

to act and not to fill space. We need to work together so that all 100 Senators have the opportunity to work within our rules to solve this problem.

I do hope the minority will not put procedural roadblocks in the way of the Senate resolving these issues, so we can put some of our country's best minds to work here on the floor now, this week.

I invite all who have ideas to come and work with us. Together, rather than apart, we can bring the best to bear to solve this problem of illegal immigration so that America is safer, so that America is more secure.

As I said when I introduced the bill we call SABA, I want this coming debate to reflect our history in America as a nation committed to the rule of law and our immigrant inheritance.

I am glad many agree on the need to ensure our debate is in the best keeping of the Senate's traditions. We ought to be honest about the problems we face and the outcomes we seek, within a framework of conversation that does credit to the Senate and the Nation.

This debate, and our effort, is about the American dream and the hope this country holds for so many hard-working people. But it is also an issue about what it means to be a nation. And every nation must keep its citizens safe and keep its borders secure. We should not have to choose between respect for our history and respect for our laws.

With hard work and responsible debate, we can have both. I hope we can conduct this debate with civility and seriousness. I look forward to a thorough and full discussion over the coming days.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

The President pro tempore is recognized.

TRIBUTE TO ERMA BYRD

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, having arrived late Saturday night from Hawaii where we attended the memorial services for Senator INOUE's late wife Maggie, my wife Catherine and I were deeply saddened the next morning to learn that Erma Ora James Byrd had passed away Saturday night. I come to offer our sincere condolences to our good friend Senator BYRD and his family.

As the leader has said, Senator BYRD and Erma were married at the age of 19. In their nearly 69 years of marriage, Erma was a pillar of strength to our friend. She stood by him as he finished

high school and college and attended American University Law School. She was at his side every moment and milestone in his 60 years of public service. As he has often told us, it was Erma who made sure he was polished and well pressed before he left for the Capitol every morning. She took great pride in the work he did for their State and for our Nation.

Erma has been part of our Senate family since the Senator was elected to this body in 1958. Those of us who have served with the Senator have come to know her and love her, and we will deeply miss her.

She was a true southern lady in every sense—intelligent, graceful, and known for her southern hospitality. As Senator BYRD has often mentioned, she never sought the limelight, choosing instead to keep her focus on their family and their home.

Catherine and I were privileged to travel with Erma and Senator BYRD over the years, and my family has always enjoyed being with them. We have looked forward to celebrating Erma's birthday each year. Her annual birthday lunch on Capitol Hill has always included lots of beautiful flowers which Erma loved.

We have also been the recipient of Senator BYRD's good wishes for our family, particularly our children over the years. I remember distinctly the comment that Senator BYRD made on the floor when our first grandchild was born, and he has been very kind to our last child, Lily, who has grown up and known Senator BYRD as one of her "uncles," so to speak. Catherine remembers the many hours Erma spent sewing and knitting on Tuesday mornings for the Senate wives' Red Cross projects. We will not forget how gracious and generous she was when she hosted Members of the Senate and the British Parliament in their home State of West Virginia some years ago. It was a lovely evening up on the mountaintop. Those memories will stay with us forever.

Erma was not only a great partner to Senator BYRD in life, she was a wonderful mother to their two daughters. Senator FRIST has spoken extensively on them. But anyone who wants to understand the depth of the Senator's love for Erma should read the speeches he has come to the floor to deliver each Mother's Day.

In his Mother's Day address in 1997, he said this:

I could not have put in the countless hours required by my office without [Erma's] extreme patience and forbearance, understanding and good humor and support. Erma is the epitome of traditional family values, and my pride in the accomplishments of my daughters and their children is a clear reflection of the values and lessons they learned from their mother and their grandmother.

Mr. President, West Virginia has lost a beloved daughter, and the Senate has lost a dear friend. I think she may have been the longest serving wife of a Senator. Catherine and I extend our deepest sympathies to Senator BYRD, his

family, and all who knew and loved Erma. We are deeply saddened by this news.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic minority whip.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I rise today to commemorate the life and mourn the loss of a remarkable woman. Erma Byrd, the wife of Senator ROBERT C. BYRD, passed away over the weekend after battling a long illness. Her death brings sadness to the entire Senate family. On behalf of the Senate I wish to extend our condolences to Senator BYRD and their two daughters, five grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren.

This remarkable couple had been married for 69 years, and anyone who spent time with Senator BYRD knows how much they loved one another. It is clear they took their vows very seriously, to stand by one another in sickness and health. It is a tribute to our colleague and to his late wife that their devotion and love sustained them together for so many years.

As Senator BYRD has said on the floor of the Senate so many times, Erma Byrd has always been his touchstone. He said:

Her faith in me has never wavered and she took to mothering me as effortlessly as she took to mothering our daughters. In Erma Ora James Byrd runs the blood of a great line of mothers, fierce in their devotion to their families, vigilant in their care, loving in their manner.

In a time of increasing callousness and cynicism, the story of ROBERT and Erma Byrd can only be described as a true lifelong love story. Erma and ROBERT BYRD were married when they were both 19 years old. They met when they were students in grade school in Raleigh County, WV.

One of my favorite stories that Senator BYRD tells is about his courtship of Erma. It turns out he decided that the best way to Erma's heart was with another man's candy. His family wasn't prosperous, but the young ROBERT C. BYRD had a friend whose father owned a candy store, and each day that young man would pass out a few pieces of candy to his friends—such as ROBERT BYRD. As tempting as I am sure it was, ROBERT C. BYRD never ate his candy. Instead, he would present it to his girlfriend Erma.

It worked. Those of us who know the two of them know that little exchange of friendship would lead to a lifetime of commitment. I am sure ROBERT C. BYRD had many fine qualities and Erma noticed those, but she also apparently noticed the candy.

