

They hoped to get 1,500 draftees out of Hawaii.

When DANNY INOUE, our colleague, volunteered and enlisted, he was one of 10,000 who stepped forward to serve. He told this touching story of taking the streetcar with his dad, off to catch the boat for military training, and how his dad reminded him how good this country had been to him and to his family and urged him to serve with honor and never dishonor his family's name.

DANNY INOUE told that story like no one else could because, of course, he served and became an officer in the U.S. Army. During an invasion in Italy, he was gravely wounded, lost his left arm, and was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for the valor he showed in combat. People worried at that time whether they should take a chance with Japanese Americans. Could we really trust them? Would they really fight for America and be loyal? DANNY INOUE and thousands of others proved that they would.

The same question is being raised about these young people. These are young people who are undocumented. They don't technically have citizenship. They certainly don't have one in America. They are asking for a chance to serve. We are told they want to serve in greater numbers than most others.

A recent study by the Center for Naval Analyses concluded "non-citizens have high rates of success while serving [in the military]—they are far more likely . . . to fulfill their enlistment obligations than their U.S.-born counterparts."

The Pentagon recognizes the merit of the DREAM Act. Bill Carr, Acting Under Secretary of Defense for Military Personnel Policy, recently said that the DREAM Act is "very appealing" to the military because it would apply to the "cream of the crop of students." Mr. Carr concluded that the DREAM Act would be "good for readiness."

The DREAM Act is also supported by a broad coalition of military experts, education, business, labor, civil rights and religious leaders from across the political spectrum and around the country. Last week, I received a letter supporting the DREAM Act from over 60 national organizations: the American Federation of State and County Municipal Employees, the American Federation of Teachers, the Anti-Defamation League, the American Baptist Churches, Asian-American Justice Center, the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities, Episcopal Migration Ministries, Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Congress, the Jesuit Conference, the Jewish Council for Public Affairs, the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services, National Council of Jewish Women, National Council of La Raza, National Education Association, Service Employees International Union, and UNITE HERE.

Thomas Wenski is bishop of Orlando, FL. He issued a statement on behalf of the U.S. Catholic Bishops supporting the DREAM Act. I would like to read it into the Record:

For those who call this legislation an amnesty, I say shame on you. These are children who were brought to this country illegally through no fault of their own . . . The United States is the only country and home many of them know.

Are we to deport some of our future leaders to a country they do not know in the name of an unjust law? Should we forsake these young people because we lack the political will and courage to provide them a just remedy?

Our elected officials should resist the voices of dissension and fear this time and vote for the DREAM Act. By investing in these young people, our nation will receive benefits for years to come. It also is the right and moral thing to do.

Last week, John Sweeney, president of the AFL-CIO, issued a statement. He said:

[The DREAM Act] will go a long way in remedying the injustices that these hard-working and law-abiding children face. We strongly support passage of the DREAM Act . . .

Students who qualify for the DREAM Act are graduating at the top of their class; they are honor roll students, star athletes and valedictorians. They have lived in the United States most of their lives; this is the only country they know. These children are as committed to their communities and to this country as their American-born classmates. Yet, because they lack legal status, they do not have the same opportunities to education or to a decent job.

This is the choice the DREAM Act presents to us. We can allow a generation of immigrant students with great potential and ambitions to contribute more fully to our society and national security or we can relegate them to a future in the shadows, which would be a loss for all Americans.

Since I introduced this bill about 5 years ago, I have run into many of these same students. Life goes on for them. They don't qualify for Federal loans, for grants. They are trying to make it through college. They borrow the money and try to come up with it, delay their education, if they can. Occasionally, in the few weeks when I get back in their neighborhoods, they will come and see me. They will walk up to me and say: Senator, what is new with the DREAM Act? It isn't just an idle question of someone who might follow legislative activity; this is a question which will decide their lives for them. It will decide whether we cast them aside, reject them, say we don't need their talent and dreams and their idealism or whether we will vote for this bill and give these young people a chance.

