

for the very executives who helped lose \$25 billion last year.

The answer to that woman is, no, there is nobody here who has a program that says: You know what, let's pay as much attention to the Main Street business that is struggling this morning as is being paid to the biggest banks that are too big to fail. Nobody is talking about that small business.

By the way, when they lose, they lose everything. That small business, that dream, that risk of, in most cases, all the assets that family has, when that is gone, it is gone. Is there anybody here who has put together some structure that says: Let's help those folks. Maybe the economic engine also runs well when you help folks at the bottom. Maybe things percolate up in America.

I think it is a fair question to ask. It is a fair question to ask that many ask about rewarding reckless behavior, about what do you do in a country to try to put an economy that has been so savaged by bad decisions and, in some cases, bad luck, but also greed, a carnival of greed, what do you do to put it on track, to give people confidence about the future? There is not one solution. There is not one answer. There are a series of things to be done. It seems to me, first and foremost, we have to try to understand that the American people cannot continue to read this. They cannot continue to read that they are asked to come up with another \$750 billion because these institutions are too big to fail but apparently not smart enough to understand you don't need to give \$3.6 billion in bonuses to people who lost \$25 billion. There is no Main Street in America where that decision would be made.

As I conclude, let me say that I want this country to succeed so badly. The President said it the other day. He had a room full of Republicans and Democrats in a joint session of Congress, and he said: I know everybody in this room loves their country. And we do. This country is in a lot of difficulty. It is not some natural disaster. This was not some Hurricane Katrina. This difficulty was caused by a lot of terrible decisions. Some people can call our offices and look at this Government and they can say: It was all Government policies. Let me just make this case as well that the consumer debt by the American people has gone up, up, up, straight up. That is not Government debt; that is consumer debt. That is also a problem. Giant trade deficits through unbelievably incompetent trade agreements, at \$700 billion a year. We have a lot of problems, and we need to address them all right now and begin fixing them and putting this country on course so that we have an economy people can believe in and so they can believe life will be better for their kids than it was for them because this is a country that cares about expanding the middle class and lifting everybody up.

We can do this. We can do it. But we won't do it by ignoring the things

about which I just talked. We ought to face them and face them now.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Alaska.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. I thank the Chair.

(The remarks of Ms. MURKOWSKI pertaining to the introduction of S. 503 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

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

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

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SESSIONS. 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.

E-VERIFY

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, we have had a number of discussions in recent days about the E-Verify system that allows employers to do a quick computer check of an individual's Social Security number to validate whether it is a legitimate number before hiring them, an action that would help them avoid hiring people in the country illegally.

The discussion has been whether to extend that program which is currently set to expire in March. I offered an amendment to do that, an amendment similar to the one that passed in the House last year, 407 to 2, that would extend the E-Verify program for 4 years. There are 100,000 American businesses using it every day, and 1,000 to 2,000 new businesses a week are signing up voluntarily—just voluntarily because it protects them.

They want to follow the law, as most of our businesses do. When they go through this process, if someone were to say: You deliberately hired someone illegally in the country, they could say: Well, we checked it out on the system and they showed up to be legitimate and we felt legitimate in hiring them. So it protects them and helps them follow the law.

But for some reason there has been a resistance here. It passed the House. It was in the House stimulus bill, that \$800 billion stimulus bill. It also provided, in the House legislation which was accepted and the majority of the House Members all voted for it on final passage, that everybody who gets a contract from the U.S. Government as part of this stimulus package must use E-Verify. In other words, it was designed to create and protect jobs for lawful Americans. The amendment, which was unanimously accepted in committee, said that beneficiaries of stimulus money must use the E-Verify system, and that E-Verify system would help ensure that only legal people would be hired. They could be green card holders; they could be legal work-

ers; they did not have to be citizens. But they at least ought to be in the country legally. And this Senate systematically refused to allow us to have a vote on that amendment, so it was not in the Senate bill.

