

didn't work. They went to another one. Now she is pregnant, and they are going to have twins. They may have one or two more children—I don't know—but there are going to be some of those embryos left over. Right now my friend's only choice is to have them discarded. That is her only choice. But as she said to me: I would love, after I have my children and my family, if there are embryos left over, I would love to be able to donate them for stem cell research to help cure disease and to help people who are sick.

Right now she cannot do that. Neither she nor her husband can do that. Our bill would allow them to have that option. No one is forced to do anything, but it would allow them to have that option.

I also, wish to point out again one of the misconceptions. These are embryos. They are blastocysts. They have about 100 cells. I always do this: I put a dot on a piece of paper, hold it up and say: Can anybody see that? That is what we are talking about. It is about the size of a period at the end of a sentence. There is a lot of misinformation about what we are talking about.

As I said before, Congress is going to pass this bill, that is certain. Sadly, some are already predicting the President will veto it for a second time. I hope they are wrong. I hope the President will respect the will of the people and sign the stem cell research bill. But if he does veto it, we will persist. We will use every legislative means at our disposal to make sure S. 5 is enacted into law, and it will happen during this Congress.

My nephew Kelly is one of the millions of Americans whose hopes depend on stem cell research. Kelly was in the Navy. He had a terrible accident on an aircraft carrier, and he has been basically a paraplegic now for 28 years. But he has kept his hopes alive that our scientists will be able to find a cure. Stem cell research offers the best hope for people suffering from spinal cord injuries.

Now is the time to give them the hope, to lift the ban on stem cell research. As I said, we will do that in this Congress. It will be one of the first bills we pass. I hope the President will sign it and we can move on. But if not, for Kelly and for so many millions of Americans, we hope the long wait is almost over. I predict that hope will prevail in this Congress.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

CESAR CHAVEZ

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President I will speak briefly. One of the things I am going to do today is join the distinguished Presiding Officer, Senator SALAZAR—in fact, I should note that this is the first time I have seen the distinguished Presiding Officer in the chair. He looks as though he was born to preside here, and he does it well. I

am going to join him in introducing a bill to include Cesar Chavez among the names of the great civil rights leaders we honored in the title of last year's Voting Rights Act Reauthorization and Amendments Act of 2006.

When we were considering this legislation in the Senate Judiciary Committee, Senator SALAZAR made a compelling argument why that name, an American hero's name, should be added to the bill: because he devoted and sacrificed his life to empower the most vulnerable in America, as did Fannie Lou Hamer, Rosa Parks, and Coretta Scott King.

Cesar Chavez's name should be added to the law as an important recognition of the broad landscape of political inclusion made possible by the Voting Rights Act. This bill would not alter the act's vital remedies to address continuing discrimination in voting, but rather it is overdue recognition of the importance of the Voting Rights Act to Hispanic-Americans.

I offered Senator SALAZAR's amendment in the Judiciary Committee. The moral weight of what he wanted to do was so compelling that in a committee often fractured, it passed unanimously. It was included. It was not included in the final bill because as we were nearing the ending time, we did not want to have to have the bill go back and forth to the other body again because we wanted to get it on the President's desk in time. I committed to the distinguished Senator from Colorado that I would join him again this year, and I say with virtual certainty that the Senate Judiciary Committee will move very rapidly with that issue this year. I have the commitment of the new chairman backing that up, as does he have mine. And so I urge the Senate to quickly take up and pass this measure as we convene the new Congress and commit ourselves once again to ensuring that the great promises of the 14th and 15th Amendments are kept for all Americans.

COMPREHENSIVE IMMIGRATION REFORM

Mr. President, as this new Congress begins, we have a tremendous opportunity before us to enact fair, comprehensive immigration reform. It is time for bipartisan action. So I join with Senators from both sides of the aisle to call for comprehensive immigration reform, and I will work to enact it. We have to put aside the mean-spiritedness and shortsighted policies driven by fear and recognize the dignity of those whose work contributes to reinvigorating America. Consistent with our heritage as a nation of immigrants, we need to bring people out of the shadows. My maternal grandparents were immigrants to this country. My wife's parents came as immigrants to this country. We are a nation of immigrants. And those of us who are here now should not think that somehow we got here differently, and that we should close the doors to the rest. That is not the American way.

