

I believe the Judiciary Committee bill—the bill that came out of the Judiciary Committee—goes too far in granting illegal immigrants with what can fairly be described as amnesty.

We will hear a lot of debate on what is amnesty, and I hope there will be some consensus over time coming out of this debate as to what amnesty actually is. I believe the Judiciary bill does enter this realm of amnesty, and, thus, I am very hopeful that over the next several days amendments will be offered on the floor to pull back from this amnesty provision.

I disagree with the amnesty approach. I do not think we should be rewarding illegal behavior, not just as a matter of principle but also because granting amnesty now will encourage people in the future to cross the border illegally, expecting amnesty to be granted every 5 years or every 10 years or every 15 years. It undermines our securing our borders. It gives an incentive for people to cross our borders, not just legally but illegally, if we grant amnesty.

In the coming week, I look forward to my colleagues coming to the floor to offer a variety of ideas and solutions to these problems, these challenges. I hope they will have ample opportunity to do that.

I said 2 or 3 months ago, we would have 2 weeks—in essence, 2 weeks—on the floor of the Senate to provide an opportunity to come and debate and amend whatever bill came to the floor. I am concerned a little bit that we are entering into a delay or a postpone mode. I say that because we did not have votes last night, after my amendment—or late yesterday afternoon—and we are not having votes today. It does take consent on both sides of the aisle to have these votes. I encourage my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to come forward so we can have that debate, we can have that amendment, we can have those votes, and define this bill in a way that will reflect the majority of people on this floor.

An example: Last night, Senator AL-EXANDER offered his widely supported Strengthening American Citizenship Act—a beautiful and a very important amendment. It is reasonable. It is common sense. It is patriotic. It would help newly arrived immigrants to learn their responsibilities and assimilate the habits and privileges of American citizenship. Unfortunately, however, the other side objected to allowing a vote on the amendment.

I mention that because we cannot run the bill that way throughout. We have to have the debate, we have to have the votes in order to define this bill. We need a debate that is robust, that is vigorous, that is open, that is participatory in the sense that people can come forward and get the votes they deserve.

I have set up a process to be as fair as possible so all points of views are heard. Many of the Senators, understandably, do want to offer amend-

ments. For my part, though we began with the Securing America's Borders Act, a bill I brought to the floor, the first amendment was Chairman SPECTER's amendment, and that is to offer the Judiciary Committee bill as a substitute. I, and I think the whole body, accept that out of deep respect for the committee process and the great work the committee has done thus far and the right for the committee's voice to be heard.

I am optimistic about where we are going with this bill. It is interesting, in our caucus, and I know in the Democratic caucus as well, there is a lot of discussion going on. You can't help but to pick up the papers now and listen to the radio and watch television and not see this discussion of these very real problems being put first and foremost in the headlines and in the stories.

I think that is healthy because we have problems which we have failed to address as a people, problems we absolutely must address, the problems of people crossing these borders illegally, at a rate that about 2.8 million people came across our Southwest border last year. That number is increasing every year by about 25 percent. These are illegal people coming across the borders. It is a problem that is there. It is a problem that is growing. It is a problem we have to address.

The challenge which is probably the most difficult is how to address the 11 million people who have crossed those borders in the past, probably 7.5 million of whom are working, many of them families. Many of them—I guess all of them—came here with the intention of a better life. But they broke the law and they are here illegally. How can we treat them with compassion and understanding but not give them a leg up among other law-abiding people who also want citizenship?

Those are challenges. I think everybody is struggling with that. I appreciate it. And it means we are going to have passionate debate, contentious debate. Not everybody is going to agree on even those two issues I mentioned. It is going to be a highly charged issue. There are deep feelings and deep and strong principles at stake.

The process will work. I am confident in this body the process will work if we keep our debate civilized and dignified and fair to every Member of the body. And by "fair," I mean allow people to come to the floor and offer those amendments and have them voted on.

As I said when I introduced the border security bill, I do want our debate to reflect our commitment to the rule of law and to our proud immigrant heritage—to both. We are a nation of immigrants, and we have all benefited from America's uniquely inclusive character. I believe we can honor both our history and our laws, and by working together, we can forge a solution that does credit to this body and to the American people.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ISAKSON). The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to proceed as in morning business for up to 10 minutes.

