, quite frankly, important for bringing jobs home to the United States of America.

The Keystone Pipeline, which I mentioned a minute ago in talking about Senator HOEVEN's remarks, is a job creator. The unions are for it. Business is for it. Most Americans are for it. It only takes the signature of the President to let it go. The State Department has signed off on it. There is only one reason, I suppose, we are not building the Keystone Pipeline; that is, because of environmental fear of the Keystone Pipeline generating some kind of an environmental problem.

Think about it for a second. If we do not put it in a pipe and bring it underground, we can put it on a truck that burns gasoline or diesel fuel and bring it to Texas and create a whole lot of carbon molecules. We are trying to reduce carbon in the air, so building a pipeline is environmentally friendly. It is safer than putting it on the roads or railcars or trucks or tractors. It is the way to do it. I do not understand why the President will not do it. But I think we need to continue to talk about it because the energy independence Senator HOEVEN talked about is exactly what America is on the cusp of having. We suffered when we were energy dependent in the 1970s and 1980s. We paid a big price for it. We paid the price of inflation, reduced authority around the world, and we lost our position and stature in business. We now have a chance to secure it not just for this decade but for this century in the United States of America, and I hope the President will reconsider his unwillingness to sign the Keystone Pipeline and do so.

On the jobs issue and on the inversion issue, which has brought about this entire discussion—and for those who might be listening and watching, inversion is where American corporations decide to acquire a foreign company and invert to where their headquarters are in the foreign country rather than in the United States of America to take advantage of a better corporate tax rate.

We have now the highest corporate tax rate in the world—the highest in the world. Japan, which used to be up there above us or right with us, has now lowered theirs. Canada has lowered theirs. Ireland has lowered theirs.

Jobs are going offshore because the cost of taxes is lower, because it is a tax code that promotes growth, promotes business, and promotes development.

We need a progrowth tax policy in the United States. We need a simpler tax code. We need a fairer rate of taxation. We need to get rid of corporate welfare. A lot of my friends on the other side are always talking about corporate welfare. They are right. We did it on ethanol subsidies when we were subsidizing people to make ethanol. That was an intent, through a tax incentive, to cause something we thought would be the right thing to happen for the environment, which did not work. Those are the types of things we ought to stop doing—those types of corporate welfare. But what we should do is give a progrowth tax code to the American businesspeople, whether they are C corps or S corps—and I am going to talk about that for a second—so they know what kind of tax rate they can count on, they know it is simple, they know it is fair, and they know it is predictable for the future.

I find it interesting, when the old Soviet Union fell, when the Soviet satellite states such as Estonia and Latvia became independent countries, if you go back and study that—and that was not too long ago—if you go back and study what they did to separate themselves from the Soviet Union—take Estonia, for example. The new President of Estonia, after they became independent, did three things. He gave the state-owned apartments to each person who rented them and let them own them as a home and then created a housing market instantaneously.

That was No. 1. No. 2, they cut the tax rate from 50 percent to 25 percent and revenues went up and not down, because people thought 25 percent was a fair rate and they did not cheat—because there was a lot of cheating going on under the 50-percent rate. Then on the corporate taxes in Estonia, they went to businesses and said: We are not going to tax your profits as long as you reinvest those profits in jobs or in research and development. The rest of it will be taxes. So they incentivized research and development. They incentivized employment. They made corporate Estonia feel as though they had a fair tax system.

What happened? If you fly into a town in Estonia today, it is similar to flying into Dallas or Atlanta. There are cranes everywhere. There is economic development and improvement everywhere. Why? Because they have what people perceive to be a fair code. They do not have a junk code. They have a good tax code, and they incentivize people to do business and make money.

You raise revenue in America by raising prosperity, not by raising rates of taxation. We have proved that every time we have lowered the capital gains tax. Every year following the lowering of the capital gains tax, revenues from capital gains went up and not down.

Why? Because people who had a mature investment were incentivized to pay the lower tax rate, sell the investment, and reinvest in a maturing, developing investment rather than just hold onto it because they did not want to pay what they considered was a confiscatory tax. Tax policy drives economic decisions. There is not one of us in this room who does not make decisions every single day on our own personal finances where we do not consider—in some part or in whole—the tax consequence of it.

That is why you have a tax code. But we all look at fair and equitable corporate tax relief. We ought to do it for S corporations and for C corporations. I want to talk about that part for just a minute. C corporations are the major corporations and dividend-paying companies in America. Their tax rate is 35 percent. S corporations are corporations where they file as partners. The profits of the company flow through on what is known as a K-1 statement. It flows through as ordinary income.

Today the ordinary income tax rates for people making more than \$450,000 can go up to 39 percent. It is already higher than the 35 percent C corporations have. If we lower the C corporation rate from 35 to 28 percent through comprehensive tax reform, then there will be a big disparity between the S corporations and the C corporations. The S corporations employ a lot of Americans. They are the mom and pop Main Street businesses. They are 72 percent of the jobs that are created in America. So we ought to take the whole enchilada. We ought to reform both the corporate tax rate, the C corporation rate, the S corporation rate, and the individual tax rate and modernize them together and make them fair, equitable, less complex, and more productive.

If we incentivized American business to invest and to grow, we will raise revenues, we will raise prosperity, and we will raise hope. If we continue to pass bills that say: If you doing something, we are going to tax you or if you do something, we are going to give you a benefit—if we think that is going to cause people to bring jobs back to the United States of America, we are dead wrong.

What would cause them to bring jobs back to America is a fair tax code and to take our strong investments and our strong assets, such as petroleum and liquid natural gas, which we were talking about, and use them to our advantage through the soft power of economic power. So my message today is very simple. If you want to create jobs, build the Keystone Pipeline and give the President Trade Promotion Authority and do it now.

If you want to really stop corporate inversions, just modernize the American Tax Code like every other country in the world has done. There are a lot of people who are talking about offshore profits who are stranded in the Cayman Islands in these secret bank

accounts because they do not come back to America. We created the Cayman Islands secret bank accounts when we passed a tax code that was confiscatory in nature.

When it is better off for your company and your stockholders to keep the money you make offshore—somewhere else offshore—so it is not subject the second time to taxes, we created those Cayman Islands tax havens. We will do it again if we do not get our Tax Code fixed. So my message is simple: Build Keystone, explore our natural resources, give the President Trade Promotion Authority, and make a fair equitable change in S corporations, our C corporations, and our individual rate. Let's incentivize prosperity and hope and not penalize and punish Americans for doing business.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

LAWFUL IVORY PROTECTION ACT

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I congratulate the Senator from Georgia on his remarks. As usual, they are eloquent and elucidate the issue beautifully. I am glad I had a chance to hear them.

I come to the floor to speak about an effort to expand regulations that will have a damaging effect on thousands of Americans. For those who are concerned this administration is trying to take away our guns, this regulation could actually do that. If this regulation is approved, when you decide to sell a gun, to sell a guitar or anything else that contains African elephant ivory, the government would actually take them away, even if you inherited the item or bought the item at a time when the sale of ivory was not illegal.

In February the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced a plan to prohibit the interstate commerce of African elephant ivory. This was part of President Obama's National Strategy for Combating Wildlife Trade. The plan is intended to stop the poaching of African elephants and to help preserve that species. But the impact will be something very different.

The impact of this plan will be to change a policy that has been in place since 1990, which prevents the importation of ivory for commercial purposes, with the exception of antiques. But it did not restrict interstate or intrastate commerce of legal ivory.

Now, let me be clear. I support stopping poachers. I support the preservation of these magnificent, regal animals, the elephant. I strongly support stopping the trade of illegal ivory. But what I do not support is treating Tennessee musicians, Tennessee antique shops, and Tennessee firearms sellers like illegal ivory smugglers for selling legal ivory products, many of which are decades old, if not over 100 years old.

Banning the buying and selling of products with ivory found in legally produced guitars, legally produced pianos, legally produced firearms, could

prohibit musicians from buying or selling instruments that contain ivory, prevent firearms and family heirlooms containing ivory from being sold, and pose a significant threat to antique businesses.

Even though the ban has not yet gone into effect, the confusion and uncertainty created by the Fish and Wildlife Service's action to ban the interstate commerce of ivory and any item that contains ivory are already having a significant impact on businesses and families alike. Let me give you the example of John Case, who owns and operates a small antique family business with four employees in Knoxville, TN, near my home. He says he could see his business devastated by this proposed regulation. This is what John Case says:

The impact of President Obama's Executive Order expanding the buying and selling of antique ivory and other endangered species has been significant on our auction and appraisal business. If one looks at the number of antique objects we have sold and are selling at auction just for 2014, the total exceeds \$156,000. This amount is more than 11 percent of our revenues for 2013 and does not include the number of antique objects we turned away from selling because of these new regulations and the loss of appraisals of those objects.

John Case continues:

This would easily total an additional \$25,000 in revenues. This total loss in revenues of \$181,000 equates to one full time salaried employee in addition to hours for part time employees.

Here is one more example of a new regulation, which on a small business will equate to the loss of a job of one full-time salaried employee, in addition to hours for part-time employees. We wonder why the economic recovery has been worse than the great recession? You cannot be pro-jobs if you are antibusiness and if you keep dumping this big wet blanket of regulations on every effort an entrepreneur has to create a new job. Americans who create jobs—one told me the other day in Tennessee: I'm sorry to say that I'm beginning to look at a new employee as a liability instead of an asset. He said: I hate that. I want the employee to be an asset. But when I look at the employee, I think about what new costs does that employee bring to my business because of government regulations, because of ObamaCare, because of this or that. Now, in John Case's case, it is about legal ivory.

Mr. Case goes on to say:

Further, the loss of revenues for our business is significant, as it encompasses a wide range of antique objects, including 18th and 19th century American portraits on ivory, music boxes and furniture with ivory inlay, silver tea services with ivory insulators, weapons with ivory grips and inlay. If these new regulations go into full effect, I anticipate the reduction of staff and intern programs.

That is fewer jobs.

The impact of these new regulations has a significant impact on our customers as well.

According to Mr. Case:

I just fielded calls this past week of two local consignors who had holdings of antique

ivory with values exceeding \$200,000. For one of those consignors, his antique ivory was by far the most available personal property he owned. It had been inherited from his grandfather. For many of my consignors such as these gentlemen, they will see a complete devaluing of one of their greatest personal assets.