Through comprehensive immigration reform, we can increase the opportuni-

ties for American businesses to obtain the workers they need while ensuring that priority is given to willing workers already in this country, from dairy farms in Vermont to multinational corporations. We have been told of the plight of the American farmers from New York to California. We have seen the pictures of the piles of rotting fruit that have gone unharvested. We hear American technology companies lamenting lost opportunities and the loss of skilled innovators to other countries. Dairy farmers are yearning for more available legal workers in my own State of Vermont. But worse yet, others have watched families in their employ be torn apart through piece-meal, inconsistent, sometimes heavy-handed enforcement efforts. I have met some of those families. I have talked to people who were fifth, sixth, seventh generation Vermonters who say how unfair it is to see these good families torn apart by seemingly arbitrary immigration enforcement efforts. No American farmer, no business, should be put in the position of having to choose between obeying the law or losing their livelihood.

Where American workers can fill available jobs, of course they should be given priority. But where these jobs are available but unclaimed by American citizens, it makes no sense to deny willing foreign workers the opportunity to work. We can strike a balance if we work together.

We must streamline and reform our visa system for low-skilled workers so we can help reduce the crippling backlogs that affect American businesses. And we must increase the number of low-skilled work visas issued each year to keep up with the needs of our economy. We should enact stronger, consistent employer verification procedures. We should impose penalties for those employers who flout the law and exploit those who have no voice. We can do this by working together and enacting comprehensive reform.

Through comprehensive and smart reforms we can increase our security. Let us work to focus enforcement efforts and protect our citizens from those who seek to do us harm. Let us put an end to the enforcement conditions that end in too many needless deaths in the deserts of the Southwest, families—spouses and children—who die needlessly trying to seek the promise of America. We also have to take a smart approach in dealing with the millions of people already here, one that does not divide families and make instant criminals out of millions of people but rather honors our Nation's best traditions. When we enact reforms to bring the millions of undocumented people of this country out of the shadows, greater accountability will follow. When we provide incentives for undocumented people to enter a path to citizenship, we will encourage them to live up to our traditions of citizenship and civic responsibility. When we endow those who seek to better their lives and

the lives of their families with the tools to do so legally, we help instill in them a sense of belonging, of patriotism, of opportunity. Those who decry this aspect of immigration reform must carefully consider the alternative path. By driving more people underground, we foster a culture of lawlessness and mistrust.

We can't wall ourselves off from the world. A 700-mile fence on a 2,000-mile border is not the answer. Last fall, the Republican Congress rushed through a bill to build 700 miles of fencing and did so against the advice of the Department of Homeland Security. That fence bill was neither fair nor comprehensive. I share the disappointment of tens of millions of Americans who had hoped President Bush would have exercised his constitutional authority to veto that costly, cobbled-together and mean-spirited law. Instead, the President seemed to have abandoned his principles in signing the Secure Fence Act: legislation that will cost between \$2 billion and \$9 billion and fail to perform as advertised to seal our southern border. Scarring our southwestern landscape with a symbol of fear, pandering, and intolerance offends the great heritage of our Nation by sending the wrong message to our neighbors and to the world about American values. It was a pricey bumper sticker law passed to curry favor in certain quarters before the elections. Instead, by focusing on technology, innovation, and personnel rather than partisan politics and divisive walls, we can do a better job of securing our border.

The President has said many times that in order for the United States to achieve real security, we must have comprehensive immigration reform which must include a realistic solution to bring out of the shadows the millions of undocumented immigrants in this country and at the same time meet the pressing needs of employers who are looking for willing workers. In numerous statements, including a speech in Mission, TX, in August 2006, he recognized that without all components of comprehensive reform working together, immigration reform will not work.