When I hear some describe this as amnesty, I wonder, if someone is willing to risk his or her life to serve in our military in a combat zone, is that a giveaway? Is that citizenship for nothing? I don't think so. It has really been fundamental that we don't hold children responsible for the errors and crimes of their parents. Why, then,

would we hold these children responsible?

When I hear some of the critics talk about the millions who will benefit from this, those numbers don't match up to reality. To qualify for this, you have to graduate from high school. Fifty percent of Hispanic students don't graduate from high school. So already these students have beaten the odds. Then how many of these same Hispanic students go on to finish the first year of college? An even smaller percentage. The numbers go down. So we are talking about an elite group of students with great potential who can make this a greater nation, and we are talking about an elite group of undocumented students willing to risk their lives for America.

I ask my colleagues to cast aside some of the rhetoric which is divisive and sometimes unfair about these young people. Take the time to meet them. Sit down and talk to them. You will see in their faces and in their conversation the kind of idealism, the kind of aspiration for a greater America we can only hope for from the next generation.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

Mr. DURBIN. I ask unanimous consent to speak in morning business.

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

CHIP REAUTHORIZATION

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, 10 years ago the Senate created the Children's Health Insurance Program to help States provide health coverage for low-income kids across America. It is known as CHIP. It provides cost-effective health coverage to millions of kids. It is truly the biggest success story in health care in America in the past decade. We have reduced the number of uninsured children in our Nation by one-third. With the help of the CHIP program, my State of Illinois launched a statewide initiative to cover all kids, setting an important precedent for other States to follow. Over 300,000 kids in Illinois have insurance, but there are still thousands more we need to reach.

The 15 million uninsured children in America in 1997 are now 9 million nationwide. That is still far too many. Unfortunately, the Bush administration does not view the Senate bill as the carefully crafted compromise it is but sees it as a threat—in their words, "a step down the path of government-run health care for every American." Let me assure them, this bill falls far short of anything resembling universal

coverage. It leaves millions of kids still without health insurance and millions of working parents and working adults in a similar uninsured status. But it is progress.

The President's proposal to add just \$5 billion over the next 5 years isn't enough. At that level, hundreds of thousands of people will likely lose coverage. At that level, we start moving backward, pushing kids and families out of coverage and increasing the number of uninsured. This is no surprise. This President has seen a dramatic increase of uninsured children for the first time since 1998, since he took office. The number of uninsured children rose to 8.7 million in 2006, up from 8 million in 2005—a 9-percent increase in 1 year.

It is time to reauthorize the children's health program before it expires in a few days. What this bill does is strengthen a successful bipartisan program.

It allows States to cover more than 9 million children who do not have health insurance. The compromise bill will allow 6.6 million children to maintain coverage and allow States to reach almost 4 million more. The House and Senate have worked out a delicate bipartisan compromise. We know it is time to put party labels aside and do something about health care, particularly for our children.

How do we pay for it? It is an honest question, and a good one. The investment in the Children's Health Insurance Program is paid for by increasing the Federal tax on cigarettes, with proportional increases for other tobacco products.

I know there are some people who think this is unfair to smokers. But I have to tell them, their habit, their addiction to nicotine and tobacco comes at great expense not only to them personally but to this Nation. We know higher tobacco prices will make it less likely kids will use tobacco products. So it is a win-win situation. You see, if these tobacco companies do not hook our kids at an early age, while they are still kids and have not thought it through, they might never get them addicted.

So you see, the vast majority of smokers today started smoking before the age of 16. The addiction starts, and it doesn't end until one out of three of them die from this tobacco addiction.

What stops a kid from smoking? Well, sometimes good parental advice or more—and a high price. When tobacco costs a lot of money, kids don't buy it. It is a simple fact. It is economics. If there is one thing you want to do to stop kids from becoming addicted to tobacco, raise the price of the product. Each time you raise it a nickel or a dime or a quarter or 50 cents, you end up with fewer kids smoking. That is what is going to happen. So we will not only raise money from the tobacco tax to pay for health insurance for kids, we will have fewer kids addicted to tobacco.