Mr. Case is not alone. The music industry—and we have a lot of that in Tennessee, in Nashville and in Memphis and East Tennessee as well—is concerned. The National Association of Music Manufacturers, whose mission is to promote the pleasures and benefits of making music, says, of the proposed regulation:

[The] Problem with the Fish and Wildlife Service's plan is many post-1914 instruments containing ivory are still in use. Many famous artists perform with vintage guitars, violin bows or pianos which contain small amounts of ivory. It is worth noting that the music products industry had generally stopped using ivory by the mid-1970s. A ban on the interstate sale of items containing ivory would prohibit musicians from buying or selling instruments. Replacing ivory with other materials could adversely affect the total quality of those instruments.

Instruments are not bought because they contain ivory but because of their playing characteristics. The proposed ban has already resulted in anecdotal reports of Fish and Wildlife Service agents investigating piano transportation companies to see if any instruments are containing ivory—even though these companies do not own the instruments.

Here is another example from the National Rifle Association about the proposed ban of legal ivory:

The effects of the ivory ban would be disastrous for American firearms owners and sportsmen, as well as anyone else who currently owns ivory. This means that shotguns that have an ivory bead or inlay, handguns with ivory grips, or even cleaning tools containing ivory, would be illegal to sell.

My office has heard from businesses and individuals from all different sectors of our economy. The examples go on and on about this misguided policy. Let me repeat. I support stopping poachers. I support preserving these magnificent, regal animals, the elephant. I strongly support stopping the trade of illegal ivory. What I do not support is treating Tennessee musicians, antique owners, and gun owners like illegal ivory smugglers if they sell products that contain legal ivory.

I call on the Fish and Wildlife Service to abandon their current efforts and take a more commonsense approach, an approach that will preserve elephants, while not turning law-abiding citizens and businesses into criminals. In the absence of a more commonsense approach, I have introduced legislation, S. 2587, the Lawful Ivory Protection Act of 2014, to stop this misguided policy from going forward. My bill simply stops the Fish and Wildlife Service from continuing down this unwise path.

It keeps in place the same regulation that prohibited the illegal ivory trade regulation before February 25, which is

the date the Fish and Wildlife Service began rolling out new regulations to ban the interstate commerce of ivory and any item that contains ivory. I urge my colleagues to take a look at this issue, and cosponsor my bill, S. 2587, the Lawful Ivory Protection Act of 2014, to stop the administration from taking away our legal guns, from taking away our legal guitars, and from taking away our legal items which contain legal ivory if we try to sell them.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BROWN.) The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

REFUGEE CRISIS

Mr. HEINRICH. Mr. President, when Congress unanimously passed the bipartisan William Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act back in 2008 to strengthen Federal trafficking laws and ensure that unaccompanied and undocumented children receive humane treatment, it was welcomed by the Bush administration as a priority issue in preventing the trafficking of persons around the world.

At the time Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission president Richard Land said that:

It shows a broad coalition all the way from the left to the right and in between when it comes to significant human rights issues.

The law itself was named for William Wilberforce, an evangelical Christian who led the effort in Britain's Parliament to end the slave trade in Britain in the 19th century. But now, 6 years later, too many of my Republican colleagues are calling to roll back the very protections that just a few years ago were rightfully lauded as a tremendous victory for human rights.

Many of us believe the current Central American refugee crisis requires an immediate and compassionate response. Yet the proposals put forth by Senate Republicans have been to reverse critical child refugee protections, and deport DREAMers who have absolutely nothing to do with this current crisis.

The proposal introduced by my colleague from Texas, Senator CORNYN, and similar proposals from my Republican colleagues would weaken the 2008 trafficking law and implement expedited deportation that denies children the chance to go through an orderly process to determine if they need protection—and it applies to all unaccompanied children who cross the border. I believe we are a better nation than that.

My Republican colleagues keep saying they want a humane process, but these proposals would trade the safety of children for expediency and eliminate the very protections unanimously set forth by Congress back in 2008.

As a father, I have to say I believe this debate can't just be about the efficiency with which we can deport refugees. It should take into account the situation these boys and girls are seeking to escape in the first place.

Both the United Nations High Commission on Refugees and the Refugee and Immigrant Center for Education and Legal Services in two separate reviews recently found that approximately 60 percent of unaccompanied children from Central America suffered or faced harms that indicated a potential or actual need for international protection.

To understand how these proposals could adversely harm the children involved, one can read a recent article in the New York Times by Julia Preston. It tells the story of Andrea, a young woman from Honduras who was forced by her own family—associates with the Mexican drug cartel—into prostitution at age 13, if you can imagine that. After 2 years she ran away, hoping to seek safety in the United States. She tried twice to flee abuse, crossing the Rio Grande, and was apprehended by the Border Patrol in both attempts.

When agents questioned her, Andrea did not tell them why she fled. She said:

I was just trying to protect myself . . . I was just afraid of everything, after all those things those guys had been doing to my body.

Andrea, a victim of sex trafficking, was sent back into harm's way to live with relatives in Mexico.

Andrea is not alone. Many more children could also be sent back into a dangerous environment if proposals to overturn the 2008 Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act are passed.

Unaccompanied children such as Andrea need a safe place to talk about violence and abuse. A Border Patrol station holding cell is no place for an interview that literally will impact the rest of their lives, especially while they are still recovering from a dangerous journey. Subjecting Central American children to this screening process would be a retreat from our Nation's commitment as a humanitarian leader, and, frankly, undercuts our American values of putting children ahead of politics.

A coalition of more than 100 non-governmental organizations—such as First Focus, Women's Refugee Commission, and the American Immigration Lawyers Association—all wrote a letter to President Obama earlier this month to share their thoughts on this humanitarian crisis. They wrote:

Congress gave consideration to the unique circumstances of children when it enacted the [Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act].

Undermining due process and protection under the law is not the right answer, and certainly will not appease the criticisms of those who have been calling for more punitive and aggressive enforcement.

Yesterday, in an open letter to Congress, the Evangelical Immigration Table warned against weakening the protections afforded by the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act, stating that the law:

... ensures that victims of trafficking are not only identified and screened properly but that traffickers are penalized and brought to justice.

I have also heard from the Southern Baptist Convention, the U.S. Catholic Conference of Bishops, anti-trafficking groups, and children's lawyers who have all sent the same message to us: Don't weaken this anti-trafficking law. Congress should focus on strengthening safeguards for children rather than weakening their protections.

Last week one of my colleagues from Texas proposed that the only way to stop the rise of unaccompanied children is to punish DREAMers and introduce legislation to defund the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Program—or DACA, as it is called. DACA has helped more than 550,000 undocumented students across the country who came to the United States as children to have an opportunity to pursue a higher education. DREAMers in the DACA Program are not the cause of the current Central American refugee crisis. And the notion that any legislation to address this issue must also end DACA is, frankly, out of touch. DREAMers are bright, they are hard-working, and most of them don't know how to be anything but an American.

I have met many DREAMers from New Mexico. I have heard their stories. I have read their letters. They have never given up on this country, and, frankly, I am not giving up on them.

Last year I had the pleasure of meeting a young woman named Laura in Las Cruces, NM. She arrived in the United States from Mexico when she was 7 years old. She learned English. She earned good grades in school. It wasn't actually until she was 13 years old that she even found out she was undocumented.

She said:

I couldn't believe it. All my dreams, all my hard work, it felt like it was all for nothing. . . . Don't leave anyone behind on the American dream.

Laura wants to be a doctor.

There is the story from a young woman named Yuri. Her family immigrated to the United States from Mexico when she was 2 years old back in 1996. While in high school in Albuquerque, NM, Yuri volunteered in her community, graduated in the top 10 percent of her class. She even received the 2013 Sandia Laboratory scholarship. Recently, she was approved for DACA and is currently a student at the University of New Mexico.

There are literally countless stories just like these of young people who love this country and have only known it as their home. We are not going to let Republicans use this current humanitarian crisis as an opportunity to punish DREAMers.

I am happy to end President Obama's deferred action program, but we will only do that by passing the DREAM Act as part of comprehensive immigration reform.

If we really want to help solve this crisis and make our policies crystal clear, it is all the more reason to pass the Senate's bipartisan comprehensive immigration reform bill.

The reality is, our Nation is facing a refugee crisis at our southern border. Children from Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala have fled to the United States and to other neighboring Central American countries to escape unimaginable violence, corruption, extreme poverty, and instability in their home countries. In some cases, these children are literally fleeing for their lives. Many of these children are turning themselves in to Border Patrol agents.

This little boy's name is Alejandro. He is 8 years old. He traveled alone from Honduras, with nothing but his birth certificate in his pocket. I thought about that. I can't imagine my 7-year-old traveling across Washington, DC, or Albuquerque, NM, or any major metropolitan city in the United States by himself.

It took him 3 weeks to make that dangerous journey from Central America to the banks of the Rio Grande. After being asked where his parents were, Alejandro said they were in San Antonio. He came to the United States because he wanted to reunite with his family. He didn't run, he didn't hide when an agent approached him. Alejandro wanted to turn himself in—just as many mothers and children have done over the course of the last year. Yet we have heard this week calls from some who would militarize our border and send in the National Guard.

I would say we need more resources for our Border Patrol agents. They have been taxed. They have certainly been putting in long hours since these numbers started to crest. But I don't think sending soldiers to meet people like Alejandro is the right solution to this crisis. The notion that lax border policies are somehow responsible for this latest crisis is not just a myth, it is a willful misrepresentation driven by politicians who would rather create a political issue than solve a real problem.

In a recent interview when asked to discuss whether sending in the National Guard would be an appropriate response to these problems at the core of the current crisis, Steven Blum—who was the former Chief of the National Guard Bureau under President George W. Bush—told the Washington Post:

There may be many other organizations that might more appropriately be called upon. If you're talking about search and rescue, maintaining the rule of law or restoring conditions back to normal after a natural disaster or catastrophe, the Guard is superbly suited to that. I'm not so sure that what we're dealing with in scope and causation right now would make it the ideal choice.

That is a very polite statement. The fact is there are more Border Patrol agents today and more technology and resources at the border than any time in our Nation's entire history, and our Border Patrol is better prepared to deal with this issue than the National Guard.

