

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

DACA

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. President, every Member of this body is only a few generations removed from the immigrant experience. At some point in the recent past, each of our ancestors made the courageous decision to leave his home in search of a better life in America. Each of them took a risk. They didn't know what awaited them in this country, but they believed that through their own hard work and determination, they could succeed.

My mother took a huge risk when she brought my brothers and me to this country. Leaving her entire family behind, she packed our belongings into one suitcase, and we set sail for Hawaii. We grew up poor, but Mom worked so hard every day to build a life for us in this country. She worked minimum-wage jobs with no health insurance. We moved apartments and schools every few years. Eventually, we were able to bring my grandparents to Hawaii from Japan. So I understand as an immigrant how important family unification is to immigrant families.

I share my story not because I think it is particularly extraordinary but because it is a story that millions of families in our country share. The same hopes that drove my mom to risk everything to bring us to America are reflected in the stories of millions of immigrant families across the country, and they are reflected in the lives of Dreamers, whose futures are now at risk because of the President's decision to end the DACA Program.

More than 15,000 young people have already lost their protection from deportation as a result of the President's decision, and 122 more will lose DACA protection every single day. It was with this sense of urgency in mind that I joined a bipartisan group of my colleagues at the White House yesterday to find a path forward to protect the Dreamers. The President took great pains to appear reasonable and eager to make a deal, but we left yesterday's meeting without much clarity about where he stood.

Only a few days ago, the President threatened to hold Dreamers hostage until he got \$18 billion to build the wall. I would call that his vanity project. In response to my question at yesterday's meeting, the President appeared to demonstrate some flexibility on this issue, but after the Freedom Caucus spent yesterday afternoon warning of a potential betrayal on so-called "amnesty," the President reaffirmed in a tweet his hard-line position that funding for the wall must be part of any deal on Dreamers.

Between insisting on building an unnecessary wall, demonizing family reunification, and peddling misinforma-

tion about the diversity visa lottery, the President lost track of what is really at stake here—the inspiring young people whose lives he has left hanging in the balance.

Before the holidays, it was heartening to see so many Dreamers from all across the country taking direct action in the halls of Congress to fight for their futures. I spoke with a number of these young people, like Victor from Houston, who traveled for days to make his voice heard in Congress.

Victor's parents were seasonal farmworkers who traveled to the strawberry fields of Florida every year. They settled down in Houston and saved money for a car and an apartment. They sent for Victor and his sister when he was only 4 years old.

Victor spent most of his childhood not even knowing his immigration status. It wasn't until he came home one day with a permission slip to join his middle school class on a trip to Spain that his mom told him that he was undocumented. Learning what it meant to be undocumented—that if he traveled to Spain he couldn't come home—was really hard for Victor, but he tried to put it from his mind.

As the years passed, it got harder for Victor to grapple with his status. He loved going to school, but he knew as an undocumented immigrant that his options after he graduated from high school were limited. He developed depression, and his grades suffered. But a few months after graduation, President Obama created the DACA Program, and Victor successfully applied for it.

Victor told me that even though he had DACA, he was still too afraid to talk about his status with anyone. During the 2016 election, this changed. He confronted his friends who voted for Donald Trump and shared what losing DACA would mean for him.

On September 5, Victor knew there would be an announcement about his future. He put his phone away and started cleaning his house to distract him from what was about to happen. Eventually he ran out of distractions and sat down to watch Attorney General Jeff Sessions' DACA announcement. Victor began to cry. In the days that followed, Victor started having panic attacks—sometimes as many as five to seven per day. He was afraid to get in the car because he didn't want to hurt anyone if he got a panic attack while driving. A few weeks later, Victor showed up for his first United We Dream event in Houston. There he met fellow Dreamers and allies committed to fighting for him. He told me that it was amazing to see so many people show up in support and solidarity.

Victor made himself a promise that once the Dream Act passes, he is going to go back to school to study psychology so that he can help LGBT youth like him. Before he left, Victor said something really insightful. He said that it is really important for people to come out of the shadows to tell their stories because once you tell your

story, then they can no longer demonize you.

I couldn't agree more.

Fighting to protect Dreamers is about much more than the law. It is about compassion and basic human decency. Late last night, Dreamers won a temporary reprieve when a district court judge in San Francisco issued a preliminary injunction to reinstate the DACA Program for existing enrollees. The judge said that ending DACA in the way the administration ended it was arbitrary and capricious. This was an important victory, for now. It is just a temporary injunction, a temporary reprieve. So I agree with my Democratic leader that we cannot allow this decision to make us think that we are out of the woods, not at all. It cannot dim our resolve to pass the Dream Act. The fight continues.