I asked three or four times to be able to have a vote on that amendment and was rejected. When they went to conference, sure enough, as I suspected, as I stated on the floor, the Senate version won. Our bill, which did not have this language in it, prevailed. They took the House language out at conference without any deliberation. This was a common sense amendment, and I think it would have passed overwhelmingly in this Senate had we been allowed to have a vote.

So this has caused me great concern. A lot of us have believed President Bush and his administration failed to aggressively enforce the law to ensure that jobs are going to American workers and not those in the country illegally. And I criticized him for that.

But it does appear this administration and this new Congress may be even more determined to not enforce the law. In fact, it appears they may be indeed taking steps to undermine some of the programs that President Bush and the ICE Agency and the Homeland Security Department have been taking that were at least making progress toward creating a system of lawful immigration that we can be proud of.

We are a nation of immigrants. Nobody wants to end immigration in America. Over 1 million people can enter our country lawfully each year and become citizens and contribute to our country in many positive ways. But since so many people would like to come to our country, and we recognize we have to have a certain limit on the number who come, we have a legal system that requires them to make application, and by various standards they are approved or disapproved in their application. Those who are approved get to come to America, and those who do not have to wait until maybe later or maybe they, for one reason or another, are permanently unable to come. Maybe they have a criminal record or have other problems that would make them unacceptable for admission. No one has a constitutional right to come to America. We cannot have and do not have and should not have an open borders policy so that everybody who would like to come and work, can come and work.

So this is the situation we are in. In light of that, I was particularly troubled, I have to say, and all Americans should be troubled by a recent headline article in the Washington Times this week. It was about certain activist immigration rights groups criticizing the Obama administration because some of the agents in the Immigration Enforcement Division had raided an engine machine shop in Washington State and actually went so far as to detain certain illegal immigrants. They are not happy they actually went into a business and detained some individuals who

were in the country illegally, and they complained about that. So, apparently, according to the article, the Obama administration itself seemed “taken aback by the raid by the United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency.” The new Secretary, Janet Napolitano, was “vowing to Congress that she would get to the bottom of it.”

The article goes on to say that an official with the agency said, “The Secretary is not happy about it.”

Well, that is troubling to me. In 2008, under the Bush administration, which was not, I think, particularly aggressive—as a matter of fact, not aggressive enough, ICE made 5,173 administrative arrests at work sites. Additionally, ICE made 1,101 criminal arrests in connection with worksite investigations. Those arrest represented criminal activity, gangs or drugs or other kinds of criminal activity. They were doing that, and periodic enforcement actions were taken because a company does not have a right to have hundreds and hundreds of illegal workers who perhaps certainly are working for less money than Americans would work for.

That is not good and creates unfair competition and undermines our lawful immigration system. But this worried me even more. According to the Washington Times article, immigrant rights groups said they had discussed this with the administration some time during the last election. They did not discuss it publicly, but they apparently had discussions with the campaign, and they said this:

This was a fixture of our conversations and demands with him during the campaign. It has always been one that there would be a hold on the raids or a stop to the raids.

The National Council of La Raza has urged supporters to call the White House and demand that Mr. Obama lay out his immigration policy. In criticizing this, they said:

What are Latino and immigrant voters to think? They turn out in massive numbers and vote for change and yet the change we can believe in turns out to be business as usual.

Well, I think maybe the American people need to make some demands on this administration. Maybe that is the way you get things done; you make demands on the administration that they actually enforce the law and that they do not conduct investigations of the law enforcement personnel who were doing what the law required and who were, by all accounts, legitimately identifying illegal workers in America.

So now, according to this article, the Secretary of Homeland Security is investigating our law enforcement officers for simply doing their duty in response to some secret demand and agreement they made back in the campaign to undermine law enforcement in America. I do not think it is good.