In a poll conducted for the Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids, two-thirds of those interviewed—67 percent—favor this tax increase across America; 28 percent oppose it. Moreover, nearly half—49 percent—strongly favor it. Only 20 percent strongly oppose it.

It is the right thing to do for our kids' health and for the public's health. We have had good, bipartisan cooperation on this measure. It has been our highest priority since the Democrats took control of Congress at the beginning of this year. We have tried to work together, and we have worked together successfully.

I want to especially salute, on our side of the aisle, Senator MAX BAUCUS, chairman of the Finance Committee, who has been working on this very closely with Senator CHUCK GRASSLEY, a Republican from Iowa. Senator GRASSLEY, Senator HATCH, and others have really shown extraordinary political courage in coming together to support this measure.

Now we have to convince the President. The President said in his statement last week:

Members of Congress are putting health coverage for poor children at risk so they can score political points in Washington.

Well, I am sorry to say I disagree with the President on this. We are working with the President's party, many Republicans in the Senate and in the House, to improve this important program.

Last night, on the House floor, there was a vote on this program, 265 to 159. Forty-five Republicans joined almost all of the Democratic House Members in support. It is a shame the President refuses to consider the needs of millions of families who would be benefited from additional children's health insurance coverage.

Let me close by saying a word about the cost of this program. This program is likely to cost us \$6 billion a year. Mr. President, \$6 billion is a substantial sum of money to add more children to health insurance coverage. Measure that \$6 billion a year against this war—a war that costs us \$12 billion a month, a war for which this President will come and ask \$200 billion in the next 2 weeks.

But this measure that costs \$6 billion a year is an amount of money that pales in comparison with what the President is going to ask us to continue to spend on the war in Iraq. His request will be near \$200 billion. Mr. President, \$200 billion for a war in Iraq, \$200 billion for helping the people of Iraq, the President believes we can afford. But he argues we cannot afford \$6 billion for more health insurance for America's children.

I believe a strong America begins at home. It begins with strong schools and strong families and strong communities and strong neighborhoods. And it begins with health care—health care to bring peace of mind to parents who otherwise worry that tomorrow that earache may turn into something

worse, or a strep throat or a child struggling with asthma or diabetes.

These are kids who need basic health protection and do not have it today. They are not the poorest of the poor. Those kids already have help from our Government. These kids I am talking about are the children of working families, working families who, unfortunately, have no health insurance at their workplace. We are trying to expand the coverage of health insurance.

The President says it is unfair to private health insurance companies for us to expand this program. I could not disagree more. Private health insurance companies are doing quite well. They do not need any more help from us. The fact that these kids do not have health insurance suggests these private health insurance companies either cannot or will not provide them the coverage they need.

I urge my colleagues, when the measure comes over from the House of Representatives—which it should momentarily—that we should support it, and I hope with numbers that say to the President: Please, for the sake of this country, for the sake of our families, and for the sake of the kids—the millions of kids who will have health insurance coverage—please, do not veto this important children's health insurance bill.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—H.R. 1585

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now resume consideration of H.R. 1585, and immediately after the bill is reported the debate time be 2 minutes equally divided and controlled between the leaders or their designees with respect to the following pending amendments: Biden amendment No. 2997 and Kyl-Lieberman amendment No. 3017; that each amendment be modified with the changes at the desk, and that no amendments be in order to either amendment prior to the vote; that upon the use or yielding back of time, without further intervening action or debate, the Senate proceed to vote in relation to the Biden amendment, as modified; that upon the disposition of that amendment, there be 2 minutes of debate equally divided and controlled prior to a vote in relation to the Kyl-Lieberman amendment, as modified; that each amendment be subject to a 60-vote threshold, and that if the amendment does not achieve that threshold, it be withdrawn; and that the second vote in this sequence be