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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. STEVENS).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Lord, we wait for You and in Your Word do we place our hope. Help us never to run ahead of You. Quiet our doubts and calm our fears as You remind us that many things are better left to You.

Challenge our lawmakers today to put their trust and hope in You. Encourage them with the fact that You know their works and their motives. Help them to know that You will guide them with Your providence if they will only seek Your will in all things.

Open all of our eyes to Your presence among us in the kind deeds and generous acts that we encounter along life's journey. Let Your grace transform us and Your mercy keep us on the path of faithfulness.

We pray in Your wonderful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The PRESIDENT pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to a period of morning business for up to 1 hour, with the first 30 minutes under the control of the Demo-

cratic leader or his designee and the remaining 30 minutes under the control of the majority leader or his designee.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, today we begin with a 60-minute period for morning business, with that time equally divided. Following morning business, we will return to the debate on S. 2454, the border security bill. The consent agreement from yesterday provides that the time until 12 noon be equally divided for debate only.

At noon, Chairman SPECTER will be here to offer an amendment. There will then be a period for general debate until 5 p.m. this afternoon.

Today Senators should have the opportunity to offer amendments, and I hope we can debate and vote on some of those amendments. Today is only Thursday, and we will be working today and tomorrow on this bill, and I think we can make good progress over the course of this week. I encourage Members to get their amendments ready and contact the managers when they are prepared to get into a lineup to offer their amendments.

We expect votes today on the border security bill, and I will be working with the Democratic leader and the two bill managers to set up a vote as early as possible this afternoon.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Democratic leader is recognized.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, has the Chair announced morning business?

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Chair has announced morning business.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the first 20 minutes would be yielded to the Senator from Colorado, Mr. SALAZAR.

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

Mr. REID. I see the Senator from Louisiana. It is my understanding she and Senator KERRY need 10 minutes.

How much time does the Senator from Louisiana need?

Ms. LANDRIEU. Ten minutes.

Mr. REID. OK. So 20 minutes to Senator SALAZAR and 10 minutes to Senator LANDRIEU.

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

The Senator from Colorado.

IMMIGRATION REFORM

Mr. SALAZAR. Mr. President, I rise this morning to speak in support of the immigration reform bill which has been produced out of our Judiciary Committee. I wish to first congratulate Senator SPECTER and Senator LEAHY for their leadership in that effort in the Judiciary Committee. I also wish to congratulate all of my colleagues, Republicans and Democrats, who have come together in support of this historic measure that is now before the Senate.

I believe this measure truly represents the kind of bipartisan spirit that leads to the best policy creation for our country. I am also proud of the eight sponsors of the McCain-Kennedy bill, including Senator MCCAIN and Senator GRAHAM, Senator BROWNBACK, Senator MARTINEZ, Senator KENNEDY, Senator LIEBERMAN, and Senator OBAMA, who came together and have led part of the effort to make sure we address comprehensive immigration reform this year.

I believe these bipartisan success stories establish the kind of civility we need to have in the Senate to be able to address the major issues that affect our

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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country. In reality, what the Judiciary Committee proposal does is it addresses the real problem we currently are facing in our country. We are facing a reality of broken borders and lawlessness at our borders as well as the interior with regard to immigration issues. What the Judiciary Committee bill does is it takes that reality of broken borders and lawlessness and creates a system that addresses our national security by strengthening our borders.

It also takes that system and reality of broken borders and lawlessness and says we can do a better job in securing our interior by enforcing our immigration laws. It also takes that system of broken borders and lawlessness and it creates a workable system of immigration that addresses both the economic and human realities of immigration in our Nation.

Finally, it takes that system of broken borders and lawlessness and tackles head on the horrible injustice that occurs with human trafficking that we see in our immigration problems of today.

As the Senate works to perfect and strengthen this legislation, it is my hope we will build upon the committee's work. I believe if we continue in a bipartisan manner, our final work product will be a comprehensive immigration reform law that protects our borders and addresses the human and economic realities within our homeland.