Border Patrol apprehensions are today less than one-third of what they were at their peak, and this is because we have worked so hard and so effectively to secure the border. Those of us who represent border communities understand the challenges we face, but there are solutions before us that are pragmatic and bipartisan; that uphold our American values; that don't compromise them. Republican leaders should demand that their colleagues in the House of Representatives act to fix our broken immigration system. The Senate passed a bipartisan bill more than a year ago now, and passing that bill would make our immigration policies crystal clear to the world.

Additionally, passing the Senate's supplemental funding bill to address this crisis sends a clear signal that we are aggressively stemming the flow of children and families from Central America while continuing to treat those refugee children humanely under the law. This situation is an emergency and frankly we need emergency funding.

Passing the emergency supplemental would allow the Departments of Homeland Security and Justice to deploy additional enforcement resources, including immigration judges, Immigration and Customs Enforcement attorneys, asylum officers, as well as expand the use of the alternatives to detention program. We are not arguing that every child should stay. Many, in fact, will be returned, but it will be after a Department of Justice judge has evaluated his or her case for asylum.

The supplemental would also help governments in Central America better control their borders and address the root causes of migration, including criminal gangs causing and profiting from this refugee crisis. A number of us today met with the Ambassadors from Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador, and it was very clear what was driving these issues. Without getting to those root causes, we won't be able to solve this crisis permanently.

The supplemental would provide much needed resources for U.S. Health and Human Services to ensure that these children receive medical screenings, housing, and counseling. Yet, instead of supporting this funding which seeks to meet these challenges head-on and protects these children, Republicans want to use the crisis to eliminate crucial child protection, punish some of our Nation's brightest students, and promote their border-enforcement-only agenda.

Before I close and hand the floor off to some of my colleagues, I would like to highlight some of the humanitarian work that is being done in my home

State of New Mexico to address this crisis by telling the story of Project Oak Tree volunteer Orlando Antonio Jimenez.

Project Oak Tree is a short-term-stay shelter for Central American undocumented immigrants in Las Cruces run by the Catholic Diocese of Las Cruces. The shelter opened earlier this month after DHS established a temporary facility for undocumented parents and their children at FLETC—the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center campus—in Artesia, NM.

Orlando signed up to volunteer for Project Oak Tree on day one. He said he saw the immediate need to assist families facing this humanitarian crisis and he didn't think twice. He said his Christian values and belief in doing the right thing drove him to volunteer.

Orlando gets the opportunity to speak to almost every single person who arrives at Project Oak Tree and said that almost all of the stories he hears from mothers have some element of fear for their safety if they were to go back home. Orlando said he will never again say the words "I am starving" when he is hungry because he knows now what starving really means. He says that this experience has changed his life forever and that he will continue to help as much as he can.

I am grateful for Orlando's work in our community and for the many others in New Mexico who have stepped in and shown compassion and done all they can to help. Now it is Congress's turn to help. It is our turn to be part of the solution to this refugee crisis.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia is recognized.

Mr. KAINE. Mr. President, I also rise on the floor together with my colleagues from New Mexico and Florida to talk about the refugee crisis at our Nation's border. I appreciate Senator HEINRICH's leadership on this issue and his comments, and I am looking forward to hearing from Senator NELSON as well.

I would like to share a little bit of a personal story and amplify a few comments I made on the floor last Thursday about this challenge. I feel very personally connected to this issue and to the children who are coming to the border, children such as Alejandro, whose picture was such a stark reminder that we are dealing with little kids.

In 1980 and 1981, I was a student in law school, and I decided that I didn't know what I wanted to do with my life and I needed to figure it out. So what I did was I took a year off from law school and went to work with Jesuit missionaries in the town of El Progreso, Honduras. El Progreso, Honduras, was at that point a small community at the edge of banana plantations in a large agricultural valley in that country. I worked there as the principal of a school that taught kids to be plumbers and carpenters. I was

dealing with youngsters in that neighborhood. Well, today El Progreso is in the epicenter of this problem. There have been many hundreds of kids from El Progreso who have come to the border this year.

San Pedro Sula—a nearby large city—is thought to be the murder capital of Honduras, which is now the murder capital of the world.

When I was in Honduras in 1980 and 1981, it was not an overly violent place. It was under military dictatorship. There were problems and challenges, and there was poverty, but refugees were coming into Honduras back then from El Salvador and Guatemala. They weren't leaving because there wasn't the everyday violence we see today. Honduras was a great ally of the United States, a great partner. Honduras was one of the original countries to which we sent Peace Corps volunteers, and I could see their influence all around the country.

But Honduras is a very different nation today. Honduras is now the murder capital of the world, has the highest homicide rate, which is about 40 times the homicide rate of the United States. This area, El Progreso and San Pedro Sula, is the epicenter of that. The United States had to pull Peace Corps volunteers out of the country a few years ago because it got too violent. The friends I have stayed in touch with over the years have informed me about what has been happening in their neighborhoods as the violence has increased.

We had a hearing last week where we had witnesses before us in the Foreign Relations Committee. We asked: Why are the kids leaving Honduras? Is it because their parents don't love them?

I mean, you think about family members. What would it take for a family to let a child take a trip of the kind Alejandro took? I can tell you from living in Honduras that parents love their kids just as much as people love their kids here in the United States. They are no different. To send your child thousands of miles—you would only do it for the most extreme reasons, and living in the murder capital of the world is that extreme reason. These kids are fleeing to the border because they are not safe.

What is the cause of the violence? I talked about this a little bit last week. The violence in Honduras, which is the murder capital of the world; El Salvador, which has the fourth highest homicide rate in the world; and Guatemala, which has the fifth highest homicide rate in the world—the violence is overwhelmingly driven by the drug trade. That was the evidence from our hearing last week as well.

Drug cartels have moved into Honduras and into these Central American countries. They get drugs from South America. They are shipping them to the United States because of the U.S. demand for illegal drugs, especially cocaine. The drug rate in Honduras is not about Hondurans using drugs.

Hondurans don't use drugs to any significant degree at all. It is the illegal demand for drugs by people in the United States, largely, and the dollars we are sending down to buy drugs that have turned Honduras—that have turned San Pedro Sula and El Progreso into a massive drug cartel area where the combination of dollars and violence and fights between drug cartels puts little kids in harm's way. And then the gangs want them to join—we want to be the most powerful gangs because we want the money, and the way we do that is we recruit more kids.

So the root of this problem—the root of these refugees—is violence in their neighborhoods that is created by a drug trade that is driven by, sadly, U.S. demand for illegal drugs. That is what is happening. That is what is happening.

It has been heartbreaking to see a country that I care about and love and people whom I care about and love live in what is now the murder capital of the world largely because of the demand for illegal drugs coming from this Nation. So we are going to blame these kids? We are going to call them names or stand out in protest against them? Why? Because they live in a violent neighborhood? Because they want a better future? Because they look at the United States and think we may be a better and safer place for them? We shouldn't be blaming them. We shouldn't be blaming them because they are doing what any of us would do if we lived in a neighborhood where the violence was this extreme. If you have no other way to protect yourself, you are going to leave. We leave neighborhoods and we leave situations that are this bad.

The good news is—and Senator HEINRICH has laid this out—we don't have to stand by and say there is nothing we can do. There are solutions. We had a meeting with the three Ambassadors today, and the Foreign Relations Committee is going to have a meeting with the three Presidents of these Nations tomorrow, and we are going to talk about solutions. Let me run through six things we can do, and I will talk briefly about some of them. My colleagues have already dealt with some of them, and Senator NELSON will, but first let's start off with, how about not blaming the kids, No. 1. Let's not blame the kids. Let's not pretend they are crooks or criminals. Might there be some who are coming across the border who have criminal records? Sure. We can do a criminal record check and we can figure that out, and if that is the case, then we can deal with that. But these kids are leaving to stay alive.

My wife is a juvenile court judge. She used to say: I sometimes put a kid in jail to keep him alive.

The need to remain alive sometimes leads you to do extreme things, even to travel thousands of miles to come to a country where you think you might be more safe.

Let's begin by not blaming these kids. That is No. 1.

No. 2, we do need to implement the law. Senator HEINRICH talked about this law which was passed by a unanimous Congress, which was signed by President Bush, which was named after William Wilberforce. Do you know who William Wilberforce was? William Wilberforce was a great abolitionist English preacher who had interaction with the slave trade when he was in England and then came to realize that the slave trade was wrong and that religions had promoted the slave trade. He turned his life around and became a crusader against human trafficking, a crusader against the slave trade. That is what this law is that was put in place.

Let's not willy-nilly change the law. Let's implement the law. The law was a good law. In order to implement the law, we do need funding. Senator HEINRICH talked about the supplemental request that would be before the Senate. We have had some good discussions about it. I think we have put it in a place where it is now solid. We do need to support that supplemental request so that there will be ample services where these children can be evaluated. If they qualify for asylum, they should be able to stay, just as other refugees stay. If they have committed criminal activities, they can be sent back in order to enforce the law. It seems that is what folks are always saying around here—we should enforce the immigration laws. Let's enforce the William Wilberforce law and make sure there are funds in place to do it.

The third thing we should do is get our priorities right about how we spend money. We are spending the money the wrong way in Central America. It is kind of amazing what we are doing. You would think we ought to be investing a little bit in the security of Central America just as we invest in rebuilding infrastructure in Afghanistan, just as we invest in things all around the world, and we should especially be doing it in Central America because it is the U.S. demand for illegal drugs that is creating the conditions of violence there. Doesn't that create some obligation to take a little bit of responsibility for helping Central American nations with security?

Well, we do spend money on the security in Central American nations, but the money has been dwindling every year—dropping, dropping, dropping. For 2015 the President's budget submission for the Central American Regional Security Initiative was \$130 million, which is about \$40 million each for the three countries. Compare that to what we will spend on border security in 2015, which is \$17 billion. So \$130 million for regional security in the nations these refugees are coming from and we are spending \$17 billion on the border.