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

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

SERGEANT RYAN MONTGOMERY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask my colleagues to pause for a moment today to commemorate the life and sacrifice of SGT Ryan Jay Montgomery.

Sergeant Montgomery of Greensburg, KY, served with the 623rd Field Artillery in the Kentucky Army National Guard. On July 3, 2005, he gave his life in defense of our country near Baghdad, Iraq. He had served his Nation as a citizen-soldier for almost 5 years. He was 22 years old.

On that day in July, Sergeant Montgomery and two of his fellow Kentucky National Guard soldiers were returning from escorting a supply convoy when, just outside of Baghdad, a roadside bomb struck his humvee. The other two soldiers were injured; sadly, Sergeant Montgomery was killed.

For his valiant service, Sergeant Montgomery was awarded the Bronze Star Medal, the Purple Heart, and the Combat Action Badge. He had previously received both the Army Commendation Medal and the Armed Forces Reserve Medal. And he was awarded the Kentucky Distinguished Service Medal, for demonstrating all the qualities of a great soldier, remaining combat-focused while decisively engaged with the enemy, performing his duties and accomplishing his mission.

While a student at Green County High School, Sergeant Montgomery started a Junior ROTC program there, for kids interested in a military career. The discipline and purpose of Army life appealed to him, so young Ryan decided he could better himself through joining the Guard. Enlisting before he finished high school, he hoped to use money from the Guard to help him pay for his education necessary to realize his goal of becoming an architect.

Ryan's mother, Patricia Montgomery, said that Ryan's service in the Kentucky National Guard could "give him a better start in life." His twin brother, Bryan, who never strayed far from his brother's side, was so impressed by the opportunities the military gave his brother that he, too, decided to serve, and ended up a member of Bravo Battery, First Battalion, in the 623rd Field Artillery—the same unit as his brother Ryan.

Before he was deployed to Iraq, Ryan worked two jobs in addition to his

work with the Guard. He was training with the Green County Fire and Rescue Team, to become a volunteer firefighter. He also helped out with the junior ROTC program at Green County High that he had formed, teaching classes and encouraging the students who were following his example to serve their country.

Sergeant Montgomery was deployed to Iraq in January 2005. Ryan and his unit were charged with escorting the many supply convoys which traveled in and out of Baghdad, often a hazardous assignment, and also searching for the enemy or their deadly roadside bombs. Sergeant Montgomery successfully took part in 130 missions. As his father, Raymond Montgomery said, "He really felt like he was doing good over there. He absolutely loved it." Before deploying to Iraq, Ryan's unit also served in Kuwait.

During his downtime in Iraq, Ryan could most often be found working on his humvee with his twin brother Bryan, who served as a mechanic for the 623rd. He would also write or e-mail the folks back home, or he would talk or watch a movie with his brother Bryan. The two didn't get a lot of free time together in Iraq, but they usually saw each other every day.

Born in Greensburg, where he lived his whole life and which is the county seat of Green County, Ryan and Bryan were known as twin cut-ups, according to their mom, Patricia. She recalls that the two identical brothers would often switch clothes to confuse family friends and babysitters.

Patricia remembers that Ryan taught Bryan how to ride a bike when the two were little. As a child, Ryan loved family dinners. And he loved to make people laugh. "If you see someone without a smile, give them yours"—that was Ryan's motto, according to his mother. Bryan recalled, "My brother and I always lived like a laugh could solve anything."

Both Ryan and Bryan played the great American pastime—Little League—as kids. What they may have lacked in athleticism, they made up for in enthusiasm. "They were average athletes," says John Durham, the boys' Little League coach. "But I don't think there was another member of the team that had as much fun out there playing than they did."

In high school, Ryan played in the marching band in addition to his work with Junior ROTC. He played the trumpet and Bryan played the tuba and the trombone. And he liked to go hunting with his dad.

Ryan was also interested in truck-pulling. As a kid, Ryan's dad took him and his brother to truck pulls at local fairs. It was something that naturally appealed to both boys, and when he was old enough, Ryan bought a Chevy S-10 that all three men worked to modify together.