So I will continue working to enact legislation to secure our borders and strengthen our economy and bring about a realistic solution for the millions of people who want to work and live legally in our country. I will continue to support fair and comprehensive immigration reform that will respect the dignity of those who seek to join mainstream American society and better their lives in the United States. Let's hope that common sense and bipartisanship will prevail and that the promises of America, those promises of America that encouraged my grandparents to come to this country and my wife's parents to come to this country, are still there. Let us not enact laws that are beneath the dignity of a great and noble and welcoming Nation. Let us pass legislation that reflects

what is the best of America and reflects the America that is a diverse country made up of people of diverse backgrounds. We will be stronger and better for it.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, before the Senator from Vermont leaves the floor, let me commend him for his remarks and the passion he brings to this subject which is based on his own personal experience but which reflects the experience, I believe, of the vast majority of Americans. I just want to tell him how much we all look forward to his leadership on this and so many other issues.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, might I thank the distinguished senior Senator from Michigan. He and I have been dear friends for years and years. I thank him for those words. I am also happy to see the gavel of the Armed Services Committee go into his hands.

Mr. LEVIN. I thank my dear friend from Vermont. I join him also in telling the Senate just how pleased we are to see the Presiding Officer sitting where he is. We have worked together on many issues. We have traveled together. His commitment to such critical issues as immigration, environment, energy, and a number of other issues has made a real difference. He is a very quick study and a quick learner, as noted when we traveled together to Iraq and other countries. So he indeed fits the chair which he is sitting, and it is a pleasure to look at him as I address the Senate for a few minutes this afternoon.

REBUILDING AMERICA'S MILITARY ACT OF 2007

Mr. President, I join our majority leader, Senator REID, in introducing S. 8, the Rebuilding America's Military Act of 2007. Every Member of the Senate, every Democrat, every Republican, strongly supports our men and women in uniform and is committed to providing them with the training, equipment, and support they need and deserve. I commend Senator HARRY REID for recognizing that much needs to be done in this regard and that we need to commit ourselves to doing what needs to be done.

As the situation in Iraq has grown steadily worse over the last 3 years, our military commitments in that country have placed an increasing strain on our Armed Forces. For example, delays in ordering body armor and other protective equipment have left some of our troops vulnerable in combat. Failures to fully fund special replacement and repair of equipment that has been damaged and destroyed in the course of ongoing operations endangers our troops. The decision to send our best and most ready equipment to Iraq has left the military's nondeployed ground forces with a declining and dangerously low level of readiness to meet their wartime missions. For example, at least two-thirds of the Army units in the United States are rated as not ready to deploy. That is a totally unacceptable situation rel-

ative to the readiness of our forces. The repeated deployments and a sustained high operational tempo have placed increasing strains on members of the Armed Forces and their families.

It is my hope that we will change course in Iraq for many reasons, but one of them surely is that such a change will help address many of the problems that I have identified here in these few minutes. Placing the responsibility for the future of Iraq in the hands of the Iraqis and beginning a phased withdrawal of our troops from that country in the next 4 to 6 months would be an important step toward turning responsibility for the future of Iraq over to the Iraqis, but also a critically needed step toward rebuilding our own military. We must act to ensure that our troops have the training, equipment, and support they need to remain the strongest and best military force in the world.

Senator REID's S. 8, Senate bill 8, the Rebuilding America's Military Act of 2007, commits us to taking such action. I am confident that we can do so on a bipartisan basis, and I look forward to proceeding in that manner as the weeks and months unfold.

I again thank the Chair. I again commend him for the way in which he has proceeded as a Senator in so many ways and for his friendship.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Idaho is recognized.

Mr. CRAIG. I thank the Chair.

(The remarks of Mr. CRAIG pertaining to the introduction of S.J. Res. 1 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced bills and Joint Resolutions.")

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico is recognized.

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I ask each side, the Democratic and Republican sides, be given an additional 10 minutes to speak in this period. I will take the first 5 minutes of that, and then my colleague from California, Senator BOXER, will take the second 5 minutes of the Democratic time remaining for us.

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

NATIONAL ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT SECURITY ACT OF 2007

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I am pleased to cosponsor S. 6, which is the National Energy and Environment Security Act of 2007. This is a message bill that Senator REID introduced earlier today. It lays out a number of important goals that will guide our thinking and action on energy-related matters, including the issue of global warming, in the 110th Congress.

Let me talk briefly about five key goals that are mentioned in the bill. These goals will be subject to much more detailed discussion in future weeks and to action both in the Energy Committee and, for some issues, in the Environment Committee as well.