I believe comprehensive immigration reform legislation must be tough, must be fair, and must be practical. It must be tough, and it must be fair, and it must be practical. I believe the Judiciary Committee proposal is, in fact, tough, fair, and practical.

I know I am not alone in supporting this type of approach. Just last week, President Bush met with Americans from the business, faith, agriculture, and civil rights communities across our country. In the group in that meeting there were two people from Colorado who attended: Cindy Clark from The Broadmoor in Colorado Springs and Archbishop Charles Chaput, the archbishop of Denver. I commend both Ms. Clark and the archbishop for voicing the concerns of Coloradans with the President that we need to have a comprehensive immigration reform package. I have also spoken with President Bush and members of his Cabinet on a number of different occasions in the last year about the need for comprehensive immigration reform.

I share President Bush's belief, as he says—and I quote—

Ours is a nation of law and ours is a nation of immigrants, we believe that we can have rational, important immigration policy that's based upon law and reflects our deep desire to be a compassionate and decent nation.

Immigration is, indeed, a vital component of our Nation's history. Our country has always been seen as a land of opportunity for immigrants who are willing to work hard for a chance at

achieving the American dream for themselves and for their families.

Without the important contributions immigrants have made to our country, the United States would not exist as we know it today.

In my home State of Colorado, the first nonnatives to explore our lands were the Spanish. They arrived nearly 500 years ago and left their mark on the American Southwest and Colorado. Their presence is reflected today in the names of my State and its cities, its rivers, its mountains, and even in the food we eat.

More recently, immigrants came to Colorado to farm and ranch, to mine our State's abundant natural resources, to build the railroads and forge steel. They came, and continue to come, out of desperation, and also out of hope—the hope of America.

In a recent newspaper column, a former councilman, Bill Burnett, of the little Colorado town of Minturn—an old mining town—summed up the sentiments of many people in my State. He said:

Without immigrants, we never would've built this place.

The sentiment is echoed by many across this great country of ours.

It can also be heard through the words of the great poem "The Mew Colossus," inscribed at the foot of the Statue of Liberty. That poem says:

Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!

Our country has always been a beacon of hope.

My own family migrated to Colorado in the 1850s, almost 20 years before Colorado became a State. We came from northern New Mexico, from a city named Santa Fe, which we had helped found over 250 years earlier. That was before Plymouth Rock and James Town. We pioneered the settlement of Colorado's San Luis Valley, where we have farmed the same land for almost 150 years.

In truth, every one of us in Congress and, indeed, virtually every person in America has a story to tell of their immigrant roots. That is because we are a nation of immigrants, a historical fact that has made us the wonder, the hope, and the envy of the world for centuries.

But there is no question today that our immigration laws are not working. We have broken borders in America today, and we must fix the problem for the sake of the national security of America.

The level of illegal immigration on our borders is unacceptable and has to change. Our borders are undermanned and overwhelmed. We must do far better in getting control of our borders.

In the past decade alone, we have seen the number of undocumented immigrants in our country rise from 4 million to some 12 million in 2006.

Enforcement of our immigration laws has certainly not kept pace with the flow of both legal and illegal immigration, and the laws that deal with those who cross the border are enforced only rarely so that in reality many believe enforcement of the laws simply does not exist.

In this post 9/11 era, it is critical we get control of our borders—both the northern border with Canada as well as the southern border with Mexico—so we can protect our country from outside threats that would do harm to Americans and punish those who exploit the hopes of foreign workers who come here through human trafficking.

We must solve our Nation's illegal immigration problems as a matter of national security.

To that end, the first priority of immigration reform must be to provide for adequate and sensible border security and a renewed Federal commitment to enforcing our Nation's immigration laws. The Judiciary Committee bill contains many provisions that will strengthen enforcement both at the border and within our country. It contains more than 30 provisions that will ensure the security of our borders.

