

memories that much sweeter and the love all the more enduring.

As somebody who is fortunate enough myself to be married to a wonderful woman for the past 14 years, I can only imagine the difficult transition this causes for our dear colleague from the State of West Virginia, but I pray that the Byrd family will find strength in this difficult time. I pray that Erma may now rest in eternal peace.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I join many of my colleagues who have been speaking today and yesterday extending their heartfelt sympathy to Senator ROBERT BYRD of West Virginia for the loss of the diamond of his life, Erma. She truly was the light of his life. On many occasions, I have eased over into the chair next to Senator BYRD, and we have talked about how blessed we are with our two wives. He knows my wife Tricia and often asks about her, typically the courtesy that Senator BYRD extends to all of us.

I have asked him about Erma and how she was doing. We talked a lot about what a difference they have made in our lives. There is no question that he is going to miss her greatly, as will all of the family, I know. To all of them, we extend our heartfelt sympathies. We know the children and grandchildren are with Senator BYRD now and with Mrs. Byrd.

I remember an occasion on a Friday afternoon standing here when Senator BYRD asked me to yield. You are not always sure what Senator BYRD is asking you to yield for because it could be that you violated some rule of the Senate. But he asked if I would yield so that he could speak on the beauty of the grandson. I had just had my first grandchild, and it happened to be a grandson. He spoke so beautifully, so eloquently, totally from memory, and ended with a beautiful quote of what a grandson means to a grandfather. I was moved by it, literally to tears. And of course, when it came out in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, I had it framed. It hangs on the wall of my son's home in Paris, KY. Obviously, he doesn't think much of it right now, doesn't fully appreciate it. But some day, he will read that, and I know he will think of his grandfather and where he has served.

I tell that story to remind my colleagues about the kind of man Senator BYRD is. He can be a tough adversary. He can cause leaders to have a lot of heartburn. I have had it a couple of times when I was standing here in this place. But it is because he reveres the institution, because he does care about us as individual men and women. He knows about every one of us. He knows about our families. And not only does he love the institution, but he loves knowledge and great history and poetry.

Many have quoted from his favorite poem in the last couple of days. I don't have a poem. I don't have some great saying from memory. I only rise to join all the others in saying how much I ad-

mire and appreciate this Senator who is an institution in his own right in this body. I know how much he is suffering right now.

Sometimes we get so busy these days in this institution, trying to make it move forward or trying to keep up with the mail and the constituents and the flying back and forth, we really need a few who have very firm rudders and their sails set in the right direction for the best interests of the country. I know that is true of Senator BYRD.

Again, I extend my best wishes to him. When he returns, I will join all my colleagues in paying my respects to him and my appreciation for the example he set for himself and Erma, his wife of 69 years.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I rise to pay tribute to Erma Ora Byrd, the wife of our esteemed colleague, ROBERT C. BYRD of West Virginia. It has always warmed my heart to watch the Senator from West Virginia speak of his wife in conversation, of which we have had many, or as he has stood on this Senate floor. He has mentioned her name, and whenever he mentioned it, he immediately got this glow on his face in reverence to his friend, his wife, his love of nearly seven decades.

Love of this magnitude should be celebrated. And their marriage of 69 years should be celebrated. As a matter of fact, recently I talked to Senator BYRD about his marriage, and he said: I just hope that we can celebrate 70 years of marriage. Well, they did not get to 70 years. They got to 69, plus. And although her body failed her this past weekend, and their time together on this Earth ended, the love they shared—Senator BYRD and Erma—that love is timeless and that love is forever.

ROBERT BYRD is known throughout the country for his intellect and his patriotism, for his devotion to this country, to the State of West Virginia, his reverence for the Constitution, and his reverence for the Senate. But as famous as he is, and as eloquent as he is, and as far as he has gone in this Senate—he has been the leader here; he has been the chairman of committees here—he never would fail to share the credit for his many accomplishments with his wife, who inspired him and humbled him.

Erma never sought the spotlight, nor, according to ROBERT, would she allow her husband to bask in it for any longer than absolutely necessary. She strived to be a model of duty and service—service to one's family and service to one's country.

Erma Byrd has always been by her husband's side, ever since they were married, both of them at the age of 19. Imagine: the age of 19. Their love never waned. It is as strong now as it was on the very day they said their wedding vows. And I would posit that it has actually grown deeper, far deeper. That love is a bond that will never be broken, and even in her death her spirit will remain by his side to guide him on.

Erma had been struggling with illness for the past several years. God ended her battle, allowing her to be at rest. Although Erma's struggle with illness is over, and the deep pain that ROBERT felt as he watched her struggle with this illness is over, we should all know that he needs us now, his friends and his colleagues. He needs us to be his friend as he grieves for the loss of his soulmate.