This is why people are upset with Washington and upset with Congress. I believe in lawful immigration. I think we need to stop all of this. But what do

we do? Nothing. Whenever something starts happening and has some possibility of being successful, well, politicians intervene and stop the law enforcement officers from doing their duty.

I am really concerned about it. The Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency says in their statement about the operation that they were investigating criminal activity, and they apparently discovered in the course of that the hiring records revealed a significant number of people were using bogus Social Security numbers and counterfeit identity documents. That is why they did their jobs. They went and checked it out and found 28 people at this company who were not here lawfully.

So now the Secretary of Homeland Security has promised to get to the bottom of it—not to the bottom of why this company was hiring 28 illegal workers, not asking whether this company ever used the E-Verify system, they are going to get to the bottom of why the law enforcement officers of the U.S. Government, paid for by the taxpayers, had the temerity to actually go out and investigate criminal activity and detain people in the country illegally.

So I have to tell you, this is not going to fly. We are not going to go quietly about this issue. We need a vote in the Senate, and we need one soon to extend E-Verify. It is unthinkable that this highly successful, proven system that over 100,000 businesses voluntarily are using would be allowed to expire.

The only reason it would be allowed to expire would be we do not want the laws enforced. And, by the way, E-Verify does not raid any businesses. E-Verify does not call for a single investigator, not a single detention facility. All it says is the business owner could check and not hire someone if they did not have good documents. That is all. They do not arrest them. They do not call the police. Nothing happens. You just eliminate the jobs magnet, as the Border Patrol people tell us, that is causing people to come to our country illegally to get jobs, and that magnet is a factor. E-Verify would diminish that.

I wished to share those thoughts. I believe this is a troubling event. We need to consider it and not go down this path. It signals a further erosion of the efforts to bring a lawful system to this unlawful system we have today.

The Secretary does deserve credit for one statement she made, that businesses do need to be held accountable for exploiting the illegal labor market. I thought that was a good statement. She went on to state that there is an impact of illegal workers in the country and “that has impacts on American workers, and it has impacts on wage levels, often has undue impacts on illegal workers themselves.”

This is also true. There are costs to the American worker in terms of

wages, the ability to get a job, when we allow huge numbers of illegal workers into the country.

I hope our colleagues will consider this issue. The American people have a different view than some about the need to enforce our laws. The American people would like to see that, before we start talking about amnesty and a lot of other things. If we are not going to enforce the law, why should we go forward with some of these expansive programs that have been proposed to allow persons who only recently broke into the country to be placed on legal status? The American people are not naive about this. They want something done, and they have a right to expect it. We in Congress have to figure out a way to be responsive to their demands and not focus only on the demands of special interests, certain big businesses, and certain activist groups, but to focus on legitimate demands of the public for good public policy. Good public policy requires the end of the illegality in immigration and the establishment of a lawful system of immigration that honors our great heritage of immigration of which we have always been proud.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Delaware.

SUPPORTING SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING

Mr. KAUFMAN. Mr. President, America's economy is in crisis. We can either drown under the weight of the problem, or we can ride the wave of opportunity that it offers.

To do that, we must put science, engineering, and innovation back in their rightful place in our economy.

If every cloud has a silver lining, this economic crisis can benefit America, we use this opportunity to restore our leadership in the world, if we create anew the industries, businesses and products that will shape the new economy.

As the only Senator holding an engineering degree, I remember when engineering ranked far ahead of business administration as the premier college degree for those who had ambition and the determination to succeed.

After the Soviet Union's 1957 surprise launch of Sputnik 1, American leaders spurred the Nation to catch up, to increase our national commitment to science.

The Sputnik crisis led to the creation of NASA and other government research agencies, as well as an increase in U.S. Government spending on scientific research and higher education.

It doesn't seem that long ago, but I was one of the young students who were drawn by Sputnik and our leaders' call to seek an engineering degree.

More recently, though, more and more of America's best and brightest college students opted instead to take their “quant” skills in math and analysis to Wall Street.