Among the numerous provisions it includes, it doubles the number of Border Patrol agents. It adds 12,000 new agents over the next 5 years. It doubles interior enforcement. It does so by adding 1,000 investigators per year over the next 5 years. It provides additional border fences at specific vulnerable sections across the border. It increases resources to expand the ability of Federal agents to retrieve aliens detained by local police. And there are numerous other enforcement provisions contained within the bill.

Some in our country would have preferred that we wall off our country along our southern border. To the proponents of building that wall, I ask them: What would Ronald Reagan have said about that wall? We should not repeat the example of the Berlin Wall, one of the most shameful symbols of antifreedom and oppression ever designed by man, designed solely to keep people from hope and opportunity and freedom. It was President Reagan who told the Soviet leader: Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall. We must not build those walls around our country.

Some also want to make criminals out of local parish priests who counsel their immigrant parishioners and soup-kitchen workers who provide a warm meal to the hungry. That, too, is wrong, to criminalize these people who take on humanitarian endeavors. I am pleased that the Judiciary Committee bill does not call for the construction of a massive wall along the border and does not criminalize the millions of Americans who come into contact with undocumented workers.

These security and enforcement efforts alone cannot be our sole means to confront this challenge. In the past,

Congress has focused almost exclusively on only this component of border security. We have tripled the number of Border Patrol agents who sometimes spend eight times as many hours patrolling the border. Yet during the same time, our borders have continued to be out of control.

The reality is, regardless of how much money we dedicate to border and interior enforcement, there are economic forces that spur immigration. Our country's current workforce is continuing to age, and our newer workers have become more educated and less interested in taking the important jobs our economy keeps creating. The Judiciary Committee bill addresses this issue.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, if the Senator will yield for a question, I know he has a limited period of time. Obviously, in describing his own background and that of his family—some 160 years in Colorado, 250 years in Santa Fe—he knows the issues. He brings a special dimension to the debate. What I am hearing from the Senator is that what is really necessary is a comprehensive approach, that the Senator is a strong believer that we have to do something about our borders to make sure they are going to be the best in terms of technology so we can have realistic laws, but that we also have to understand how we are going to include those undocumented here in the United States in a way which is going to be consistent with our traditions and will also be responsible.

Many have called that adjustment status amnesty. I reject that. I ask the Senator if he doesn't agree with me that amnesty means forgiveness. It means pardon. That is not what the underlying legislation is. The underlying legislation says you have to go to the back of the line. You have to wait until everyone who is in line gets the opportunity to come here. You have to work hard, play by the rules, pay your taxes, and pay a fine. Then you can earn your way to the possibility of citizenship, if that is what you desire. If you don't desire that, you don't have to. Does the Senator agree with me that is a reasonable way we ought to think about that, at least when we are trying to recognize that some 11 million undocumented people are here, who work hard and play by the rules? Eighty thousand of them are permanent residents who are serving in the Armed Forces in Iraq and Afghanistan. Should they not be able to earn the possibility of citizenship?

Mr. SALAZAR. I agree with my colleague and friend from Massachusetts. As a person who has worked with law enforcement for a good part of my life as attorney general of my State, I know what amnesty is. I believe those who characterize this bill as amnesty are absolutely wrong. In the proposal of the Judiciary Committee, we have said that you go to the back of the line. What we have said is that you pay

a very substantial fine. That, in my view, with the other provisions in the bill, takes it completely out of the context of any kind of amnesty program we have ever seen.

I agree with my colleague from Massachusetts that at the end of the day, what we are dealing with is the reality of creating a stronger border but then addressing the reality within our Nation in a way that is workable. For those who would simply want to ignore the reality of the 11 to 12 million undocumented workers who are in the shadows of America today, we are simply not going to create a workable system of immigration reform in our country.

That is why I join my colleague from Massachusetts in pushing as hard as I can to get the Judiciary bill passed.