I yield the floor.

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

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

Mr. KAINE. Thank you, Mr. President.

I rise as many of my colleagues have this afternoon, and I have risen on the same topic often to talk about our Dreamers.

Usually, when I have risen in the past, I have told stories about Virginia Dreamers. We have about 13,000 Dreamers in Virginia. I have highlighted stories of Dreamers from Latin America, Africa, Sweden, and Asia. One of the students I talked about, Gloria Oduyoye, just graduated from William & Mary Law School within the last month and thus became the first Dreamer to be a law school graduate in Virginia and one of the few Dreamers who attained a law degree in the United States. I talked about her story.

Today I decided not to talk about stories of individuals again but to try to put it in context, with the message really being that the time is now to make a decision. We don't need more information. We just need the will to act and do what I think is the right and the fair thing to do because we have been at this discussion now—it is hard to believe we have been at this discussion for 16 years.

The American public—Democrats, Republicans, and Independents—overwhelmingly support a permanent solution for Dreamers. It is not that we need to know anything more to solve this. We have been talking about it for a very long time.

I want to encourage Members of this body and in the House who are involved in the negotiation to come to an agreement and provide permanent protection for the Dreamers before next Friday so that we can protect this community, which is frightened because

they are so worried about being deported or losing their ability to work, to go to school, losing the ability to protect their families. But it is more than just protecting people because they are frightened; it is protecting them because, as I have seen in Virginia and in every State, they so enrich this country.

The first version of the DREAM Act, it is hard to believe, was introduced in 2001. The Senator from Illinois, Mr. DURBIN, who has been a champion of this and has my deepest admiration for his persistence in this endeavor, introduced the first version of the DREAM Act together with the senior Senator from Utah, Mr. HATCH.

The bill has evolved since then. It wasn't exactly the same as we are contemplating now, but it was the first version of the bill. It sought to repeal a provision of the 1996 immigration reform that prohibited undocumented immigrants from eligibility for higher education. Instead, what the bill, in its original version, did 17 years ago was to grant permanent resident status to young, undocumented immigrants with a high school degree or equivalent GED who fulfilled certain residence requirements and did not have criminal records. That was the start of this discussion. We are still looking for the permanent answer.

The DREAM Act first almost passed in 2007. It attained more than a majority vote in the Senate, but it didn't get to the 60-vote threshold, so that was insufficient for passage. In 2010, the House passed the DREAM Act, but the Senate again failed to approve it with a 60-vote threshold.

In 2013, just a few months after I came to the Senate, we contemplated, debated, discussed, voted upon comprehensive immigration reform in June. I was kind of proud then. I was a young Senator, had been here a couple of months and stood in my chair and offered a speech on the floor of the Senate in Spanish to describe what was in the bill for the 45 million Americans who get their news every day in the Spanish language. After I was finished describing it, people came up to me and said: Has anybody ever done that before? And I said: Frankly, I don't know.

It turned out that it was the first time in the history of the body that a speech had been given in a language other than English. But what was important about that moment in June of 2013 was not the speech; it was the vote. The package was comprehensive. It included not just the DREAM Act but border security, assistance for employers to determine the immigration bona fides of those applying for work. These are reforms—an approval for people here on temporary protected status from El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Somalia, Sudan, and Haiti to become permanent residents and then convert that into a path to citizenship. That comprehensive immigration reform bill, in my view, represents the Senate working at its best: a bipar-

tisan working group, coming through committee, coming to the floor with amendments. It passed this body with 68 votes in favor.

It was evidence of the naivete of a young Senator at the time that I assumed, of course, something was going to happen because it passed here with 68 votes. I knew the House wouldn't do exactly what we did, but I thought they would do something, and we would be conferencing it. But alas, I was naive; that was not to happen.

We are now in a different place, and we have the ability to act.

I supported President Obama's actions in June of 2012 to protect Dreamers—the DACA Program; and then later, the DAPA Program. I felt that those actions were completely in accord with earlier Executive actions Presidents had taken in the area of immigration.

Since June of 2012, 800,000 young people have achieved Dreamer status. Some of them aren't so young anymore. I sometimes refer to them as students and kids, but they are in the military, they are parents, they are teachers, and they are active in their communities. As I said, there are 13,000 in my State. DACA has allowed them to continue their education, to work legally, and to remain in the only country they have ever known.

I will say I was disappointed when President Trump in September announced that he would terminate the program in 6 months—in March. I felt like it was the breaking of a promise to these young people because he had said, even as a candidate and then as President, that Dreamers were good kids and that they wouldn't have anything to worry about from him.

