

been in the United States for a period of time, sometimes 14 years, and have established themselves in the community, have good jobs, have started families, pay their taxes, don't commit crime, do things that are important for America—to give them a chance to apply for citizenship. It is known as registry status. The last registry status that we enacted was in 1986, dating back to 1972. We think this should be reenacted and updated so there will be an opportunity for another generation.

Finally, restoring section 245(i) of the Immigration Act, a provision of the immigration law that sensibly allowed people in the United States who were on the verge of gaining their immigration status to remain here while completing the process. This upside down idea has to be changed—that people have to return to their country of birth while they wait for the final months of the INS decision process on becoming a citizen. It is terrible to tear these families apart and to impose this financial burden on them.

I hope we will pass as part of H-1B visa this Latino and Immigrant Fairness Act. It really speaks to what we are all about in the Congress, the House of Representatives and the Senate.

Many people have said they are compassionate in this political campaign. There are many tests of compassion as far as I am concerned. Some of these tests might come down to what you are willing to vote for. I think the test of compassion for thousands of families ensnared in the bureaucratic tangle of the INS is not in hollow campaign promises. The test of compassion for thousands from El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Haiti refugees asking for equal treatment is not in being able to speak a few words of Spanish. The test of compassion for hard-working people in our country who are forced to leave their families to comply with INS requirements is not whether a public official is willing to pose for a picture with people of color.

The test is whether you are willing to actively support legislation that brings real fairness to our immigration laws. That is why I am a cosponsor of this effort for the 6 million immigrants in the U.S. who are not yet citizens, who are only asking for a chance to have their ability to reach out for the American dream, a chance which so many of us have had in the past.

These immigrants add about \$10 billion each year to the U.S. economy and pay at least \$133 billion in taxes, according to a 1998 study. Immigrants pay \$25 billion to \$30 billion more in taxes each year than they receive in public services. Immigrant businesses are a source of substantial economic and fiscal gain for the U.S. citizenry, adding at least another \$29 billion to the total amount of taxes paid.

In a study of real hourly earnings of illegal immigrants between 1988, when they were undocumented, and 1992

when legalized, showed that real hourly earnings increased by 15 percent for men and 21 percent for women. Many of these hard-working people are being exploited because they are not allowed to achieve legal status. The state of the situation on the floor of the Senate is that we are giving speeches instead of offering amendments. It is a sad commentary on this great body that has deliberated some of the most important issues facing America.

Those watching this debate who are witnessing this proceeding in the Senate Chamber must wonder why the Senate isn't filled with Members on both sides of the aisle actively debating the important issues of education and training and reform of our immigration laws. Sadly, this is nothing new. For the past year, this Congress has done little or nothing.

When we see all of the agenda items before us, whether it is education, dealing with health care, a prescription drug benefit under Medicare, the Patients' Bill of Rights for individuals and families to be treated fairly by health insurance companies, this Congress has fallen down time and time again. It is a sad commentary when men and women have been entrusted with the responsibility and the opportunity and have not risen to the challenge. This bill pending today is further evidence that this Congress is not willing to grapple with the important issues that America's families really care about.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to speak for up to 10 minutes as in morning business.

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

(The remarks of Mr. WELLSTONE pertaining to the introduction of S. 3110 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

H-1B VISAS

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I would like to also speak now about the H-1B bill on the floor.

I ask unanimous consent that I have 10 minutes to speak on that legislation.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SMITH of Oregon). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. WELLSTONE. I thank the Chair. I will not speak a long time. But I want to raise a couple of issues that other colleagues have spoken to as well.

I come from a State with a very sophisticated high-tech industry. I come from a State that has an explosion of information technology companies. I come from a State that has a great medical device industry. I come from a State that is leading the way.

I am very sympathetic to the call on the part of business communities to be

able to get more help from skilled labor, including skilled workers from other countries. I am more than sympathetic to what the business community is saying. I certainly believe that immigrants—men and women from other countries who help businesses and work, who stay in our country—make our country a richer and better country.