A true coal miner's daughter, Erma Byrd met Presidents and Senators, kings and queens, and the greatest among celebrities, yet. She never sought the limelight. She never lost her sturdy and sensible ways. She never forgot the values that sustained her in West Virginia and throughout all her life.

All of us in political life know that we make increasing demands on our

spouses. We know they have to make great sacrifices because of our choice of public service. We all join in expressing our sadness at the loss of Erma Byrd, and we stand by our colleague Senator BYRD and his family to help them remember, at this time of loss, those good memories of times together. We know those memories will sustain their family.

Erma Byrd was the guiding star in her husband's firmament—the light that sustained him, healed him, and comforted him. I know her remarkable spirit will continue to guide him not only through this day of mourning but throughout the rest of his life.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The Senator from New Hampshire is recognized.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, are we in morning business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. We are in morning business.

Mr. GREGG. I ask unanimous consent to proceed for 15 minutes in morning business.

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

IMMIGRATION REFORM

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, we are about to begin this week a very significant discussion, debate, and, hopefully, passage of some legislation to address what is one of the crucial public policy issues we have as a country, which is the question of how we handle immigration.

We are, obviously, a nation which has been built on immigrants. Every one of us in this country, except for Native Americans, comes from a family that came from somewhere else and immigrated to this country. It is a part of our heritage of which we are most proud, the fact we have been able to assimilate cultures from around the world and bring them to the United States and create America. We should take pride in something that sets an example for the rest of the world to show that people can gather and can live together and can be productive and can produce a nation founded on democracy, freedom, liberty, individual rights, and heritage—heritage which has built a matrix of strength for us as a nation as we bring together peoples from different cultures and we form an America.

E Pluribus Unum, the line above the Presiding Officer of the Senate, says it so well: From many, one. We are, therefore, a nation which needs to have an immigration policy which understands that, which, first and foremost, appreciates and continues to reward the idea that there are people from

around this world who wish to come to America to participate in this country and to make us a more productive place in which to raise their children and to assist us as a nation in being stronger economically, socially, and from a standpoint of inner strength we obtain from having so many different people participate in our country. We always want to be that beacon, that light upon the hill that draws the world to us. As long as people want to come to America, we know we are doing something right, and we should take great pride in it.

We continue to be a place where people want to come and, as a result, we do have issues of how we deal with immigration. But most importantly, as we move down this road, we have to recognize it is critical that we not do anything which tarnishes or chills or in any way undermines that great tradition of America, which is that we reach out our arms to people who wish to come here and be productive and participate in our way of life.

However, unfortunately, over the last few decades, and especially in an accelerated way as we moved through the nineties and moved into this first decade of 2000, we have seen that a large number of people are coming into our Nation illegally. They are not following the course which is available to become an American citizen legally—to immigrate here, to take advantage of our system, and to build on the opportunities that are here but to do it legally. That has become a problem for us. It is a problem, obviously, from the standpoint that it violates our laws. It is also a problem for us in the post-9/11 world where we need to know who is coming into this Nation because of the threat of terrorist acts against us.

For the most part, these people who come to our country have come here for purposes which are good and decent. They want to have a better life. They want to be able to earn a better living. They want to be able to give their families more than they had in the nation they left. That is a well-intentioned purpose. But they have still come here illegally, and we need to address the issue of how we deal with that situation.

This question has been divided into basically two functions. First is how we physically control the borders of our Nation and make sure those borders are reasonably secure so that we have a decent idea of who is coming across those borders and why they are coming into our Nation.

The second question is how we deal with people who have come here to work, to perform tasks which are available to them, people who may already be here illegally, but people who still want to come here and do it in a way that is within the law. And that, of course, involves the debate over a guest worker program.

On the first issue, I have had a fair amount of interest and involvement because I chair the subcommittee that

has jurisdiction over this question, the Subcommittee on Homeland Security. The question of whether our borders are secure is something which, since I have taken over as chairman of this subcommittee, has been all consuming over the last 2 years I have had the good fortune of chairing this subcommittee of the Appropriations Committee. It is pretty obvious to any American that our borders are not secure, that we do not know who is coming in. We certainly don't know who is leaving. We don't know what is coming in, and we don't know, to a large degree, what is going out.

But on the issue of movement of people, we are attempting to address that question. We have over the last 2 years significantly increased the resources going into border security. We have increased the number of Border Patrol agents by almost 2,000. We have increased the number of beds which are available—what is known as detention beds—also by a significant number. We have increased resources flowing in to the border security area, especially in the area of technology capability, trying to set up a system called US-VISIT which will allow us to effectively track who is coming into our country on a real-time basis through using fingerprints and our databases on fingerprints. We have made progress, but we are nowhere near solving the problem.

I wanted to talk briefly about that specific issue and then a little bit about the bigger issue of the guest worker program and how you become an American citizen.

As the Judiciary Committee wrestles with this problem of border security, it is important that we do it the right way, that we think about it in terms of what is going to get the best results versus what is going to get the best press releases.

To begin with, we do not need a wall across our southern border. We don't need it from the standpoint of being able to know who is coming across the border, we don't need it from the standpoint of being good neighbors, and we do not need it from the standpoint of presenting the national culture. Doing that would be the exact opposite of what we should do as a Nation.

There may be sections, clearly, where some sort of fencing or wall will be necessary, sections where the commingling of the border is so close that it is very difficult to control that section without some sort of a definable event which forces people who wish to come across the border through a controlled point, but to run a wall the length of the border as has been suggested by some of our colleagues, especially in the other body, is just anathema to the concept of what America stands for. We want to continue to be a society which says we are open, that we are a place where people are encouraged to come, and that we are a place that reaches out to people who wish to be productive and come here to be productive