I will say there was one aspect of what the President said—I can't just be critical without pointing out that there was one thing about what he said that I thought was right. He said: And Congress should fix it. I agreed with President Trump on that. I wish he hadn't terminated the program, but he was right that this is something for Congress to fix because anything done by Executive action, even fully within the power of a President to take it, is subject to being changed by another Executive. The lives and futures of these young people are such that we shouldn't be scaring them about whether they are protected or maybe back to being protected depending upon who was the occupant of the White House.

That Presidential announcement in March, although I was disappointed, on that core piece of it, that Congress should fix it, I think President Trump was right and I think he is right. I think this is something that Congress must fix, should fix, can fix, and we have all the information about it to fix it right now.

It has been difficult and a little bit heartbreaking to talk to these young people and their families about the fears they have. I don't live under the

fear of deportation. I don't live under the fear of my job being taken away because of my status. I don't live under the fear of my kids not being able to get in-state tuition and instead having to pay out-of-state or not being able to afford it at all. It is not a fear I walk around with every day. It is hard to put yourself in somebody else's shoes and experience the fear and even terror they are feeling when you yourself don't have that same exposure.

I have spent a lot of time listening to these young people and their parents in Northern Virginia and Richmond, especially, where I live, and the fear they feel is very palpable, and the panic they feel is very palpable, and I understand why. I think part of our job should not be to increase anxiety and fear; part of our job should be—when we can, when it is the right thing to do, when it is within our grasp—to take action and provide clarity and certainty so people will know what their status is. I think the time for that is now after 16 years.

Maybe the most important thing I am saying is that this is not a new issue. It is not that we need another week or another month or another year to figure out the answer. The first bill was introduced in 2001, and I think January 19, 2018, is ample time for us to now get this right and make it either part of the spending bills that we will do at year-end or part of a stand-alone bill that we could embrace as a body.

I was heartened by some of the comments by the President, as reported yesterday, during the meeting with bipartisan leadership at the White House about this. We can do it, and the time is right to do it now. So I would ask my colleagues and especially urge all those in the negotiations to make this decision and provide these wonderful young people with certainty about their future.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I join my colleague from Virginia, as well as Senator DURBIN, who has been working so hard to get this done, to stand up for the Dreamers. I give my strong support once again for taking action on the Dream Act. We need to take up this bill.

As Senator Kaine just noted, I was also heartened, after the meeting at the White House, by the fact that this President understands—he said he understands that we can't wait until March to get this done, that we need to get this done soon. For me, the easiest way to do this is by passing the Dream Act.

The Federal court decision in California yesterday will provide some temporary relief, as every single day more and more kids fall out of status. That sounds like a legal term, but for them, it changes their whole life. These are kids who literally believed our government. They were told: You register. You sign up. We are going to allow you to stay.

And then, in one little moment and with a signature, that all changed. Their lives changed. So it is now our obligation in the Senate to get this done.

We have already seen the harmful effects of the administration's decision to end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Program, and the situation will continue to get worse until we take action. This is not just a small thing. I have met these kids. Ninety-seven percent of them either work or are in school. The average age they were when they were brought to this country is 6½ years old.

A few months back, I stood in front of a Catholic church with our archbishop of the Twin Cities, Archbishop Hebda, and a number of his parishioners and a number of the priests from that church to talk about what this meant in people's lives—kids brought over through no fault of their own.

My favorite example of a Dreamer, Senator KAINE and Mr. President, is Joseph Medina. He was brought over—and he didn't know this at the time—as a baby. His parents had died, and he was brought over to Sleepy Eye, MN, where he was raised. This was a long time ago. When he got to be the right age, he decided that he wanted to serve our country, and he signed up to serve in World War II.

Well, back then, he went to the military, to the Army, and said: I want to sign up.

They said: Well, it turns out—I don't know what term they used back then, but he was undocumented. And when I first met him at the young age of 99, as he explained to me, back then, all you did was you went to Canada for a day, with our country's OK, and slept in a hotel for a night, which is what he did, and then came back. Then he was made legal, and the Army signed him up, and he ended up going over and serving in the Pacific. He came back to this country, met his wife, got married, had a son, and that son served in the Vietnam war.

A few years ago, when he was 99, I got to bring him to Washington, and we stood in front of the World War II Memorial. There he stood. He had never seen it before, and he would never go again. He just died at the age of 103. He stood there with two Dreamers, suburban high school kids from Minnesota who wanted to join the Air Force, but they couldn't do it. They didn't have that right status. They were Dreamers too. They had been brought over as young kids.