Mr. KENNEDY. I thank the Senator. He has explained the underlying bill accurately and correctly. The Senator understands that any of those individuals attempting to adjust their status over an 11-year period, if they get in trouble with the law, they are subject to deportation. They have to play by the rules, pay their taxes, work in the community, and be good citizens, learning English.

I am always impressed by the fact that under the Pew poll, it says that 98 percent of undocumented males are working today in the United States. These are workers making our economy stronger and providing for their families. If they in any way violate the law, they are subject to all of the legal interpretations and their opportunity for citizenship is eliminated. This is a tough provision, I believe.

Mr. SALAZAR. I agree with my colleague from Massachusetts. Amnesty is simply a red herring from those who don't want to get real immigration reform. When you talk about somebody having to wait in line for 11 years, having to go to the back of the line, having to remain crime free for 11 years, having to have a job in America, having to have an absolutely clean record, and then, at the end of the day, having to pay a substantial monetary fine, that is not amnesty.

We will be on this bill for a number of days. I expect to be speaking again about the importance of immigration reform as part of our national security. I wanted today, in this period of morning business and as we enter into the debate, to read from one of my favorite prayers from a person who understood the importance of immigration, especially in the context of agriculture. That is Cesar Chavez. He wrote this prayer, and it is something I think all of us in the Chamber should keep in mind as we move forward in the debate:

Show me the suffering of the most miserable so that I will know my people's plight. Free me to pray for others, for you are present in every person. Help me take responsibility for my own life so that I can be free at last. Grant me courage to serve others, for in service there is true life. Give me honesty

and patience so that I can work with other workers.

Bring forth song and celebration so that the spirit will be alive among us. Let the disparate flourish and grow so that we will never tire of the struggle. Let us remember those who have died for justice, for they have given us life. Help us love even those who hate us so that we can change the world.

As we engage in this very important debate on comprehensive immigration reform, I ask my colleagues to keep in mind that this is one of the most important issues we confront together as a group of Americans in the 109th Congress.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Louisiana is recognized.

Ms. LANDRIEU. I thank the Chair.

Mr. President, I associate myself with the remarks of the Senator from Colorado and the senior Senator from Massachusetts regarding the important issue before the Senate, which is trying to reconcile the rules and regulations regarding immigration. I commend both of them for their outstanding leadership on that issue.

(The remarks of Ms. LANDRIEU and Mr. KERRY pertaining to the introduction of S. 2482 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. MURKOWSKI). The Senator from Georgia is recognized.

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Madam President, I did not hear the unanimous consent request of Senator KERRY. Was it to have 3 minutes on both sides?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. No. It was to add 3 minutes to his side.

Mr. CHAMBLISS. I ask unanimous consent that we add an additional 3 minutes to the majority's time also.

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

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Madam President. I rise to express my extreme disappointment with the actions taken by the Senate Judiciary Committee earlier this week on immigration reform. I know that this is a tough issue, an emotional issue, and that my colleagues on the Judiciary Committee worked very hard to pass something out of committee. However, it seems to me that the rush to pass some form of immigration reform eclipsed prudent policy-making.

The immigration problem in our country is out of control and must be solved. Our top priority in this immigration reform debate is to provide for real and comprehensive border security. We must also address in a responsible manner the presence of an enormous illegal population currently in our country.

The issue before us is critical to the future of our country, in terms of national security, economic prosperity, and the fabric of our Nation. I hope we will proceed with a thoughtful and thorough debate in the Senate because the proposals we are going to be asked

to consider are enormous in scope and have far-reaching implications. We must ensure that not only the Senators but also the American people have ample opportunity to fully comprehend the consequences of any action we take.

It is absolutely vital that the Senate act to put the resources and mechanisms in place to allow the Department of Homeland Security to gain operational control of our borders and to have stronger and more meaningful enforcement of our immigration laws in the interior of the United States.