After Ryan's death, Bryan continued his brother's project, driving the truck they had collaborated on to victory in

a truck pull that was dedicated to Ryan in Temple Hill, KY. It was the same competition that Ryan had won in 2004 with the same truck. After winning, Bryan said, "It felt great to follow in Ryan's success like that."

Ryan left behind a loving family who will forever treasure his memory. We thank his father, Raymond Montgomery, his mother, Patricia Montgomery, and his brother, Bryan Montgomery, for sharing their stories of Ryan with us. We are also thinking of Ryan's sister, Ashley Montgomery, and his stepmother, Sharon Montgomery, today.

I want to leave my colleagues with the words of SGT Ryan Montgomery himself. These words were found on his computer in Iraq. He wrote:

This place is a roller coaster ride; you never know what is going [to] happen next. It's scary when you think about it. But I pray every night for every soldier who has given their freedom to free these people.

Ryan continued:

I pray for my family and every blessing God [has] put in my life. [It's] hard to live day to day, not knowing what the next day holds. I just pray and carry on with the mission. I didn't think this place was going [to affect] me like it has. I'm a different person, but for the good.

Words cannot describe the overflowing of gratitude, and pride, and honor one feels after reading this young man's words. Nor can they describe the depths of sorrow we feel at his loss. Sergeant Montgomery's courage was so strong that, even amidst the "roller coaster" of battle, he was able to hold on to his love of God, his family, and his mission to spread freedom.

I ask my colleagues to join me today in saying that America can never repay the debt we owe SGT Ryan Montgomery or the Montgomery family. We are truly blessed to live in a country where so many brave men and women, like Ryan, volunteer to face hardship out of the love of freedom, and love for the rest of us.

I yield the floor.

SECURING AMERICA'S BORDERS ACT AMENDMENT

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I return to the floor to speak about the pending amendment to the border security and immigration bill that was voted out of the Senate Judiciary Committee, on which I am proud to serve. I want to explain to my colleagues and anyone else who may be listening why I oppose this amendment. I believe that, while there are many good things in the bill, or amendment, one of the bad things it contains is that it provides amnesty to those who have violated our immigration laws. As I have said before and I will say again, I cannot accept amnesty as part of any comprehensive solution to our immigration crisis. But more important, it is not a question of whether I can accept this as part of the solution. I don't believe the American people will accept amnesty as part of the solution either.

Unfortunately, at its core the committee product includes an amnesty. Let me explain in some detail because I think there are those who see amnesty in every solution that has been offered. Some say the guest worker program that the President speaks about is an amnesty. I don't necessarily agree with that because it is a temporary worker program, as he has used that term, not an alternative path to citizenship such as the Judiciary Committee bill. But I do think that there are some things that can justifiably be called amnesty; that is, if words have any meaning.

The reason why I conclude that this Judiciary Committee bill provides an amnesty is because it creates a new path to citizenship for approximately 12 million people who have entered our country in violation of our immigration laws. I want to be quick to interject, we understand why it is that people come to America. It is the same reason that everyone wants to come to America, and that is because we are the beacon of hope and freedom and opportunity for the planet. We understand that and we harbor no ill will or grudge against people who simply want to provide for their family. We understand that. But as a sovereign nation, sovereignty implies control of our borders, and we do not have control of our borders today. It also implies that we will do first what is good for America and American interests, and then if we can, and certainly we do, we could go help our neighbor. But we simply can't throw our hands up in the air and say we give up when it comes to controlling our borders and enforcing our laws.

First of all, that would violate the sacred oath that we have taken as Senators, as Members of Congress, to defend and uphold the laws of the United States, including the Constitution. So what we are talking about is not a matter of wanting to be unnecessarily harsh or punitive toward those who have come here for what are all understandable and human reasons. But I do not believe the American people will accept a proposal which includes amnesty because they understand that American citizenship is a very special privilege, and they reject the notion that we have no choice but to give it out because the Federal Government has simply failed to enforce the law.

I strongly believe that we need comprehensive immigration reform, including border security. I think we need to provide a path to the 10 million people who have come here in violation of our immigration laws, who already live in the United States. But I have a fundamental disagreement with the approach contained in this amendment.

I believe we must start with the rule that people who have come to this country in violation of our immigration laws should be required to go through the same process as all other legal immigrants.

Let me say that again.