To me, that just brought it all home. This is a war hero, someone who served our country, and this is the kind of person we are talking about when we talk about the Dreamers. His last act of patriotism in the last few years of his life was to continue to push so that other kids could serve their country just as he had and just as his son had.

While we have not reached an agreement yet on this bill, the reports on the bipartisan meeting are hopeful. But

time is ticking by. Time is ticking. The American public is with us. This is not one of these issues where the public says: What are they doing? This makes no sense. No. A recent poll found that 86 percent of Americans support action to allow the Dreamers to stay here in the United States. So I am very hopeful that we can come together on a bipartisan agreement.

The Dream Act was based on one simple principle, and that is that you should have the opportunity—this set of people, 800,000 people who came over here through no fault of their own, should have that opportunity to call this country home, as they have been doing for so many years.

Passing the Dream Act isn't just the morally right thing to do, it is the economically right thing to do. One recent study estimated that ending deferred action for childhood arrivals would cost the country over \$400 billion over the next 10 years. It would cost my State more than \$376 million in annual revenue. We are proud to be the home of more than 6,000 Dreamers.

Since it was established in 2012, it has helped, as I have noted, nearly 800,000 young people who have lived in the United States since childhood to have better lives. Think about that—800,000 people. As I mentioned, 97 percent of them are in school or in the workforce, and 72 percent of them are currently in school pursuing a bachelor's degree or higher. More than 100 students applied to medical school last year. Nearly 100 of them are currently enrolled in medical school at a time when we need more doctors, particularly in rural areas. Those are the facts.

I note that at the meeting at the White House, the President actually said that when this got done, he wanted to pursue comprehensive immigration reform. It is something that we have done before on a bipartisan basis in the Senate, and I believe that is where we need to turn now.

We talk about the economic sense of the Dreamers. Look at our country overall. Seventy of our Fortune 500 companies are headed by immigrants. Twenty-five percent of our U.S. Nobel Laureates were born in other countries. Immigrants have been an economic engine for this country.

Everyone in this Chamber came from somewhere. Their relatives came from somewhere. My grandparents on my mom's side came from Switzerland, and on my dad's side my great-grandparents came from Slovenia. They worked in the mines. They worked so hard just to send my dad to college. They saved money in a coffee can in a basement. I am here today with great-grandparents who came straight from Slovenia, a grandfather who worked in a mine, a dad who grew up there and was the first one in the family to go to college and get a 2-year degree and then a 4-year degree, and I literally stand here on the shoulders of these immigrants.

On my mom's side, the Swiss side, my grandpa came over and ended up at Ellis Island when he was 18 years old, and they had reached the cap on Swiss immigrants. That might sound amusing, but that was the case. He then somehow got himself to Canada—I think he said he was going to live there—came back through—because he wanted to be in our country—came back through, ended up in Wisconsin, like all good Swiss, with my other relatives on my grandma's side, worked at a cheese factory, and was an alien for 20 years. He finally applied for citizenship when World War II was breaking out, and that is when they found out that, in fact, he maybe had come into the country two different ways. But back then, they listened to his story, and they gave him citizenship. Otherwise, he would have been deported—I think it was 3 weeks before the U.S. joined World War II—as a Swiss German. Instead, he married my grandma back then, they had my mom and my mom's brother, and here I am.

I am on the shoulders of those immigrants. So when I see these Dreamers, I see my own family, and I hope everyone in this Chamber sees the same thing—the American dream. That is why, Mr. President, I stand with the Senator from Virginia, Mr. KAINE, with Senator DURBIN, and so many of my colleagues who have been working on this for so long on both sides of the aisle. There has been leadership on both sides of the aisle. So let's get this done, let's pass the Dream Act, and let's never forget that we all come from somewhere.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. TILLIS). The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, a number of us are here today with a very simple, straightforward demand. We must act now to pass a Dream Act. Very simply, the honor and integrity of this Chamber are at stake.

The young people who would be covered under the Dream Act are Americans in all but name. They came here as children. They grew up as Americans. They go to our schools, serve in our military, and support our economy. They work hard and they give back and they believe in the American dream. Deporting Dreamers would be cruel and irrational, inhumane, and, very simply, repugnant to basic American values.

Just think of Jonathan Gonzalez-Cruz. He is a college student at Southern Connecticut State University. I had the privilege of meeting him in December. His story has stuck with me. His story haunts me when I think of the moral imperative of this Nation to pass the Dream Act.