Rarely a day goes by when our borders are not breached in a new way. By now, we've all heard the story of the teams of investigators from the Government Accountability Office who, in December 2005, were able to carry enough radioactive material to make two dirty bombs past border checkpoints in Texas and Washington State by faking Government documents. We can address this problem, and we will, by providing improved training for agents and improved technology at the borders.

The magnitude of the flow of illegal immigrants into the United States is astounding. The Border Patrol arrested 1.2 million illegal immigrants in 2005, but couldn't stop hundreds of thousands more from unlawfully entering the country because they don't have the resources. We can address this problem and we will, by providing more Border Patrol agents, better infrastructure, additional checkpoints and use of the latest technology available.

In addition, we must address the real magnet for illegal immigration for so many: the promise of a job. Most illegal immigrants in the United States did not come to this country to cause us harm but rather came to earn a better life for themselves and their families. However, we must ensure that a legal process for hiring foreign workers is put in place and strictly adhered to. We can address this problem and we will by mandating employer sanctions for those who flaunt the rule of law and continue to hire illegal workers and by providing tamper-proof documentation to those who are authorized to work in the United States so that employers will have no confusion about the legality of the workers they hire.

In addition to border security, we will be addressing a guest worker program. However, I am hoping we can have the opportunity to refocus the Senate's attention on the "guest" part of the term guest worker program. It is vital in this debate to distinguish between true temporary guest worker programs and proposals that will lead a guest worker down a new path to citizenship. I don't think it's fair to call the legislation passed by the Judiciary Committee a guest worker bill. It is more appropriately named a citizen worker bill because it provides a clear new path to citizenship for aliens who are currently in the United States illegally.

I have a very simple question to ask all Members of the Senate as we debate this bill: Why is it necessary that we address the issue of U.S. citizenship when we are talking about immigration reform? There are reasons we need to deal with the people who are here illegally. There are reasons we need to deal with folks who want to come to this country for the right reasons. But why is it necessary in this legislation that we even consider the issue of U.S. citizenship?

I am particularly concerned about the agricultural guest worker program adopted by the Judiciary Committee because I believe it is contrary to the best interests of American agriculture. Not only that, but it will punish those farmers who have been abiding by the law in this country and utilizing the H-2A program, which has been a long-standing temporary guest worker program in the U.S. relative to agriculture.

Because my focus in this debate will center on border security and a temporary agricultural guest worker program, I would like to take a few minutes to outline some of the problems I see with the Judiciary Committee's agricultural guest worker program and indicate my intention to utilize the amendment process at the appropriate time to attempt to remedy what I regard as some shortcomings of the Judiciary Committee's agricultural reform.

Most troubling to me is that the agricultural reform provision provides amnesty to 1.5 million illegal workers in agriculture.

Some might call it earned adjustment of status or earned citizenship, but I call it amnesty because it provides a clear path to citizenship for illegal agricultural workers who meet a very low threshold. These illegal workers will not have to return to their home countries and will not have to wait their turn in line to gain legal permanent resident status in the United States.

The amnesty provision would allow illegal aliens who performed 863 hours, or 150 days, of agricultural work in the United States between January 1, 2003, and December 31, 2005, to qualify for a blue card.

In legislation Senator KYL and I introduced a year ago and had on the floor previously, we had a blue card provision. That is not the blue card I am talking about this morning. The blue card I am referring to is the one that was created by the Judiciary Committee mark.

The blue card program has a low threshold requirement to qualify. A workday is defined as "any day in which the individual is employed 1 or more hours in agriculture." So someone who worked 1 hour per day for 150 days over the past 2 years would qualify for a blue card. The blue card under the Judiciary Committee bill would allow those illegal workers to then work legally in agriculture or any other area of our economy, provided

they satisfy their agricultural employment requirements each year.

Once in possession of a blue card, an alien who is currently here illegally, would only have to work in agriculture for 100 workdays, or 575 hours per year, over a 5-year period to qualify for legal permanent resident status.