I am the son of a Jewish immigrant who was born in Ukraine and who fled persecution from Russia. But I also believe that it is a crying shame that we do not have the opportunity—again, this is the greatness of the Senate—to be able to introduce some amendments: an amendment that would focus on education and job training and skill development for Americans who could take some of these jobs; an amendment that deals with telework that is so important to rural America, and so important to rural Minnesota.

I hope there is some way I can get this amendment and this piece of legislation passed, which basically would employ people in rural communities, such as some of the farmers who lost their farms, who have a great work ethic, who want to work, and who want to have a chance to develop their skills for the technology companies that say they need skilled workers. They can telework. They can do it from home or satellite offices. It is a marriage made in heaven. I am hoping to somehow still pass that legislation. I hope it will be an amendment on this bill because, again, it would enable these Americans to have a chance.

My colleague from New Mexico is one of the strongest advocates for Native Americans. This was such an interesting meeting this past Sunday in Minnesota. I give FCC Chairman Kennard a lot of credit for holding a 3-day workshop for people in Indian country who not only don't have access to the Internet but who still don't have phones. They were talking about guest workers and others coming to our country. These were the first Americans. They were saying: we want to be a part of this new economy; we want to have a chance to learn the skills. We want to be wired. We want to have the infrastructure.

I hope there can be an amendment that speaks to the concerns and circumstances of people in Indian country.

Finally, I think the Latino and Immigrant Fairness Act is important for not only the Latino community but also for the Liberian community. I am worried about the thousands of Liberians in Minnesota who at the end of the month maybe will have to leave this country if we don't have some kind of change. This legislation calls for permanent residency status for them. But I am terribly worried they are going to be forced to go back. It would be very dangerous for them and their families. I certainly think there is a powerful, moral, and ethical plan for the Latino and Latina community

in this legislation. We had hoped that would be an amendment. Again, it doesn't look as if we are going to have an opportunity to present this amendment. I don't think that is the Senate at its best.

I will vote for cloture on a bill that I actually think is a good piece of legislation but not without the opportunity for us to consider some of these amendments. They could have time limits where we could try to improve this bill. We can make sure this is good for the business community and good for the people in our country who want to have a chance to be a part of this new economy, as well as bringing in skilled workers from other countries. I think we could do all of it. It could be a win-win-win.

The Senate is at its best when we can bring these amendments to the floor and therefore have an opportunity to represent people in our States and be legislators. But when we are shut down and closed out, then I think Senators have every right to say we can't support this. That is certainly going to be my position.

I yield the floor.

HEALTH CARE LEGISLATION PROVISIONS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 10 minutes.

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

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I note the presence of Senator KENNEDY on the floor. I want to say to Senator KENNEDY and to Senator FRIST—who is not on the floor, but I have seen him personally—that I thank both of them for their marvelous efforts in having included in the health care bill, which was recently reported out, SAMSHA, and about five or six provisions contained in a Domenici-Kennedy bill regarding the needs of those in our country who have serious impairment from mental illness.

We did not expect to get those accomplished this year. We thank them for it. We know that we will have to work together in the future to get them funded. But when we present them to the appropriators, they will understand how important they are.

I thank the Senator.

ENERGY POLICY

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I spoke yesterday for a bit and in the Energy Committee today for a bit about energy policy. I guess I believe so strongly about this issue that I want to speak again perhaps from a little different vantage point.

I would like to talk today about the "invisible priority" that has existed in the United States for practically the last 8 years. The "invisible priority" has been the supply of reliable affordable energy for the American people.

Let me say unequivocally that we have no energy policy because the Interior Department, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Energy Department all have ideological priorities that leave the American consumer of energy out in the cold.

Making sure that Americans have a supply of reliable and affordable energy, and taking actions to move us in that direction, is the "invisible priority." And that is giving the administration the benefit of the doubt.