Jonathan was born in Mexico. He came to this country when he was just 4 years old. The United States is home for him. It is the only country he has ever known. He received a full scholarship to attend Southern Connecticut

State University, and he is set to graduate this spring with an honors degree in economics and math.

His dream is to attend law school, but due to the uncertainty surrounding DACA, he has decided to delay applying, knowing he will be unable to receive scholarships without his DACA status. He could attend, but he can't pay for it with scholarships unless he has that DACA status.

Jonathan first became compelled to speak up and tell his story after his father was deported, and they were unable to even say goodbye. Despite his own struggles, Jonathan is a passionate advocate for his community, and he actively works for Connecticut Students for a Dream. That organization, Connecticut Students for a Dream, is a group of students who help empower and advocate on behalf of other undocumented students. In fact, today, Jonathan is in DC to help ensure that the voices of students are, in fact, heard. Jonathan is a volunteer peer mentor through that organization because he is so passionate about raising graduation rates and ensuring that all students like himself have the support they need to succeed.

During his senior year, Jonathan has been interning at an immigration law firm, and he is glad to be helping others gain legal status in this country. The irony is not lost on him—and should not be lost on us—that he, himself, could face deportation this year. If Jonathan is not permitted to stay—if Congress does not act and he loses his DACA protection—Connecticut and this Nation will be the losers. Connecticut and this Nation will lose an educated and compassionate public service-minded individual who gives back to his community, to his fellow students, and to our State. He is just one example of the estimated 10,000 like him in Connecticut—and at least 700,000 around the country—who could lose their status in March if Congress fails to act now.

Very simply, we have an obligation to do our job and provide permanent status and a path to citizenship for the Dreamers. The hopeful news is, there is broad bipartisan support for affording the Dreamers protection against mass, draconian deportation. Our challenge is to make sure that what we do here reflects that broad bipartisan support in this Chamber and around the country because America knows it has made a promise. It made a promise to those Dreamers, and great countries do not break promises.

Last night, a Federal district court issued a preliminary injunction ordering DHS—the Department of Homeland Security—to resume accepting renewal applications. Once again, the courts have served as a bulwark for basic rights under rule of law, but this reprieve is no final remedy. We must redouble our determination to protect these young people from draconian, mass deportation—a continuing threat as long as President Trump refuses to

reverse his cruel, unconscionable policy.

A Federal judge has struck down President Trump's order as unconstitutional, but a Dream Act is no less necessary today than it was yesterday. Congress should waste no time in swiftly passing clean legislation—a clean Dream Act to protect these young people.

When DACA was adopted in 2012, it changed the lives of young people like Jonathan. It opened new vistas. It provided Dreamers with the opportunity to get driver's licenses, to attend college, to become productive members of our economy.

Importantly, when DACA was adopted, we made that promise to these young people. We promised that if they came forward and provided the United States of America with information, some of the most personal information any of us have—information about their addresses, employment, dates of birth, their families—we would not use that information against them. They had a place here under DACA. They had rights—moral, if not legal. That promise is now about to be broken.

Great countries keep those promises. The United States is the greatest country in the history of the world. It should not be breaking promises to innocent young men and women who know only this country, who believe in the American dream, who believe in America's promises, who believed those promises when they offered that information and now are relying on the good faith of America. The rescission of DACA threatens to tear apart families, destroy lives, create disarray, and derail futures. We are a country that is better than this rescission. We are a country that keeps promises, and Congress must now act to protect these young people.

DACA protections are set to expire in 2 months. Already, tens of thousands of DACA recipients are estimated to have lost their protection from removal. The longer Congress takes to act, the longer these young people, who were promised the American dream, continue with anguish, with targets on their backs.

Continued waiting means instability to the job market because companies are forced to hire replacements for DACA recipients and train new workers in anticipation of the March deadline. It could mean a massive ejection of qualified, hard-working people vital to our economy.

This kind of massive deportation by plane, by boat, by car, by foot would be unprecedented. We have never seen anything like it before. As I have said repeatedly, this kind of mass, draconian deportation would be a humanitarian nightmare, a betrayal of America.

If Congress fails to pass the Dream Act, we will lose nearly \$500 billion over the next 10 years. Let me repeat. We will lose \$500 billion over the next 10 years. We will lose \$25 billion in

Medicare and Social Security taxes alone. In my home State of Connecticut, we stand to lose \$300 million in economic benefits a year.

Now is the time to abandon the myth that the Dreamers work on the sidelines of American society. They are part of the fabric of this Nation. Their lives are woven into the great tapestry of America. They drive our economy. They give back to our communities.