Instead of having to catch all these kids as they are coming across the border and spend time and expense on the legal processes, wouldn't it be a little better to try to take some of that

money and spend more in Central America to help these three nations have stronger police forces, stronger judiciary systems? If we could deal with and reduce violence in the neighborhoods—and we have to do it in partnership with these nations. They have responsibilities as well. If we could do that, we could dramatically reduce the number of kids who are coming to the border. We are spending money the wrong way.

I am happy this supplemental has some significant funding to increase our security efforts in Central America. That is very critical. We have to work with the Central American governments to prosecute the coyotes. The coyotes are the smugglers who bring these kids to the border, and they often perpetrate violence and tell these kids: Hey, look, we can get you to the border, and you can stay forever. They will spin false messages about American law, and they do it because they are making money off these poor families.

Honduras is one of the poorest countries in the Western Hemisphere. For a parent to pay \$4,000 or \$5,000 to one of these smugglers for their kids to come here—that is usually more than their combined assets. They have to gather up money from all kinds of places to be able to do it. We need to prosecute the coyotes and these smugglers in Central America, and our effort is going to help these countries do that.

We need to make sure these countries spread the message that once the kids get here, they are not going to come and stay automatically. That work is being done, but more can be done.

I think probably the most important thing we can do here is to spend more money helping to solve the cause of the violence and the drug cartels in Central America. If we do that, we will see the number of kids who are fleeing neighborhoods such as the ones I lived in dramatically reduced.

The fourth thing we can do—and Senator NELSON is going to talk about this, so I will not get into it—is interdict more drugs. If you want to do something tough, why send the National Guard to the border? These kids are not sneaking across the border. They are turning themselves in to the first person they see. They know if they see someone with a U.S. uniform on, they won't be killed. They feel safe. We don't need more National Guard at the border because the kids are already turning themselves in. But if you want to be tough, how about more funds for the American military so they can interdict more drugs before they get to Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador? Senator NELSON will go over that.

Fifth, we need to do immigration reform, and Senator HEINRICH mentioned that. We passed immigration reform in this Chamber 13 months ago. There were all kinds of stories about it. There has been no action in the House—not even bills out of committee, much less

from the House floor—on immigration reform.

This morning the ambassadors told us the uncertain status of whether there is going to be immigration reform is an issue. What is going to happen? Something passed, but maybe it won't pass in the other House. When there is uncertainty, it enables these coyotes to go in and kind of market and say something is going to happen. They will say: We can get you to the United States, and you can stay.

The faster we pass immigration reform and create certainty, the easier it will be to deliver a message that everybody in Central America will understand about what our rules are and what they are not and who is allowed to come in and who is not.

Finally—and this is the hardest one of all—we have to figure out better strategies to reduce the illegal use of drugs, especially cocaine, in the United States. As long as there is this massive demand for illegal drugs such as cocaine in countries such as Honduras that have poor budgets, there will be powerful drug cartels that will use them as staging grounds to try to supply the United States drug demand.

We sometimes hear people talk about drug and cocaine use as a victimless crime. They say: It is a victimless crime; I am not hurting anybody. I may use drugs, but I am not hurting anybody.

This is not a victimless crime. The ones who are using recreational, illegal drugs transited through the Americas are the ones who are creating victims. They are creating the murder capital of the world, and they are the reason kids are fleeing their homes and trying to find safety in the arms of a Border Patrol agent on the border of the United States.

We need new strategies to tackle a huge and overwhelming demand for illegal drugs in the United States. Two weeks ago the President's drug control policy key administrator, Michael Botticelli, went to Roanoke, VA, to roll out the national drug control strategy. He chose Roanoke because Virginia, like a lot of States, has had significant problems—whether it is heroin or prescription drugs. He also chose Roanoke because it has been a place where there have been strong efforts to come together to tackle illegal drug use.

Last Friday I went to Roanoke and spoke at a drug court graduation—people who were addicted to drugs but worked with social workers and folks from local courts to break the bonds of that addiction, the bonds that, just as they are addicted to them, also put people in chains in countries such as Honduras by turning their neighborhoods into violent drug-controlled shooting galleries.

We have to be creative and strategic in dealing with the demands for illegal drugs. It is sad that these kids are fleeing their country because of the violence that in some ways has its roots here. The drug demand in this country

is at the origin of the violence that is chasing these kids out of their neighborhoods, and that gives us a moral responsibility to try and tackle this problem and solve it.

I thank my colleagues for their strong support for the supplemental appropriation we will take up. I look forward to working with them. We can solve this problem. We can solve it if we do the right things.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BLUMENTHAL). The Senator from Florida.

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, I say to my colleagues that this is a very substantive discussion. This Senator is enormously impressed with the quality of the commentary from the two who have preceded me and those who will follow. We are addressing the treatment of this issue in a comprehensive way.

I was so glad the Senator from Virginia mentioned the initial legislation from years ago protecting children once they reached the border is named after William Wilberforce, a Parliamentarian in England in the late 1700s and early 1800s whose sole mission—it took him 20 years as a politician and a member of Parliament—changed the course of history because he single-handedly, through his legislative efforts, abolished the English slave trade, and it changed the course of the history of the world.

When we think of that kind of quality of parliamentary endeavor, it is time for the Senate to rise to this occasion in what is considered a humanitarian crisis but is so complicated as to the reason it is causing hundreds and thousands of children to appear at our border.

Right off the bat this law says we are going to treat these children in a humanitarian way. They are going to get medical treatment and a safe place to stay.

When Senator HEINRICH showed the picture of the little boy named Alejandro—doesn't your heart go out to him? Taking care of a little boy like that is at the heart of America. We don't want all of these children coming to our border, begging for entrance.

Listen to these Senators as they dissect the problem of what we should do to eliminate the problem in the first place.

I want to take one snippet of what Senator KAINE said. Why is Honduras the murder capital of the world? Why are the other two Central American countries—El Salvador and Guatemala—ranked so high as murder capitals of the world? Why is it that next door in Nicaragua and Belize their children are not coming to our border in great numbers? The same thing is true with Costa Rica and Panama. Why those three countries? Because the drug lords producing the drugs in South America are sending huge shipments by boat—2 and 3 tons of cocaine per boat—through the Caribbean to the

East or the Pacific to the West. Where are they going? They are going to those three countries.

Basically, most of those drug shipments are getting through. Once they get to those Central American countries—since the economic power is among the drug dealers and the drug lords—they can buy off everybody else. If you don't do what they say, you are dead.

When a young man gets close to becoming a teenager, his parents are confronted with a situation of either joining one of these criminal gangs, which is interrelated with the drug lords, or they have to accept the fact that they are going to be attending their child's funeral because he will be killed if he doesn't join them.

The third choice they have comes from what they hear from these coyotes when they say: You are going to have free entrance into the United States.

What do you think a parent is going to do? Because the big shipments of drugs—primarily by boat to the east and the west—has corrupted the whole system in those three Central American countries, what should the United States be doing?

We have had very successful drug interdiction programs in the past. We have been very successful at it. We now have a four-star Marine general—General Kelly, who is the head of the United States Southern Command—who has a task force in Key West, the Joint Interagency Task Force South, watching their radar and aerial surveillance but doesn't have the assets to go after 75 percent of those drug shipments. If we would give General Kelly and the joint task force the additional Navy assets—that is Navy boats with helicopters or Coast Guard cutters with helicopters—to interdict those shipments instead of letting 75 percent of them go, we would get to the root cause of the whole problem of why the children are showing up on our border.

The big shipments of drugs have completely corrupted the societies of those three countries, leading to all of the ramifications of the children and others going north.

Once those big shipments of 2 or 3 tons of cocaine in a boat land in one of those Central American countries, they break them up into small packages. It is then transported by individuals, and it is very hard to interdict those drug shipments as they go north through the rest of Central America, Mexico, and to the border. The place to get them is when they are the large shipments. There are many more of these shipments coming by boat than on airplanes. As a result, what we see is this crisis.

I will close by saying my wife Grace and I have been involved through a Christian charity in trying to help some of the poor villagers have hope, particularly in Honduras in this case. I am not going to say the name of the village because I don't want to alert

the bad guys that this is a little village where they are getting attention, an education, nourishment, and some health care. More than that, they are getting the love of Americans. So it is a painful personal picture for us to see what has happened to that little country.

Finally, the President's request of over \$3 billion does not include, as we learned in an all-Senators meeting last week with three or four cabinet secretaries and other agencies represented, funds for additional Coast Guard cutters or Navy ships or the movement of those Coast Guard cutters or Navy ships with their helicopters from other places. I hope, by the effort Senator HEINRICH has exerted today, with many of us coming here and speaking about this, that we are going to start to get this message through as to what needs to be done to address this crisis.

Mr. President, it is a privilege for me to share my heart, and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. BOOKER. Mr. President, I wish to thank my colleagues sitting here before me, especially Senator HEINRICH, who invited us to partner in this dialogue today. I wish right now just to express my frustration. We see on our television sets and we hear throughout the American landscape rhetoric, posturing, and demagoguery that does not reflect the truth of who we are as a nation, and it obscures the facts of what is happening on our southern border right now as a country. We have thousands upon thousands of children in the most vulnerable and innocent stage of their lives showing up at our border. I hear ugly rhetoric about just turning them around and sending them back—rhetoric that does not reflect who we are as a nation, the history of our communities or the laws of this land.

If I may, for a brief time I wish to speak just to reflect on the fact of why these children are showing up. Why are they coming to our borders? As the senior Senator from New Jersey has said clearly: This is not a case of ordinary people seeking better economic opportunities. If this was just about poverty, then we would see people coming from all the nations in that area. To be specific, El Salvador's poverty rate is 34.5 percent. Belize's poverty rate is actually higher at 41.3 percent. To make a journey from a country with a lower poverty rate to a country with a higher poverty rate, because that is where many of these refugees are going—to Belize—begs a closer examination of the true drivers of this migration, because it is not poverty. It is not people simplistically looking for economic opportunity. We are seeing countries in addition to America facing the same problem: Children from these three nations escaping severe persecution, sexual assault, rape, violence, and murder are not just coming to the borders of the United States to escape this persecution but going to other nations in that area.

For example, combined, Mexico, Panama, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and Belize documented a 435-percent increase in the number of asylum applications logged by individuals from El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala. In this area of our globe, where there is such violence and persecution in these three countries, it is driving people out not just to the United States, as some people allege because of the policy of the Obama administration; these are people escaping persecution to countries all throughout the region. This is about violence. This is about heinous crimes. This is about a drug war. This is about cartels carrying out the most egregious of human acts, evidencing the depravity and the evil that so cuts at the conscience of humanity, so that people are escaping to wherever they can go.