Although we mourn her loss, we must not forget to also celebrate the rich, full life she made with her husband, her children, and her grandchildren.

The good Senator from West Virginia has always had a penchant for poetry, especially when it was used to help him describe Erma. So in closing, I will quote a poem by Charles Jeffreys that the Senator himself has used to describe his marriage to Erma:

We have lived and loved together
Through many changing years;
We have shared each other's gladness
And wept each other's tears;
I have known ne'er a sorrow
That was long unsoothed by thee;
For thy smiles can make a summer
Where darkness else would be.

Like the leaves that fall around us
In autumn's fading hours,
Are the traitor's smiles, that darken,
When the cloud of sorrow lowers;
And though many such we've known, love,
Too prone, alas, to range,
We both can speak of one love
Which time can never change.

We have lived and loved together
Through many changing years,
We have shared each other's gladness
And wept each other's tears.
And let us hope the future,
As the past has been will be:
I will share with thee my sorrows,
And thou thy joys with me.

When ROBERT BYRD spoke these words, he meant them deeply in his soul toward his one love. And so my husband joins me, and our family joins me, and I know all of our colleagues feel this way: We offer our thoughts and prayers to our dear friend Senator BYRD, to his family, and to the good people of West Virginia during this difficult time. I know my friend ROBERT will dedicate his future in the Senate not only to the people of West Virginia, whom he serves so proudly, but to his incomparable soulmate who so inspired him.

Thank you very much, Mr. President. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

IMMIGRATION

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, yesterday in the Senate Judiciary Committee, there was a historic vote, a

vote that relates to an issue America has grappled with almost from the beginning. That is the issue of immigration. It is interesting as we reflect on our history that we are a nation of immigrants. But for the Native Americans who were here on our shores when the first White men arrived, we have all come to this country either directly or indirectly through our parents, grandparents, or previous generations. It is that immigration which has made America such a unique and diverse place. We take great pride in our roots, where we came from, and even greater pride in where we have planted those roots in American soil. That is a fact of life in America. It brings a special quality to this country.

Think of the people who have decided to come to our shores, men and women who walked away from a comfortable life in a familiar place with a familiar church, with family, a culture, a language, to embark on a journey to a place they had never seen before, to come to a country where they could not speak the language, to live in a place where they were not certain what their future would hold. It takes an extraordinary person to make that leap of faith into the future. It takes an extraordinary family to decide that their future is going to be here in a new place.

The story I have described has been repeated millions of times. The people who had the courage to step forward and come here have brought a special quality to this country, a quality we admire—creativity, a love of freedom, entrepreneurship, things that make America a much different place in the world, an America which we are all proud to call home.

An interesting thing happened in the course of history. Those who came first would look at the ships coming in and say: No, not more of those people. That is part of it, too—an intolerance for immigration even as we know our own birthright included an immigrant experience.

Now we are involved in a national debate about some 11 or 12 million in our midst who are not here with proper documentation, not having followed the proper legal process. We have been asked to reflect on that. Do we need them? Are they an important part of America?

They are a very important part, not just for the spirit they bring but for what they do each day. These are the men and women who probably cooked your breakfast, probably cleared the table after you finished, washed the dishes in the kitchen. These are the people who each day clean your hotel room. They are the ones who are watching your children at daycare. They are taking care of your aging parent at a nursing home at this moment. They make sure that when you go to the golf course the putting green is perfect. They stand in line many times for 8 hours or more in dull, tough jobs, in damp cold, experience watching

chicken carcasses and beef carcasses go by so you can enjoy a barbecue over the weekend. They take jobs many people won't take. That is the immigrant story.

They volunteer to serve our country. Some 60,000 of them are now in the U.S. military, not legal citizens—here legally but not citizens—willing to put on that uniform, take an oath of loyalty to the United States, and literally risk their lives for you and for me. Some of them die in the process. We have this kind of cruel wrinkle in the law that if you die in service to America, we will make you a citizen after you die. Their grieving parents receive folded American flags in gratitude from a nation that is so thankful for their heroism.

Now they have come forward out of the shadows, hundreds of thousands of them across America, protesting a bill that passed the House of Representatives which would make a criminal out of every single one of them, not just ordinary criminals but aggravated felons. The House bill, the SENSENBRENNER bill which passed, says that the 11 or 12 million in America who are undocumented would be branded as aggravated felons, the same type of criminal penalty which we save for the worst—armed robbers and rapists. That is what the House bill would do. That is what they would brand these people, the same people who sit next to us in church, whose kids go to school with our kids, the same people we see every day though we may not speak to them. That bill is cruel. That bill is wrong.