The administration has thrown a ticking time bomb into their lives, but it is also a ticking time bomb in this Chamber. We have the power to defuse it. In doing so, we can give hope to hundreds of thousands of members of our society and reaffirm the greatness of our country. At stake is nothing less than the character of our country, and that is why there is such bipartisan support for the Dream Act, as evidenced yesterday in the Cabinet Room when the President met with Members of the Congress on both sides of the aisle.

In the Dreamers, we see ourselves. We see relatives who came to this country years ago, many of them as teenagers. My father fled Germany at 17 years old with nothing more than the shirt on his back, speaking no English, knowing virtually no one here. Like him, they believe in America's promise, America's dream, and we should believe in the Dreamers.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to speak about the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Program, known as DACA. That was an Executive order of President Obama's which provided temporary legal status to immigrant students and young people if they registered with the government, paid a fee, and passed a criminal and national security background check. It was for 2 years and renewable.

Young people who are protected by DACA are known by some as Dreamers. They came to the United States as children. They grew up singing the "Star Spangled Banner" and pledging allegiance to our flag. They believed that they were Americans, but legally, they are not. The average DACA recipient came to the United States at the age of 6 and has been here for approximately 20 years.

It was 7 years ago that I sent a letter to President Obama. I was joined in that letter, incidentally, by Senator Dick Lugar, a Republican from Indiana. In that letter, I asked President Obama: Can you find a way to protect these young people?

We passed the Dream Act on the floor of the House. We passed it on the floor of the Senate. We have never managed to pass it in both Chambers in the same year. And the President created the DACA Program.

The DACA Program has been a success. Approximately 800,000 Dreamers have come forward and received DACA protection. Let's allow them to be part of America as teachers, as nurses, as engineers, as first responders, and even serving in the U.S. military.

But on September 5 of this last year, 2017, Attorney General Jeff Sessions announced that the Trump administration was setting out to repeal DACA, to put an end to it. That same day, President Trump called on Congress to come up with a solution to legalize DACA. He challenged us. He said to the U.S. Senate and House: Pass a law. If this is a good idea, pass a law.

It has been more than 4 months since the President issued that challenge. The Republican leadership of Congress has not proposed any legislation to legalize DACA as the President asked.

The deportation clock is ticking for these young people who are protected. Already, 15,000 have lost their DACA status. Beginning on March 5—the deadline that initially was imposed by President Trump—every day for the next 2 years, 1,000 DACA young people will lose their ability to work legally in the United States and will be subject to being deported from this country.

Who are they? Some 20,000 of them are teachers in our schools who would lose the right to work legally and have to leave their classrooms. Nurses would leave their patients. First responders would leave their posts. And 900 soldiers would lose their ability to volunteer to risk their lives for America's future.

This isn't just a looming humanitarian crisis; it is an economic crisis. More than 91 percent of DACA Dreamers are gainfully employed and paying taxes. Many of them are students; yet they are still gainfully employed because they don't qualify for Federal assistance for higher education, so they have to work jobs, sometimes many jobs.

The nonpartisan Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy reports that DACA-eligible individuals contribute an estimated \$2 billion a year in State and local taxes. The Cato Institute, a conservative operation in Washington, estimates that ending DACA and deporting DACA recipients will cost the economy \$60 billion and result in a \$280 billion reduction in economic growth over the next decade.

Poll after poll shows overwhelming bipartisan support for the Dreamers. FOX News found that 79 percent of Americans support a path to citizenship for Dreamers, including 63 percent of Trump voters.

The answer is clear. It was 16 years ago that I first introduced the DREAM Act—bipartisan legislation to give these young people a path to citizen-

ship. In July of last year, I introduced the most recent version with my colleague, Senator LINDSEY GRAHAM of South Carolina. We need to pass the Dream Act, and we need to do it now, before January 19.

Over the years, I have come to the floor to tell the story of the Dreamers. I can give a pretty nice speech here, but these stories tell the story of this issue more than anything I can add to them. These stories show what is at stake when we consider the fate of DACA and the Dream Act.

Today, I want to tell you about this young lady. Her name is Evelyn Valdez-Ward. This is the 107th Dreamer story I have told on the floor. Evelyn was 6 months old when her family brought her from Mexico to Houston, TX. She was quite a good student. She graduated 11th in her high school class of 650. She took all advanced placement classes and was a member of the National Honor Society. She was a member of the color guard in the marching band and regularly volunteered at homeless shelters and animal shelters.