Alternatively, those blue card workers could work 150 workdays, or 863 hours per year, over a 3-year period to earn legal permanent resident status.

A workday is still defined as "any day in which the individual is employed 1 or more hours in agriculture." So the requirement to obtain legal permanent resident status is either 100 hours per year over a 5-year period or 150 hours per year over a 3-year period.

While the number of blue cards allowed to be issued is capped at 1.5 million, once a blue card holder becomes a legal permanent resident, his or her family members receive derivative legal status and work authorization.

That means that whether a blue card worker has 1 child or 10 children, once he or she becomes a legal permanent resident, the rest of the family will have been deemed to have been here legally in the United States, and the spouse will be allowed to work regardless of whether they have had a job in the United States in the past.

This is hardly matching willing workers with willing employers but, rather, putting a large population on a level playing field with American workers for job opportunities.

While some of my colleagues might disagree with me on the amnesty issue, we should be able to agree on the fact that these agricultural workers who earn amnesty through this provision will not remain in agriculture forever.

Most everyone agrees that agriculture is the hardest low-skilled work around in our country today. It is truly backbreaking. Generally, those who have had an opportunity to earn a living in some other manner have chosen to do so. Even those who choose to stay in agricultural work find they cannot occupy these labor-intensive jobs over a long period of time. There is a natural tendency to age out of agricultural work.

Therefore, if this provision adopted by the Judiciary Committee is enacted into law, I anticipate those current illegal workers who become legal permanent residents will leave agriculture in the short term and leave our farmers to continue to rely only upon H-2A for their workforce, if they are going to hire legal workers.

The reason I believe these workers will leave agriculture is because that is what has happened in the past. I have spoken with numerous farmers who were farming during the special agricultural worker program Congress authorized in 1986. That is commonly called the Special Agricultural Worker Program. That program provided amnesty for those agricultural workers who performed 90 days of farm work in 1985 through 1986.

Chalmers Carr, a peach grower in the State of South Carolina, helped 200 workers adjust in 1986 pursuant to the special agricultural worker education program. After 2 years, 75 percent of those workers had left his farm, and after 5 years, the last adjusted worker left agriculture.

Similarly, Bill Brim, a Georgia fruit and vegetable grower, assisted 130 workers adjust status pursuant to the Special Agricultural Worker Program. Not one single one of the 130 workers stayed on his farm for more than 6 months after they adjusted their status.

Recognizing that these agricultural workers who are able to adjust their status will not be in agriculture forever, the Senate should be able to agree that we need a viable H-2A program to address the labor needs of agriculture in the future. Unfortunately, the agricultural provision of the Judiciary Committee's bill simply does not meet the needs of our Nation's agribusiness.

It is ironic to me that those who admittedly do not use the H-2A program in their States purport to know the modifications necessary for improvement of the program. In reality, the language contained in the Judiciary Committee's proposal provides every advantage to those agricultural employers who have been utilizing an illegal workforce and cripples those employers who have utilized the legal H-2A program.

For instance, the Judiciary Committee's agricultural proposal treats all those currently illegal aliens who qualify for a blue card as U.S. workers for purposes of recruiting workers. This means an agricultural employer who has been utilizing the H-2A program for years and following the rule of law already on the books will be forced to hire an illegal alien with a blue card before that farmer can petition to bring in the same people who had been working and returning in a legal manner for him in the H-2A program for years.

Further, in the case of an agricultural employer who properly applies for and brings H-2A workers to work on his farm, that employer will be forced to replace that H-2A worker for whom he has paid transportation costs to the worksite with a blue card worker who arrives at the worksite at any point during the first 50 percent of the work period seeking an agricultural job to fill his or her yearly hourly requirement to maintain their blue card status.

Once again, we are going to be giving folks who are here illegally preferential treatment over those folks who are here legally. There is no common sense whatsoever to that proposal.