We in the United States have a long and noble history that when there are places on our globe that face this level of crisis, we respond, and we are a part of an international community where our peer nations have shown that history as well. Here in North America, we know allies such as Canada have done incredible deeds when there is crisis, violence, war, and persecution—mass rapes going on. There have been responses from our northern neighbor.

In 1972 when Uganda's President Idi Amin announced the Ugandan Asians were to be expelled, Canada set up a refugee office and, by the end of 1973, more than 7,000 Uganda Asians arrived in Canada.

Germany, for example, right now currently is accepting 20,000 Syrian refugees. As I speak right now, Jordan and Lebanon are host to over 2 million Syrian refugees, and we as a nation are encouraging our allies in the Middle East to be there for those refugees when they come to those borders. That is the international community. In America, we set the standard. We are the leaders globally for compassion, for humanity, for charity. I am proud that this tradition, which is two centuries old in America, can continue under Democrats and Republicans. It has not been a partisan football.

In 2008, under the Bush administration, in the face of Burma's humanitarian crisis, this country, with the courage of its compassion, resettled thousands of Burmese refugees, admitting as many as 18,000 of them. President Bush signed the legislation to ease the restrictions that prevented ethnic minorities involved in that struggle against the Burmese regime—eased restrictions for them entering the United States. President Bush spoke eloquently during that time about American compassion. He spoke about American heritage and American tradition. He said, quite poignantly, I thank those of you Americans and those around the country—all of us—who have opened up our arms and said: "Welcome to America. How can we help you settle in?"

This is who we are as a nation. And when we have children—innocents—es-

caping violence and terror and crimes against humanity, where we as a nation are not even fully relieved of culpability for what is going on and when our Nation's drug consumption is helping to drive that violence, we have a responsibility. That is who we are. That is our truth. We know this. We are a nation of people who came from persecution, who came from famine, who came from religious war. We are a nation settled by those who were yearning to be free.

Now, I know the Statue of Liberty well because New Jersey has its back. When I travel around the State, I often get a great view of her noble torch. I know it is not down along our southern border, but the ideals of the Statue of Liberty still hold true:

Give me your tired, your poor,

Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,

The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.

Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me,

I lift my lamp beside the golden door!

I am grateful and support Senator MIKULSKI's leadership and the push to address this crisis by stepping up as a nation, by following the letter of the law and providing due process for these young people who have come to our borders, so that we can evaluate them and see those who have a justifiable claim for asylum and to see that we honor our tradition and our law and give them a place in our country that is safe and secure from the terror and the violence that is going on in those three countries. It cannot be acceptable that we use our resources now simply to expedite the return of thousands of children into that conflict zone, which is more dangerous now than at the height of civilian dangers during the Iraq war.

We must as Americans follow that great tradition. We must as Americans now do the right thing by innocent children: evaluate them with our resources, expedite the judicial process to understand clearly who is meritorious of asylum. And we should invest our resources in making sure the conflicts in those nations are abated so this crisis ends.

I say clearly: In America we stand for something now as we have time and time again. We must garner our resources and, most importantly, our compassion, which is the truth of who we say we are, and make sure we take care of these vulnerable children and make sure we don't turn them around into a dangerous situation. It is time we show internationally that when there is crisis, America stands and shows leadership and does the right thing.

With that, I yield the floor for the senior Senator from New Jersey.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, first of all, let me say I am really moved by Senator BOOKER's passion, Senator NELSON's clarity of thought, and by my

other colleagues who have joined us. I am compelled to join them because we do have a crisis, but we also have, in my mind, a clear moral and legal compass we need to follow.

We have a refugee crisis on our southern border, which I argue requires an emergency response domestically and the urgent recalibration of our foreign policy. Why do I say that? Because, as I have argued for several years in the Foreign Relations Committee, the continuous cuts we have had in the programs that are in our national interests, in our national security, were going to bring us a day in which we would rue the consequences of those cuts.

So here we are with Honduras having the No. 1 murder rate per capita in the world, and the other two Central American countries from which these children are fleeing in the top five in the world. As Senator NELSON spoke so eloquently, there is the whole question of the narcotics trafficking taking place, using this as a via to the United States where the demand is, and the total inability of these countries to deal with entities that have more money and very often have more firepower than any of the national governments that are engaged. Then add to that the dynamic and explosive growth of gangs. I am talking about gangs armed and fueled with money in a symbiotic relationship with the drug traffickers. That creates a challenge. In one of these countries it went from 600 to 40,000 members of a gang. This isn't about some far-off place; this is right here in our own front yard, in our hemisphere, a very relatively short distance. Unless we deal with the root causes of these problems, there will be no resources or any change in law that is going to ultimately meet the challenge of those who flee because to stay is to die.

So that is the challenge we have before us. We have to deal with that challenge on our southern border, and our distinguished chair of the Appropriations Committee has fashioned a package I think is balanced and seeks to do that. But as we deal with this refugee crisis, in my view, it is equally important that we not rush to change our laws in a way that strips children of the very rights for which we have been known as a country. I am not even talking about the 2008 law; I am talking about the very essence of our immigration law for decades that has asylum as a fundamental pillar.

It is imperative to understand this is a desperate effort by desperate parents to do what any parent would do to protect their child from violence and the threat of death. Imagine the circumstances a parent must be in to send an 8-year-old on a treacherous journey of 2,000 miles where all things can happen to them in the hope—in the hope—they can arrive and make a claim for asylum, but not knowing whether their child will actually be able to arrive alive. That is some dramatic choice,

but those are choices facing these parents.

These children are facing tremendous threats: towns and schools controlled by narcotic traffickers, gangs threatening to kill them, rapes and manufacturers.

In the Foreign Relations Committee recently, we held a hearing and I noted a piece that was written in the *New York Times* by Pulitzer Prize-winning author Sonia Nazario, who testified before the committee. This was to give the Senate the sense of what we are talking about.

A young boy named Christian Omar Reyes, a sixth grader—his father was murdered by gangs while working as a security guard. Three people he knows have been murdered this year. Four others were gunned down on a corner near his house in the first 2 weeks of this year. A girl his age was beaten, had a hole cut in her throat, her body left in a ravine across from his house. Christian said: It is time to flee.

Carlos Baquedana, a 14-year-old who worked in a dump picking scrap metal when he was a boy, making a dollar or two a day, when he was 9 years old, barely escaped two drug traffickers who were trying to rape him. When he was 10, the drug traffickers pressured him to try drugs and join a gang or die. He has known eight people who were murdered—three killed in front of him. In one case he watched as two hit-men brazenly shot two young brothers execution style. Going to school is even too dangerous for him now.

These stories are, unfortunately, not unique. They are tragic stories of life-changing experiences that too many children face in Central America every day—children such as Christian and Carlos whose stories are unknown but no less tragic.

Let me take a moment to repeat that I strongly oppose changing existing law. The answer is not to repeal the law that keeps these children safe and gives them an opportunity—that is all the law gives them, an opportunity—to determine whether their status here can be adjusted under asylum. The answer is not to deny these children their day in court and send them back to very probable death. But those who want to repeal the 2008 law would be doing exactly that.

If we provide the funding the government needs, the administration has the authority to deal with the crisis in a safe and humane way without turning our back on the rule of law that we take pride in as a nation.

Antitrafficking organizations have explained to me that this trafficking law was designed by both Republicans and Democrats in broad bipartisan efforts to give special protections to children who cannot adequately represent themselves and who often do not self-identify as victims of abuse, crime or human trafficking.

Congress sought to provide special protections for those who have fled thousands of miles in recognition of

the fact that a larger percentage of these children may have very compelling and legitimate claims.

Unfortunately, the Border Patrol's cursory review of Mexican children's claims often results in a failure to identify children who are at risk of persecution or trafficking, according to the U.N. Commissioner for Refugees. Extending this type of superficial screening to Central American children would certainly mean serious abuse or death upon their return.

We can keep this important antitrafficking law and at the same time address the situation on the border. Let me explain how the administration already—already—has the authority to control this crisis.

Critics have complained that the 2008 trafficking law requires children to be released into the community, but what the law actually says is that children need to be held in the manner that is in the "best interests of the child." In this situation, where we are dealing with an influx of thousands of children, it is clearly in the best interests of these children to hold them in a safe and clean shelter rather than returning them to face possible death or quickly releasing them into the hands of a sponsor who may not be properly vetted. Failure to properly screen these children could result in children being returned to their very traffickers.

Critics have also complained that deportation hearings do not take place for years after the children arrive and that this creates an incentive for children to come to the United States. But the law allows the Justice Department to hold hearings much more quickly—without denying due process—by moving recently arriving children and families to the front of the line for hearings before a judge.

As the Justice Department testified last week before the Appropriations Committee hearing, that is exactly what they are doing—surging resources and expediting full hearings.

This expedited process that still protects due process would send a signal to the parents in Central America that children without valid claims—and there will be a significant universe that will not have a valid claim and will be deported—will not be able to stay in the United States. But at the same time we protect the rights of legitimate refugees and trafficking victims.

So while not every single child apprehended at the border will have a valid claim to stay in the country, and many will be deported, we have a moral and a legal obligation to keep them safe until their status is resolved.

The answer is not to repeal the law that protects them but to enforce it and to provide the administration with the resources it requested to address both the domestic and international aspects of this crisis.

This problem was not created overnight, and it will not be solved overnight. But the solution is not to aban-

don our values and the rule of law that we uphold as an example to other nations so every child will be safe wherever they may live. If we do this now, I can tell you, I do not know how we will have any authority to look at any other country in the world and say to them: You must accept refugees from Syria, you must accept refugees from Congo, the Dominican Republic, you must accept refugees from Haiti. The list goes on and on.

There is a reason this law was passed. It was passed to say if you are fleeing 2,000 miles to try to come to the United States, there may be a greater probability that you have a real case to be made for asylum because you have a credible fear for the loss of your life.

As I hear those who advocate for the rule of law, I say you are right. The rule of law means you do not undermine the law or change it when you do not want to ultimately live under it. You obey it. You obey it.