It wasn't until she began to apply for college that she finally learned her immigration status. She wasn't like the other students with whom she had grown up and shared classrooms and experiences. Evelyn is undocumented, but it didn't stop her—she was going to pursue college.

One of her teachers believed in her because she was such a bright student and wrote her a letter of recommendation to go to college. She was accepted into the University of Houston. She received multiple awards while in college, including the Excellence in SI Leadership and Mentoring Award, the American Society of Plant Biology Award for Outstanding Research, and the Outstanding Biology Leadership Award.

The summer after her freshman year, she was offered a great research opportunity through the National Science Foundation. Because of DACA, she was allowed to work legally in the United States, and she was able to pursue this important research. That opportunity was in plant water transport research in California. This is where Evelyn fell in love with ecology and plants.

She graduated magna cum laude in 2016 with a bachelor of science in biology. Today, she is a second-year Ph.D. student at the University of California, Irvine, in the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology. She is researching the effects of climate change on the interactions between plants and soil. Evelyn's dream is to continue her research as a scientist and to become an advocate for strategies to mitigate climate change.

In September, the American Association for the Advancement of Science wrote a letter opposing the White House decision to rescind DACA. Here is what they said:

Many DACA students make significant contributions to the scientific and engineering enterprise in the United States . . . high-

achieving young people in DACA contribute in many ways to our nation. Many are studying to become scientists, engineers, medical doctors and entrepreneurs. Given the administration's decision, we urge Congress to craft legislation that provides long-term protection for these young people who seek to continue their education and contribute to society. . . . Our nation needs an immigration policy that advances U.S. innovation and prosperity, and stays true to foundational American goals that seek contributions to society from all.

The Presiding Officer and I had a unique invitation yesterday. I would just say that as a Member of the House and of the Senate, I have never been invited to a meeting quite like the one we had yesterday with the President in the Cabinet Room of the White House. It was the President's idea. I don't know if it was a spur-of-the-moment idea, but it is one that came together very quickly in a few days.

I think there were almost 26 of us—Democrats, Republicans, House and Senate Members—who were called together by President Trump. I was kind of surprised, but there I was sitting right next to the President of the United States. It was only the third time we had ever spoken. The other two times, incidentally, were about DACA and the Dream Act, as you can probably guess. He invited me to sit next to him as we talked about this issue.

Then he did something that was really unusual. I have been to some meetings with the President in the Cabinet Room with President Obama and President George W. Bush. Usually, what happens is, the cameras come in, the President says a few words, then the staff tells them to leave, and they reluctantly pull out and leave. Yesterday was quite different. The President told the press they could stay, and they did, for almost an hour. The conversations between the President of the United States and Members of Congress were shared with the American people. I had never seen anything quite like it.

I kind of liked it, to be honest with you. I think there was a lot of candor in the room. People were expressing their points of view, and there were many different points of view, but I think I came away from that meeting with more hope than ever that we can do something about DACA and the Dream Act. The President told us he would like to see it done. He added, though, there were things he wanted to be a part of it. One of them dealt with border security, which has been a priority for all of us from the beginning.

We want to establish—both political parties want to establish that we are committed to border security, and we are. How you define it, what it costs, and how it is implemented—some of these things we can define in our agreement; others will be left to future efforts by Congress and the President.

Then he talked about the family unification, and that is an issue that is very delicate. It is one that, as my colleagues can imagine, really hits home.

It is very personal as to whether a member of a family can bring someone they love—some relative in their family—to the United States. Even if they decide to bring them—incidentally, they may be waiting 30 years, in the case of those who are seeking entry into the United States through family visas; 80 years, from China; 160 years from Mexico. Some of these things are unrealistic and will never happen, but to talk about family unification really strikes home with a lot of families.

I want to hear the President's point of view, but I want to deal with this in the most sensitive and sincere way. We don't want to flood the United States with people who are any danger to us, No. 1, or nonproductive citizens, but we certainly want to see families unified.

There is a question about diversity visas. I will not go into it because it is a long story—the creation of this program, where it is today, and where it might be in the future.

Here is what I do believe after yesterday's meeting. I believe President Donald Trump called for that meeting because he wanted to let the American people know he was serious. He wanted to show them he could be a President presiding over a table with 24, 25 Members of Congress from both political parties and tackle a sensitive, delicate, challenging issue. He wants to show the American people he can lead. I want to help him lead if the goal is to make sure DACA and the Dreamers ultimately have their chance to be part of America's future.