Yesterday, the Senate Judiciary Committee and the Senate on a bipartisan basis decided that there was a better way. By a 12-to-6 vote, the Senate Judiciary Committee said the following: First, if we are going to be a secure America, we need to know who lives here. We need to know the names and addresses and workplaces of all the people in America, particularly the 11 or 12 million undocumented. So for security purposes, we moved forward with this bill to identify who these people are, where they live, where they are from, and to make certain that any single one of them who is a threat to America would be removed and has to leave. But we went further. We said: We need to toughen the borders, too. Let's make sure we enforce the laws that are there. America can't absorb every single person who wants to come here. That is physically impossible. So we need better enforcement at the borders, and we need enforcement when it comes to employment. If we say to employers: We need to know who is working for you, we need to know if, in fact, they are American citizens, and we will enforce the law, it is going to tighten the system.

The second thing we did was essential. We said to the people who are here: We are going to give you a chance, a chance to become legal in the eyes of America. But it won't be easy. It will take you a long time. It will

take you more than 10 years. During that 10-year period, you will have to demonstrate to us that you were, in fact, a person of good moral standing, that you don't have a criminal record, that you were working, you were paying your taxes, you were learning English, and you will pay a fine for having violated the law in coming to this country. At the end of that period, we will decide if you met these strict qualifications and whether you can get on to a 5- or 6-year path to finally become an American citizen.

It is not an easy road. Some will fall along the wayside. Some will make it. Those who make it will add something to America. They will show that their determination to leave a place and come here has been matched by the determination to stay here and make this a better country.

When I walk through the streets of Chicago—I love that city, the diversity. When you get in a taxicab in Chicago, you will meet the world. Every driver is from country after country, people who come here—doctors, scientists, and others who are driving cabs and praying they might become part of America. It reminds me of my own roots, and my mother, who came from Lithuania. In 1911, when she arrived, could she have ever dreamed that one day her youngest son would be sworn in as the 47th Senator from the State of Illinois? It was a dream she never could have had, but it came true when she saw me sworn in before she passed away. In my office is her naturalization certificate behind my desk—a reminder of who I am and where I am from and, quite honestly, where we are all from.

Yesterday, with the bill passed on a bipartisan vote, which now will come to the floor of the Senate, we have an opportunity to do something that is not only historic and fair but right, to make America a more secure place, make certain there is fairness, and to make certain, as the President said, that we maintain not only the lawful tradition in America but the welcoming tradition in America. We can celebrate our diversity, knowing that it makes us different than so many other countries—countries that are now torn by sectarian strife and ethnic violence. Thank God that in the United States, because there are so many of us from so many different places, we have largely avoided that kind of confrontation.

I hope we will consider this bill on a bipartisan basis. We will need to tighten up some aspects and change a few words here and there. But we can never go how the House of Representatives went, with the Sensenbrenner bill; it is a punitive bill, a mean-spirited bill, not in the best tradition of America. We can do better. It criminalizes 11 million or 12 million Americans. Calling them aggravated felons is no way to embark on this road to a more united America.

That law, as it passed the House, will never be enforced. We know that. But

it is a shadow over the lives of so many millions—not just those here without documentation, but those who would reach out to help them, such as the priest who counsels the mother to stay with her children, even though she may not have the right legal documents or the person at the domestic violence shelter who tells a mother and her battered children to stay in this place; it is a safe and secure place for you; stay here until that abusive, drunken husband of yours is arrested and the kids are safe again.

Under the bill passed by the House of Representatives, the people I have described would be branded not just as criminals but as felons. That is an unfortunate approach and one that doesn't reflect the values of this country. That is an approach which would drive more people into the shadows.

The Democrats support a comprehensive approach, one that includes security and also includes a path to legalization—a tough, long path, with many requirements that some will not finish. But those who do finish will make a better America. We have to go beyond enforcement. We have a reasonable and realistic approach to address the undocumented who live among us. We would give them an opportunity, and that is the best America can offer to anybody. By giving them this opportunity, we encourage them to come forward and register and to be part of the legal rolls in America. That way, we know who is living here, which enhances our national security. This is also true to American values. It is rewarding immigrants who work hard and play by the rules.

We face extraordinary security challenges in America today. We have a war that now has claimed over 2,300 of our best and bravest—sons and daughters of families across America, from Illinois and every State in the union. Today, 138,000 American troops stand risking their lives for us in Iraq and another 20,000-plus in Afghanistan. We owe them not only our gratitude and our admiration, but we owe them a plan to come home.