If you flee 2,000 miles because you were told by the gangs to join or die or if you were raped and you flee 2,000 miles never to experience that tragic and traumatic set of circumstances again, you have a very compelling case.

So let me close by saying the fact is there are some who are exploiting this issue for political gain, some who could not even see their way to cast a vote or to allow a vote on the type of comprehensive immigration reform the Senate passed on a broad, bipartisan basis in which both border control and human trafficking and all of these other issues we are now facing would have had the resources and would be addressed.

I also find it incredible to see the Governor of Texas saying he is going to send the National Guard to the border. What is the National Guard going to do in what is otherwise a Federal law enforcement obligation with Border Patrol agents who ultimately are obviously interdicting these young people but they are actually turning themselves over to them. What is the National Guard, with rifles, going to do at the Texas border that the Border Patrol cannot do themselves?

This supplemental bill is almost entirely for enforcement of the law. I know Republicans have been saying for years they want more money for enforcement of immigration law. Well, folks, here it is. Here it is. I cannot believe with the resources that are going to the very States that say they face a challenge, there will be those who will vote against it. I cannot believe that just because the President is proposing it, they cannot ultimately find their way to vote for the money that is going to go largely to the States that face the most critical challenge at this time.

So that is what our immigration debate has come to. We began this Congress with an overwhelming bipartisan vote in favor of commonsense immigration reform, and here we are unwilling to even provide something I have never

voted for but will—strictly enforcement funding. We have Republicans calling for DREAMers to be deported as part of this bill in the House of Representatives and a rollback of legislation to protect small children from human trafficking. That is what we have come to.

Rolling back this law, which passed with broad bipartisan support in both Houses of the Congress and was signed by a Republican President, is not something I can personally accept, and I will use the procedures of the Senate—I hope with others who feel the same—if that is the choice that has to come before us, not to permit that to happen.

The President has the authority to control this crisis already. Let's give him the resources to do the job, and let us, in the process of doing that, not create a dark day in our Nation's history which we will regret for years to come.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I rise as the chair of the Appropriations Committee that will be proposing the emergency supplemental bill. This bill will be introduced tonight, and I want to briefly describe it.

First of all, what does the emergency supplemental bill do? It deals with three crises; one, it will fight wildfires with additional resources as to what is going on in our own country; second, it will help Israel be able to continue to man its Iron Dome antiballistic missile system, as has been under siege by Hamas rockets; and, third, it will help be a downpayment on resolving the crisis of the children arriving at the border.

To be specific, it will fight wildfires to the tune of \$615 million. Right now there are 127 wildfires burning in our Western States, covering four or more States.

Second, it will strengthen Israel's Iron Dome and add \$225 million to replenish the antimissile defense system, saving lives by shooting down Hamas rockets, helping our essential ally Israel.

Third, it will deal with the crisis of our children arriving at the border, and that will be \$2.7 billion—\$1 billion less than what the President asked for. It will care for the children. It will provide food, shelter, and other needs. It will resolve children's asylum status, and it will have enforcement money to break up organized crime cartels, the traffickers, and the smugglers.

The total for all three of those will be \$3.57 billion.

I agree with President Obama. This is an emergency supplemental. These funds are designated as emergency spending because they meet the criteria set in the Budget Control Act of 2011 that the needs must be urgent, temporary, unforeseen, and prevent loss of life. That is exactly what we are facing.

What does it mean to designate the funds as emergency spending? It means no offsets. So we do not take existing funds where we are either defending the Nation or helping America's families to pay for the spending in this bill.

The needs are urgent.

Firefighting needs are needed now. The Forest Service will run out of money in August. Fires are burning Oregon, Washington, and other States. We need to be able to provide the support to fight those fires and help our neighbors in our Western States.

Iron Dome. The funding is needed now to replenish a key part of the missile defense system, replace Iron Dome artillery. Israel has already used a great deal of its assets dealing with the more than 2,000 Hamas rockets aimed at Israel. Israel has the right to self-defense. We are helping them have what they need to intercept 90 percent of the rockets.

Funds to deal with unaccompanied children crossing our border are needed now. If we do not do this, the Department of Immigration and Customs Enforcement will run out of money in August, and the Department of Homeland Security Border Patrol will run out in early September. It does not mean that our Border Patrol agents or ICE agents will stop working, but it will mean the Department of Homeland Security will have to take money from other Homeland Security needs to keep these agencies doing their jobs.

Also, Health and Human Services will run out of money to house children in August. It means that children will stay longer at the border. They will be in inappropriate holding cells. It also means Border Patrol agents will be taking care of them, rather than child welfare social workers. If you want to use Border Patrol agents to take care of children, that is one thing. I think they should be defending our border and we should have social workers taking care of the children.

Our approach is sensible. It meets human needs. While we acknowledge a tight budget situation, we fund only that which is needed in calendar year 2014. This is very important. It funds only what is needed in calendar year 2014. It defers \$1 billion of the President's request until 2015, subject to Congressional action that the need be validated. We hope by 2015 the surge will have diminished because of the prevention and intervention issues we are dealing with. But make no mistake, the funds we say we need we really do need.

This bill defers funds until next year, because I am deeply concerned if we do not follow the Senate number, the House will make draconian cuts that impact the care of the children, and also being penny wise and pound foolish, they are going to stop our ability to go after the smugglers and the coyotes. So we do not want to go after the children, we want to go after those people who are exploiting the children and trying to recruit them into despicable activities.

We also do not want radical riders that will weaken our refugee and human trafficking laws or accelerate deportation of children without due process under existing law. We do not want a backdoor version of bad immigration reform.

This bill is only a money bill. It does not include immigration legislation. How that will be addressed on the Senate floor will be decided by the leadership on both sides. The challenges to this request are many. We have made changes to the President's request. We have included more money for immigration judges and more money for additional legal representation for children so we can determine their legal status and determine whether they have the right to seek asylum status.

We also have robust enforcement against gangs and organized crime. Seven organized crime syndicates are operating in these three Central American countries now. We are talking about more guns at the border. We need more law enforcement and the help of the United States going after the real bums and scums, which is these drug dealers who recruit these children, murder children before other children's eyes.

You know what. We also know that when we work in a crisis and we do urgent supplemental efforts, we sometimes waste money. We can only look at some of the other agencies where we have done this. This bill includes strong oversight from the inspectors general to make sure the taxpayers' money is well spent, to protect our border, protect the children, and go after smugglers, coyotes, and human traffickers.

The best way to make sure the surge of children is slowed is not by rewriting refugee and human trafficking laws, it is by making it harder on these crooks and criminals.

I am going to conclude by saying this: We already have 60,000 children at the border. This crisis is not at our border, however. The crisis is in their home countries: Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala.

These children are truly fleeing violence. I have been down to the border. I have talked to these children, listened to children who faced sexual assault, the recruitment into human trafficking, gang intimidation, persecution, threats of grisly physical actions directed against them.

What is happening in these countries? When you listen to the cries of the children, I can tell you, in these countries there is a war on children. We cannot turn our backs on these children who are seeking refuge. We need to pass this supplemental and we need to deal with the violence that is coming out of Central America; that if we do not deal with it there, it is not that the children will come to our borders, it is that the violence and the gangs will come to our borders.

I hope when the leader introduces the bill later on this evening we can proceed and debate this with due diligence. I look forward to chairing the committee as we go through this process.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to enter into a presentation and colloquy with my fellow Republican colleagues for up to 25 minutes.

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

(The remarks of Mr. CORKER, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. RUBIO, and Mr. MCCAIN pertaining to the introduction of S. 2650 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. CORKER. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 2262

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I come to the floor with a number of my colleagues to ask unanimous consent that at a time to be determined by the majority leader, after consultation with the Republican leader, the Senate resume consideration of S. 2262, which is the Shaheen-Portman energy efficiency bill; that the motion to commit be withdrawn; that amendments Nos. 3023 and 3025 be withdrawn; that the pending substitute amendment be agreed to; that there be no other amendments, points of order, or motions in order to the bill other than budget points of order and the applicable motions to waive; that there be up to 4 hours of debate on the bill equally divided between the two leaders or their designees; that upon the use or yielding back of time, the Senate proceed to vote on passage of the bill, as amended; that the bill be subject to a 60-affirmative-vote threshold; that if the bill is passed, the Senate proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 371, S. 2282, which is the passage of the Keystone Pipeline, at a time to be determined by the majority leader, after consultation with the Republican leader, but no later than Thursday, July 31, 2014; that there be no amendments, points of order, or motions in order to the bill other than budget points of order and the applicable motions to waive; that there be up to 4 hours of debate on the bill equally divided between the two leaders or their designees; that upon the use or yielding back of time, the Senate proceed to vote on passage of the bill; finally, that the bill be subject to a 60-affirmative-vote threshold.

What I am basically asking is that we get a vote on Shaheen-Portman and if that moves, that we then get a vote on the Keystone Pipeline—something our colleagues on both sides of the aisle have been talking about for months.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I object. The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I would propose to the Senator from New Hampshire an alternative. Before I do that, I would say the biggest problem we have is the inability of the Senate to process amendments in the normal order. I believe the Senator from New Hampshire is sympathetic to that.

If we could just have an opportunity to offer and vote on amendments, I have every confidence this piece of legislation would have been long passed. But somehow we are stuck. And it is not just the minority party that is limited on opportunities to offer ideas to help improve legislation and to get votes. It is even our friends who are in the majority. I can only imagine what it is like to feel like: I am in the majority, and I can't even get votes on my amendments or my legislation passed.

So I ask unanimous consent that the only amendments in order to S. 2262 be five amendments from the Republican side related to energy policy, each with a 60-vote threshold on adoption of each amendment. I further ask that following the disposition of these five amendments, the bill be read a third time and the Senate proceed to vote on passage of the bill, as amended, if amended.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection of the Senator from Rhode Island is heard.

The Senator from West Virginia.

Mr. MANCHIN. Mr. President, I came to the floor to speak on these two commonsense pieces of legislation.