That yearly requirement, in many cases, may not encompass the employer's entire season or period of desired employment, leaving the employer, again, without an adequate, reliable workforce. This disadvantages those who have been playing by the rules.

The framework of the Judiciary Committee's proposal which provides that only 575 hours of agricultural labor per year are required to transition from blue card status to that of a legal permanent resident will likely have a destabilizing effect on the agricultural workforce.

Madam President, 575 hours per year equates to a little less than 72 days per year based on an 8-hour workday. I don't know about farms in California or Idaho, but in Georgia, our farmworkers generally work around 11 or 12 hours per day during peak season. Using a 12-hour workday, a blue card worker will work just under 48 days to meet the yearly minimum hour requirement.

If these blue card workers are allowed to work in industries other than agriculture and are only required to work 575 agricultural hours to qualify for legal permanent resident status, my guess is they will not work in agriculture one hour more than necessary. This is not going to provide our agricultural employers with the stable workforce they are being promised.

I close with a comment relative to a very current issue that is very important as we debate this bill on the floor today, and that is the fact that our President today is in Cancun, Mexico, meeting with the leadership of our two best trading partners and our two border partners in the United States, that being the leadership of Mexico and the leadership of Canada.

As he meets with those leaders, I hope he will strongly emphasize, particularly to the leadership in Mexico, to change their position on border security. It is almost unfathomable to me that the leader of a country would say to his citizens that he is encouraging a border country to grant amnesty to anyone who has left his country to go into a border country. But that is exactly what is happening on the part of President Fox.

I hope President Bush emphasizes to the leadership over this week that they must be a partner with us in helping secure their border and our border which we have in common. If they will work with us, we can secure the border, and if this body acts in an appropriate way over the next several days, we can come up with an accommodation to those workers who are here for the right reason and, at the same time, we can ensure that those people who have crossed into our country illegally return to their home country, again, in the right way.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, I want to say a few words about immigration. May I inquire first how much time is left on our side?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is 15 minutes remaining.

CONGRATULATIONS TO LYNDEN AND MEREDITH MELMED

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, I wish to say a few words about immigration reform, but before I do, I want to recognize a blessed occasion of the birth of Caroline Brown Melmed 2 days ago on March 28, 2006, at 3:58 in the afternoon.

Caroline's proud father, Lynden Melmed, has been an integral part of my Judiciary Committee staff. He is on detail from the Department of Homeland Security, and he is an expert in immigration law. One can imagine how important he has been in my ability to be effective and advance the debate on this important topic.

He and his wife Meredith undoubtedly will be fantastic parents. As the father of two daughters myself, I would tell him it is the greatest blessing one could imagine. I wish them the best in the years to come.

IMMIGRATION REFORM

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, I wish to talk about immigration reform and border security. In particular, since this debate will be continuing for this week and the next, I want to emphasize the importance of border security, and, obviously, enforcement begins at the border.

But before I talk about border security and enhanced enforcement, I want to address the issue of the 12 million immigrants who are already here who have come to this country in violation of our immigration laws.

We know why people come to America. It is the same reason they have always come: because too often they have no hope and no opportunity where they live. So we understand at a very human level why it is that people want to come to the United States. Yet I think we all acknowledge America cannot open its borders to anyone and everyone who wants to come here or we would literally be drowned in a wave of humanity.

We have to regain control of our broken immigration system, and that means to deal with enforcement at our borders, to deal with enforcement in the interior of our country, and to deal with verification of the eligibility of prospective employees to actually work legally in the United States. We cannot repeat the mistake this Nation made with the 1986 amnesty bill.

I remind my colleagues that in 1986, that legislation required illegal aliens to pay a fee, to learn English, to improve themselves by working in this country for a set time.

I also remind my colleagues that everyone agrees on two points when it comes to the 1986 experience with the amnesty bill.

No. 1, they agree it was amnesty. And No. 2, they agree it was a complete and total failure. I will continue to work with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to find a solution to this great