I am willing to work in good faith with the President to compromise, whatever it takes, to bring this forward. There are so many lives hanging in the balance, and this is one of them—this wonderful, brilliant young woman who wants to make not only the world a better place but America a better place. She simply wants the chance to be here and be part of America's future. We can give her no less.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

## LEGISLATIVE SESSION

### MORNING BUSINESS

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

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

### REMEMBERING MATT HILLYARD

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, today I wish to pay tribute to a remarkable man whose smile and beautiful soul touched the lives of everyone he met. Matthew Hillyard passed away peacefully at his family home on January 4, 2018, to the grief of not only his family and close friends but to everyone who knew him in the Utah Legislature.

Matt, the loving son of Lyle and Alice Hillyard, was born with Down syndrome. His parents were told he would not live past adolescence; yet he defied the odds and packed a lot of life into 42 years on Earth. Matt never let his disability define him; instead, he shared his special light with everyone who caught his eye.

Matt's father, Lyle, has served as a Utah lawmaker since 1981. The father-and-son duo became a fixture of the Utah Legislature. When things got tense on the senate floor, Matt's innocence stood as a light to other lawmakers, defusing tension and stress during the most heated debates. He made friends with people from all walks of life—be they legislators, security guards, or schoolchildren visiting the capitol. Matt's smile and his big hugs were legendary, and people would often line up to be the recipient of his affection.

I had the privilege of enjoying Matt's hugs and greetings on many occasions, and I never left his side without feeling I had been in the presence of a truly remarkable son of our Heavenly Father. Legislative bodies across our country would be well-served with the steady presence of someone like Matt, a kind soul who gives love and unwavering friendship to all.

I believe there is a special place in Heaven for Matt, who personified the pure love of Christ. He lived a life of sweet innocence, friendship, and love. His warm embrace and sweet smile will be greatly missed by all. It is my greatest hope that his family and all who knew him will find joy and peace in the memories we have shared with this extraordinary man.

### LANDMINES

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, according to Landmine Monitor, which is the world's best source of data on the production, use, export, stockpiling, and clearance of landmines, cluster munitions, and other unexploded ordnance, 2016 was a terrible year for casualties caused by mines and other UXO.

In 2016, the Monitor recorded 8,605 casualties, of which at least 2,089 people were fatalities. That is the highest number since 1999, and it includes the most casualties of children ever recorded. Civilians represented 78 percent of recorded casualties in 2016. There are still 61 countries that are known to be contaminated with landmines.

On the positive side, approximately 232,000 landmines were destroyed in 2016, and 66 square miles of land were

cleared of mines and other UXO. International donors and UXO affected countries increased support in 2016 for UXO clearance programs by \$40 million above the previous year to \$564.5 million. The United States was, like previous years, by far the largest donor.

It is also encouraging that, since March 1, 1999, when the international treaty banning antipersonnel landmines came into force, 163 countries have joined. That is an extraordinary achievement for a treaty that owes its existence to the vision and perseverance of hundreds of advocacy, human rights, arms control, humanitarian organizations, and journalists, around the world, and the leadership of former Canadian Foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy; yet despite this progress and substantial declining in the past few years, the number of innocent people maimed and killed by mines has steadily increased.

There are several explanations for this. Rebel groups like ISIS routinely use landmines and other improvised explosive devices. The wars in Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Yemen have been largely responsible. It may never be possible to completely eradicate the use of landmines by rebel groups, for the weapon is so cheap to manufacture while causing such harm.

But the major powers that have not joined the treaty—the United States, Russia, China, Pakistan, and India—also share the blame. Antipersonnel landmines, which are designed to be triggered indiscriminately by the victim, whether an unsuspecting farmer or an enemy or friendly combatant, have no place in the arsenals of modern militaries. It is hypocrisy to claim on the one hand, as our military does, that it uses every precaution to avoid harming civilians and prides itself on its precision weapons, and on the other hand to insist on the right to use a weapon that is the antithesis of precise and overwhelmingly harms civilians.

I have spoken more times than I can count about the scourge of antipersonnel landmines and the need for the United States to join the Mine Ban Treaty so we are no longer an excuse for other countries not to join. Our military has not used landmines for more than two decades. In fact, U.S. policy now strictly limits the use of antipersonnel mines to the Korean Peninsula, but we do not need them. What we need is the best protection for our troops to maneuver safely through minefields. We should have banned these indiscriminate weapons a long time ago, and we would have if landmines were blowing off the arms and legs of children in this Nation the way they are in others, but we have learned that the Pentagon is not in the habit of giving up weapons, even if they are weapons that deserve to be relegated to the dustbin of history. That decision will only be made by a President who is willing to do what is morally right.

Landmines have been aptly described as weapons of mass destruction in slow