My dear friends Senator SHAHEEN and Senator PORTMAN—Democrat and Republican—have worked so hard in a bipartisan way, which we don't always see anymore on the floor here or over on the House side. It is a shame. People tell me about how things used to be. I have been here not quite 4 years, and I haven't seen it yet. I am still waiting for it to happen. But we have a bill, the Shaheen-Portman bill. It is basically a bill that creates jobs, saves money, makes significant strides toward a more energy-efficient nation, which we should be.

I am from an energy-producing State, the great State of West Virginia. My dear friend Senator HEITKAMP is from the great State of North Dakota, which is a tremendous energy-producing State. We believe in energy policies. We believe we should be using everything we have to make sure we have the economic engine so we can compete globally and in a very competitive way.

With that being said, this is the low-hanging fruit. This is truly low-hanging fruit. And we all agree—why shouldn't we pass a piece of legislation that basically we all benefit—all 50 States will benefit. The bill will put us on a path toward a more sustainable

future. It has broad support, as we can see. And our colleague Senator CORNYN from Texas will tell you that if it got voted on, it would pass overwhelmingly. Now, that is hard for me, coming from West Virginia where there is a lot of common sense.

People say: Well, if it would pass, why don't you just vote on it and pass it?

That is what I am saying. It is a shame that politics has trumped good policy in this body and in this city, and we have to get back to some order of common sense.

I am a tremendous supporter of this piece of legislation. I thank Senator SHAHEEN for all the hard work she has done. She has not given up. She will not give up. And that is what it takes—the tenacity to make sure a good piece of legislation which not only helps the great people of New Hampshire, it helps all of us. That is what I am looking forward to.

Then we look at the Keystone Pipeline. I have never seen a piece of legislation that makes more sense than this piece of legislation, the Keystone Pipeline. When I first heard about this, people said: Senator MANCHIN, what do you think about this?

The only thing I can say is that in West Virginia we would rather buy from our friends than our enemies. So we are going to buy the oil. The oil is going to be sold somewhere in the world. Why shouldn't we have access to that? Why shouldn't we have control of that? Why shouldn't we benefit from the jobs? We are talking 20,000 direct jobs during construction, 118,000 indirect and spinoff jobs after construction, contributing \$20 billion of economic stimulus to the United States. Every State, including my State of West Virginia—new Hampshire, North Dakota, Rhode Island—we are all going to benefit.

It is something we find almost reprehensible, for us not to be able to vote on legislation. And I understand the amendment process. I understand all of that. But when we have very clearly defined pieces of legislation that really create good policy for all of America, that is something for which sometimes maybe we push the politics aside, we vote on the policies and the contents of these other pieces of legislation, which I know West Virginia would be happy for me to vote on, and I will be in very much support of these two pieces.

With that, I thank Senator SHAHEEN for her hard work. I thank her for her not-give-up attitude, that New Hampshire commitment she has. She is going to work and fight. We are going to be right behind her and work with our bipartisan friends on the other side. Senator PORTMAN has committed the same way. So we hope we can get something reasonably done.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Ms. HEITKAMP. Mr. President, I am standing with my good friend from the

great State of West Virginia, certainly a tremendous legislator and former Governor and someone who knows how to get things done, Senator SHAHEEN.

I know what is happening. I think I have learned at least that much since I have been here, about the rules and how things work. But I also see this body through the eyes of an American citizen.

I see two pieces of legislation—the one the Keystone Pipeline. The vast majority of people in this country support moving forward with the Keystone Pipeline. It is a critical piece of North American infrastructure. It was critical in the last discussion we had about the disruption and about the horrible conditions in the Middle East. If we haven't learned the lesson, we need to build out our resources right here among our friendly allies in the form of Canada and use our own resources here and then have the ability to use that new energy development for soft power, to actually begin to have a meaningful geopolitical discussion that doesn't involve an addiction to foreign oil.

So we think about Keystone Pipeline, and we think about the relationship we have with Canada and the jobs that could be created, but mainly we think about developing the infrastructure that is absolutely essential to the development of our country and the development of our energy resources.

We can talk about fuel sources—and that is what my great friend from West Virginia just talked about, having a policy that truly includes all of the above—all of the above, not picking and choosing. Let the market decide. Let's make sure that it is diverse, that we have every opportunity to develop everything we are going to develop. But we have to move that energy, and the Keystone Pipeline is example 1.

A lot of the disagreement about the Keystone Pipeline has nothing to do with the pipeline itself. It has to do with the oil sands development up in Canada.

When we pick and choose winners and decide we are not going to vote on something, the American people just shake their head and say this makes so much sense, so why isn't the Congress voting.

Then let's take the second part of a solid energy policy—"all of the above" but also conservation, also energy efficiency, also making the best use in a great American tradition, a conservative American tradition of making sure we have the best energy efficiency in the world and having a piece of legislation that guarantees that and creates jobs as a result and saves money for schools and saves money for businesses.

All of this makes so much sense, and the American public knows it makes sense. Yet this body cannot find a way forward to take a vote. How frustrating is that?

It is frustrating for us here in this body, but it is more frustrating for the American public that watches this dis-

play of inability to move forward on critical pieces of public policy that would make a difference not only for our future but the future of the young people here whom I see every day, the future of the young people in my State, knowing that we need to absolutely have an energy policy that works for the future, that is diverse, that recognizes the importance of energy efficiency, and that moves energy.

We know we have a huge number of people in this body who support the Keystone Pipeline. Do we have 60 votes? We will find out. Let's take a vote. We know there is tremendous bipartisan support not only for Keystone but for energy efficiency, for the Shaheen-Portman bill. Let's take a vote. Let's actually demonstrate to the American public that we can move forward on what are literally no-brainers, things that absolutely make sense. And those of us who support the Keystone Pipeline, we will find out. We will find out if we can pass it.

Think about this: We have a bill here that mandates we approve that little bit of crossing into the United States of America, which is the only way the Federal Government really gets involved in it, is because it is coming from a foreign country—approves that. Maybe we win, maybe we lose, but we will know where we are. The administration has taken 6 years to evaluate the Keystone Pipeline—longer than it took us to fight World War II. There is something dramatically wrong with that. So frustration builds. We know we need to move on the Keystone Pipeline. We need to have a strong vote. Let's take that vote. Let's take the vote on Shaheen-Portman.

It is a critical piece of legislation—well-thought-out—and comes right out of committee where lots of amendments were offered, where there was the ability to have a dialogue. It comes about the right way with the bill sponsors standing on the floor answering questions and debating what the bill does. Yet because of this impasse—because of whatever happens behind closed doors that the American public doesn't see—they only look at what they see happening in the debate here and wonder why.

I support Senator SHAHEEN in her efforts to promote this bill. This will not be the first time we have come and asked this. We will continue to do everything we can to move a vote forward on Shaheen-Portman, to move a vote forward on the Keystone Pipeline, and start getting the work done for the American people.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Before my colleague leaves I wish to thank Senator HEITKAMP for her support, not just for Shaheen-Portman but for a resolution to getting a vote on our energy efficiency legislation that I have worked on for 3½ years with our colleague Senator ROB PORTMAN from Ohio but also

for the impasse that would break around the vote for the Keystone Pipeline as well. Pairing the two would allow us to see where we stand on both of these issues.

I appreciate my colleague from West Virginia, Senator MANCHIN, coming to the floor because he and Senator HEITKAMP have talked about the fact that we have to look at a variety of areas of energy if we are going to address our future energy needs in this country. There is new urgency to energy efficiency right now. A recent study just came out that shows the United States ranks 13th out of the world's largest 16 economies in energy efficiency. So that study analyzed the world's largest economies that cover more than 81 percent of the global gross domestic product and posts 71 percent of the global electricity. What it found is we are severely lagging behind other countries in our use of energy efficiency. This legislation, the Energy Efficiency and Industrial Competitiveness Act, also known as Shaheen-Portman, is a way for us to address the deficit we currently have in this country.

We have heard from the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy that by 2030 this legislation would create 192,000 domestic jobs. That is nothing to sneeze at, at a time when our economy is still recovering from the recession. It would save consumers and businesses \$16 billion a year—again, real savings in a way that is important to consumers and businesses. It would reduce carbon pollution at a time when we know pollution is affecting our environment and we are seeing a record number of disasters. It would be the equivalent of taking 22 million cars off the road. Our legislation does this without any mandates, without raising the deficit. In fact, we see a very small savings of about \$12 million in the legislation.

It addresses the building sector where we use about 40 percent of our energy. It addresses the industrial manufacturing sector that consumes more energy than any other sector of our domestic economy, and it addresses the Federal Government where we use more energy than any other entity in our economy; 93 percent of the energy is used by our military. Clearly, energy efficiency is something that would benefit all of us.

There are 10 bipartisan amendments that have been incorporated into this legislation. It is the product of 3½ years of work. It has been endorsed by hundreds—literally hundreds and hundreds of business groups, of businesses, organizations, everything from the Natural Resources Defense Council to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and National Association of Manufacturers, the International Union of Painters.

This is legislation that makes sense. We just heard Senator CORNYN on the floor saying he thought there was support to get this legislation done. I think we need to figure out how we can

come together. We don't have much time left before we go out in August to go back to our home States. This would be a great bipartisan effort to go out on at the end of July, to be able to go home and say to people across this country that we worked out a deal that passed this energy efficiency legislation, that we got a vote on the Keystone Pipeline—let the chips fall where they may—that we addressed one of the biggest challenges facing this country, which is energy, and what we are going to do about our energy future.

I certainly hope that in the remaining time between now and the beginning of August we can come together, find some sort of resolution to address this issue and get this legislation done. We know the House has said they are willing to take it up. They are interested in seeing some action on energy efficiency. Now is an opportune time to do that.

I am disappointed by today's objections, but as Senator HEITKAMP said so well, we are not going to give up. We are going to continue to try and move this issue and do what is in the best interests of the people of this country.

I thank the Presiding Officer and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I rise tonight to ask unanimous consent, first of all, to speak as if in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection.

TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY

Mr. CASEY. Thank you, Mr. President. I rise to highlight an important piece of legislation that was just voted out of the Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions—known by the acronym HELP. We voted out of committee today S. 2539, the Traumatic Brain Injury Reauthorization Act of 2014. Senator HATCH and I introduced S. 2539 to reauthorize existing programs to support States' efforts to help individuals live with traumatic brain injury and of course to help their families.