When I take a look at the situation in Iraq, it deteriorates each day and moves inexorably toward a civil war, which we pray will never happen, and I wonder how this will end. For some of us who voted against the resolution which brought us into this war, we argued at the time that it is a lot easier to get into a war than to get out of one. We argued that we needed more allies to stand with us so that it would not be just American soldiers. We argued that more nations should be with us in this effort so we would not be subsidizing a war, which now costs us \$2 billion a week.

Unfortunately, this administration moved forward, anyway. They went into a war without enough troops, without enough body armor, without enough protection on the humvees, and without the necessary defensive equipment on helicopters. They sent the

troops into battle and, sadly, so many have not come home. Many have come home with broken and battered bodies.

We have an obligation now to say to the Iraqis: We have helped you. We have removed your dictator. We have given you a chance to govern yourself, given you a chance for free elections, and we have given you a chance for your future. But now it is your responsibility. Govern your own nation; bring it together and defend your own people.

This administration promised us for years that, given enough time, the Iraqi Army and the police force would replace our troops. How much longer must we wait? How much longer must we wait until these Iraqis will stand and fight for their own future and their own country? I will believe this administration has a plan that works when the first American soldier comes home, replaced by an Iraqi soldier standing guard there in his own country. We are still waiting for that day. I hope it will come soon.

When President Bush said last week that perhaps we will have to wait until we have another President, 2½ years from now, my heart sank. Two and a half more years of this? Two and a half more years of losing American lives and watching these soldiers come back with visible scars?

We have to do better than that. Real security in America means a real plan to bring this Iraqi war to an end. I urge this administration to work toward that day and toward that plan, on a bipartisan basis, and to work toward homeland security that makes certain we are safe.

The General Accounting Office reported yesterday there is the ability to bring across our border enough fissile material to make a dirty bomb, despite our border security. There is a lot more we need to do to make America safe, and a stronger America begins at home.

This administration needs to do more when it comes to port security—not turn it over to some foreign government to manage five major ports.

This administration needs to do more when it comes to security at our chemical plants and nuclear plants.

This administration needs to do more when it comes to protecting us and making sure our first responders have what they need. I was in Marion, IL, at the fire department meeting with Chief Rinella, talking about the cuts in the Bush budget that will reduce the funds available to that department and to police departments, which we will count on if we ever have a major challenge in the United States. Real security begins at home, with an administration committed to security.

I urge my colleagues to join, on a bipartisan basis, to restore the funds that were cut in the Bush budget.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Illinois is recognized.

Mr. OBAMA. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak after Sen-

ator SANTORUM for approximately 10 minutes.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Pennsylvania is recognized.

IRAQ'S FIGHT FOR ITS FREEDOM

Mr. SANTORUM. Mr. President, I have to respond to my colleague from Illinois, who suggested that somehow the Iraqis are not standing up and fighting for the freedom of their country and the comment, "How much longer do we have to wait?"

Ask the Iraqi families of the men who were beheaded—30 of them most recently—whether they are waiting for the Iraqis to step forward and sacrifice for their country. Ask the Iraqis who are in the military who are dying today, sacrificing for the freedom of their country, whether they are waiting. The people of Iraq are stepping forward and fighting for their country. We are helping them do that. It is the clear intention of our policy in Iraq to hand over the responsibility, and it is happening.

I find it almost remarkable that here now, 3 years into this conflict, where we are trying to transform an entire society, that the level of patience for this very difficult process, given all the progress made and all the elections that have been held and the Constitution drafted—I think in all but four of the provinces, there is very little terrorist activity, or insurgent activity, or whatever you want to call it. There is a concentration in a few provinces where there are problems.

But I met with people from Mosul yesterday—elected officials—who came here and talked about the dramatic improvements that are going on in that area, and the lack of any kind of al-Qaida operations and terrorist operations in that area, saying that life is dramatically advancing. We don't hear talk about that. We hear talk about the problem spots, and that is legitimate. But the idea that the Iraqis are not fighting for their country, that they are not stepping forward—as we see day in and day out that they are conducting missions and they are eliminating the terrorist threat in Iraq—I think it is almost incredible. I don't know how you can read the news and suggest that the Iraqis are not stepping forward to defend their country and fight for their freedom.

Also, coming back to the issue of patience, I thank God sometimes that some of the elected officials who are here today were not around in 1777, 1778, and 1779. We would still be singing "God save the queen," not "hail to the chief." It took us 11 years to put a democracy together, in circumstances that I suggest were far less difficult, in a neighborhood that was far less problematic than the neighborhood Iraq happens to be situated in. So the idea that we have lost our patience in a