"Not my job" is the response that the Interior Department of the United States gives to the energy crisis and to America's ever-growing dependence upon foreign oil and, yes, I might say ever-growing dependence upon natural gas. The other alternatives, such as coal, nuclear, or other—"not my job."

It is also the response that the Environmental Protection Agency gives when it takes actions, promulgates rules, and regulations. Their overall record suggests—let me repeat—"not my job," says the Environmental Protection Agency.

The Interior Department, making drilling for oil and natural gas as difficult as possible, says, "Don't bother us."

"It is not my job," says the Department of Interior. The Environmental Protection Agency's job is to get a good environmental policy based on sound science and be the enemy of an ideologically pure environmental policy at the expense of providing energy that we need.

My last observation: In summary, the "Energy Department" is an oxymoron. It is anti-nuclear but pro-windmills. I know many Americans ask: what is the Senator talking about? Nuclear power is 20 percent of America's electricity. At least it was about 6 months ago. We have an Energy Department for this great land with the greatest technology people, scientists and engineers, that is pro-windmills and anti-nuclear.

I will say, parenthetically, as the chairman of the Energy and Water Subcommittee on Appropriations, the last 3 years we put in a tiny bit of money for nuclear energy research and have signed it into law as part of the entire appropriation, and we do have a tiny piece of money to look into the future in terms of nuclear power. It is no longer nothing going on, but it is a little bit.

Boy, do we produce windmills in the United States. The Department of Energy likes renewables. All of us like them. The question is, How will they relieve the United States from the problem we have today? I guess even this administration and even the Vice President, who is running for President, says maybe we have a crisis. Of course we have a crisis. The Federal Government spent \$102 million on solar energy, \$33 million on wind, but only \$36.5 million on nuclear research, which obviously is the cleanest of any approach to producing large quantities of electricity.

Sooner or later, even though we have been kept from doing this by a small vocal minority, even America will look back to its early days of scientific prowess in this area as we wonder how France is doing it with 87 percent of their energy produced by nuclear powerplants.

With all we hear about nuclear power from those opposed, who wouldn't concede that France exists with 87 percent or 85 percent of its energy coming from nuclear powerplants? They do, and their atmosphere is clean. Their ambient air is demonstrably the best of all developed countries because it produces no pollution.

We have an administration that, so long as we had cheap oil, said everything was OK, and we couldn't even seek a place to put the residue from our nuclear powerplants, the waste product. We couldn't even find a place to put it. We got vetoes and objections from the administration. Yet there are countries such as France, Japan, and others that have no difficulty with this problem; it is not a major problem to store spent fuel.

Let me move on to wind versus nuclear. Nuclear produced 200 times more electricity than wind and 2,000 times more than solar. As I indicated, solar research gets three times more funding than nuclear research and development.

The wind towers—we have seen them by the thousands in parts of California and other States, awfully strange looking things. They are not the old windmills that used to grace the western prairie. They have only two prongs. They look strange.

We are finding wind towers kill birds, based on current bird kill rates. Replacing the electric market with wind would kill 4.4 million birds. I am sure nobody expects either of those to happen. However, more eagles were killed in California wind farms than were killed in the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill.

The Energy Department calls wind a renewable energy policy, and the Sierra Club calls wind towers the Cuisinart of the air.

I will discuss the SPR selloff. For almost 8 years, energy has been the "invisible priority" for the U.S. Government led by Bill Clinton and the current Vice President.

Incidentally, the Vice President, who is running for President, had much to do with this "invisible priority;" he was the administration's gatekeeper on almost all matters that dealt with the Environmental Protection Agency and almost all matters that dealt with the Department of the Interior in terms of the production of energy on public land.

Let me talk about the SPR selloff for a minute. Treasury Secretary Summers warned President Clinton that the administration's proposal—now decision—to drive down energy prices by opening the energy reserve would be "a major and substantial policy mistake." He wrote the President, and Chairman