TBIs range from mild concussions to devastating life-altering injuries that collectively represent a significant public health challenge. It is the signature injury, unfortunately, of the conflicts of the last decade, whether it is Iraq or Afghanistan.

It is also an injury that occurs approximately 2.5 million times in the United States each year. Over 50,000 people die of traumatic brain injuries every year. Traumatic brain injury is implicated in nearly one-third of all injury-related deaths.

Children—just imagine this number—ages 0 to 4 and teens ages 15 to 19 are at the greatest risk for traumatic brain injury. Among all children in an average year, 62,000 will sustain brain injuries that require hospitalization and 564,000 will be seen in hospital emergency rooms. Clearly, we must continue to improve our response to trau-

matic brain injury, which includes prevention, timely and accurate diagnosis, and treatment.

The bill passed today out of the HELP Committee would make modest but important improvements to the TBI Act that is in place already. We ask that the Department of Health and Human Services develop a traumatic brain injury coordination plan to ensure that Federal activities at HHS and other Federal agencies are being coordinated for maximum efficiency and effectiveness.

We also ask for a review of the scientific evidence on brain injury and in particular brain injury management in children, with a special emphasis on evaluating scientific evidence behind the "return to school" and "return to play" policies. This of course is very important.

As public awareness of the seriousness of traumatic brain injuries increases, parents, schools, and coaches are struggling to develop appropriate responses. A lot of attention thus far has been focused on the "return to play" policies, trying to ensure that children don't return to sports until they have healed from a previous concussion, but there is much less attention on the so-called return to school policies and how we can take steps to ensure that children with a concussion or a more serious brain injury can return to the classroom and continue learning safely and effectively.

It is my hope that this bill, S. 2539, will help focus future research efforts and guide Federal and State agencies looking to develop policies in this area. Along with a lot of the members of the HELP Committee, I am pleased the committee voted today to move forward S. 2539, and I hope the rest of the Senate will join Senator HATCH and me in passing this legislation as quickly as possible.

In conclusion, it has been a great honor to work with Senator HATCH on this legislation as it is when we work together on a whole series of important matters in the Senate.

2014 KIDS COUNT DATA BOOK

Mr. President, I have brief comments on an important set of data that has just been released. I will highlight very briefly the 2014 Kids Count Data Book, something a lot of child advocates and families are aware of. This is an annual report, and I want to highlight the fact that the 2014 report is now on the record.

This Kids Count Data Book was just published by the Annie E. Casey Foundation for this year. The Kids Count Data Book looks at every State to measure child well-being in States and across the country considering factors such as economic well-being, health, education, family, and community. Within each of these categories the report highlights four important metrics and notes whether we have improved from the year 2008 to 2012.

Nationally, 10 of the 16 metrics showed improvement. That is good

news. Five metrics worsened. Of course we don't like hearing that, but it is important to measure when we are going in the wrong direction. And one of the metrics remained unchanged. So we are happy the improvement number is 16 metrics and the worsening metric number is 5, but we still have a long way to go to improve in each of these areas.

The report also ranks States based upon their overall results. Pennsylvania is ranked 16th in the Nation. I wish we were in the top 10. I wish we were in the top five and even No. 1. So we have some work to do in Pennsylvania. In some areas Pennsylvania is doing well compared to the national average. For example, we have a lower rate of children without health insurance. That is certainly good news, with still more to do on that. Teen birth rates in Pennsylvania continue to be below the national average. Pennsylvania has a slightly higher percentage of children attending preschool. That is good news. We have a lot more to do on that, both in Pennsylvania and across the Nation. Finally, Pennsylvania students continue to have higher proficiency rates in reading and math skills when compared to the national rate, but there is still more work to do there as well.

The report also highlights areas where we need to improve both in Pennsylvania and nationally. Far too many children in the United States of America are living in poverty with parents who often lack secure employment. Too many teens are not in school and also not working, which dramatically worsens their ability to grow into economically self-sufficient adults.

I would encourage my colleagues to review the 2014 Kids Count Data Book which is available on the Web site of the Annie E. Casey Foundation. We should all consider what we can do in the Senate and in the other body to improve our children's lives and our future.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I wish to speak about amendments I have filed to the Bring Jobs Home Act.

My first amendment, the United States Job Creation and International Tax Reform Act, would truly incentivize American companies to create jobs in the United States, while at the same time leveling the playing field for U.S. companies in the global marketplace. We can do this by reforming the rules for taxing the global operations of American companies and making America a more attractive location to base a business that serves customers around the world.

Our current Tax Code does just the opposite, but the base bill we are debating today wouldn't change that. Instead, it would discourage global businesses from locating their headquarters in the United States and make it harder for U.S.-based companies to expand.

Instead of messaging that we should bring jobs home, we need to reform our

outdated international Tax Code. Let's just do it. Many of the United States' major trading partners have moved to what are called territorial tax systems. Those types of tax systems tax the income generated within their borders and exempt foreign earnings from tax. The United States, on the other hand, taxes the worldwide income of U.S. companies and provides deferral of U.S. tax until the foreign earnings are brought home. Deferring these taxes incentivizes companies to leave their money abroad. Because the United States has one of the highest corporate tax rates in the world, companies don't bring those earnings back home and instead reinvest outside of the United States.

This is having a real impact on jobs. Thirty-six percent of the Fortune Global 500 companies were headquartered in the United States in 2000; in 2009 that number dropped to 28 percent. Clearly, America is losing ground, but the base bill we are considering won't change that.

My amendment would help to right the ship by pulling our international tax rules into the 21st century. This bill would give U.S. companies real incentives to create jobs in the United States in order to win globally. I hope as we talk about jobs this week, we will have a chance to consider the amendment.

My second amendment, the Small Business Fairness in Health Care Act, would remove the ObamaCare disincentive for small businesses to add jobs. Small businesses are the drivers of the economy in Wyoming and across the Nation, but the bill before us is not focused on removing the burdens that current laws have placed on our Main Street businesses.

A recent survey by the National Small Business Association found that because of the President's health care law 34 percent of small businesses report holding off on hiring a new employee and another 12 percent report they had to lay off an employee in the last year.

My amendment is a great step to help address those issues. It would remove the ObamaCare mandate that businesses with 50 employees provide health insurance. This would allow small companies with 49 employees to add jobs without the fear of the employer mandate. My amendment would also clarify that 40 hours, not 30 hours, is full-time so that folks who have jobs aren't limited to 29 hours of work per week.

These aren't the only ideas we should debate when we talk about creating jobs in the United States. We should be fighting the administration's war on coal, an industry that supported over 700,000 good-paying jobs in 2010. The EPA recently issued new regulations that try to force a backdoor cap and tax proposal on Americans that Congress has already rejected. We need to reject that idea again. Instead of running from coal, America needs to run on coal.

We should debate the merits of the Keystone Pipeline and insist that the President approve this project which has been pending for more than 5 years and would create more than 40,000 jobs. The State Department has done five reviews of the project and determined that the pipeline would cause no significant environmental impacts. So let's create those jobs. What are we waiting for?

Mr. CASEY. I note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate 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.

TRIBUTE TO THE REVEREND GREGG W. ANDERSON

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to an upstanding citizen from my home State, the Commonwealth of Kentucky. The Reverend Gregg W. Anderson is an accomplished news reporter and dedicated prison chaplain, ministering to inmates in the Commonwealth.

Though he has traveled the world, and worked as a reporter at radio and television stations across the Midwest, Reverend Anderson is honored to call Bardstown in Nelson County, KY, his home, where he hosts "Talk of the Town" Monday through Friday evenings on WBRT, Bardstown's hometown radio station on 97.1 FM and 1320 AM. This year, WBRT celebrates its 60th anniversary informing and cultivating a special relationship with the Bardstown community.

During his nearly four decades as a news reporter, Reverend Anderson has enjoyed a varied and successful career covering everything from Super Bowls to bank robberies. However, he has found no assignment more rewarding than that of "a good news reporter," bringing the good news of Christ to others.

His conversion experience began after he covered the horrific 1988 Carrollton school bus crash. Killing 27 people, including 24 children, the Carrollton crash remains the worst drunk-driving accident in our Nation's history.

The gruesomeness and heartache Reverend Anderson witnessed following that crash inspired him to begin bringing the light of Christ to others. On May 15, 1988, the day after the acci-

dent, Reverend Anderson felt called by God to be a "good news reporter." One year later he founded 70x7 Evangelistic Ministry. Continuing as a news reporter by day, Reverend Anderson began his ministry career by preaching at church services and revivals at night.

His ministry eventually brought him to the prisons of Kentucky and Ohio, where he became a devoted and beloved prison chaplain. Reverend Anderson worked with the prisoners, bringing many hardened criminals the message of Christ. Reverend Anderson eventually took his prison chaplaincy overseas, ministering to inmates in Estonia and Latvia, before returning to the United States.

The Reverend Gregg W. Anderson's dedication seems to know no bounds. His devotion and commitment to his work, whether in news reporting or in his Christian ministry, is an inspiration for us all, and I ask that my Senate colleagues join me in honoring him today.

TRIBUTE TO GREGORY SCOTT SALYER

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to a veteran from my home State, the Commonwealth of Kentucky. As a member of the Army National Guard, Gregory Scott Salyer served his country with honor on a tour of duty in Afghanistan.

Service to this country is something that runs deep in Salyer's family. His father, uncle, and grandfather are all military veterans, and Salyer followed suit when he enlisted in 2006.

In Afghanistan, Salyer and his team performed the treacherous, yet indispensable, task of tracking, unearthing, and disposing of improvised explosive devices, IEDs. IEDs were, and still remain, one of the most serious and unnerving threats to our troops abroad. Salyer's work in diffusing that threat undoubtedly increased the safety of our servicemen and women.

Returning to Kentucky following his service in the Guard, Salyer brought with him the National Defense Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Medal, the Armed Forces Reserve Medal, the Afghanistan Campaign Medal, and the ARCOM Medal of Valor.

For his honorable service to this country, Salyer is deserving of our praise here in the Senate.

Therefore, I ask that my Senate colleagues join me in honoring Gregory Scott Salyer.

The Salyersville Independent recently published an article detailing Salyer's service in Afghanistan. I ask unanimous consent that the full article be printed in the RECORD.

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