

campaign ads make it difficult to develop responsible solutions to complex problems. Thirty-second campaign TV ads are seldom a template for responsible problem-solving. The stovepiping of news sources, where citizens are hearing the news they want to hear, reinforcing their already held views, is digging deeper the lines of political division in our country. The demonizing of those who think differently is creating coarseness in our political discourse that neither serves our democracy nor sets a positive example for our children. If adults don't treat each other with respect, can we expect any different from our children?

□ 2120

The loss of centrists—Republicans and Democrats alike—in Congress will make it more difficult in the years ahead to find the common ground of compromise. A parliamentary government can work with one party on one end of the political spectrum and another on the other end with few in between, because the party in the majority in that type of government has the power to implement its programs. However, in our American democracy, built upon the principle of checks and balances, bipartisanship is needed to pass laws on major issues and then to earn acceptance of those laws from the public.

The financial problems of major regional newspapers have reduced the impact of one of the key checks and balances of our democracy—a vigorous and free press.

The financial power of corporations, unions and special interests, especially under the Citizens United Supreme Court case, to spend unlimited, non-transparent millions in congressional races without any accountability to the public who funds those races could seriously undermine the integrity of not just campaigns but of voting decisions made by Members of Congress.

Despite all of these challenges in the short term, I am confident of America's long-term future. Our people and our democracy are resilient. When Americans face hardship, we find a way to endure and overcome those hardships. They always have. We always have and always will as a people. When our democracy gets off center, we the people find a way to bring it back in line.

In every generation, including that of our Founding Fathers, there have been predictors of doom. In every generation, they have been wrong. Americans have faced a revolutionary war, a civil war, two world wars, and a great depression. In each case, we the people found a way to meet those challenges and overcome them.

While I have met some famous people over the past 20 years of my public service, I have seen the soul and spirit of America through the lives of everyday citizens. It is they who give me faith in our future. It is the teacher who volunteers to help students after

school; the military widow who asks how she can help other grieving widows; the soldier who misses the births of his two children while he is serving his country overseas; the veteran who continues giving back to country long after his or her service is completed; and the hardworking small business people—farmers and workers—who work hard every day just to provide a better life and hope for their families.

I will never ever forget Erin Buenger—a beautiful, little, red-headed girl from Bryan, Texas—in my district—who came to Washington to lobby me for better health care research for rare children's diseases. For 7 years, Erin fought bravely against a rare cancer, neuroblastoma. Yet you would never have known she had had a bad day in her life because she was so full of life. Erin won my heart. She won my heart before she died at the age of 12, but her spirit will always live on to inspire me and those blessed to know her—to inspire us to do better, to be better. As long as we have Americans with the courage, values, and heart of Erin Buenger, who personified the American spirit, our Nation's future will be bright.

I would save the last words I will speak from this House Chamber for my family. Throughout my years in Congress, it was my wife, Lea Ann, and our two sons, J.T. and Garrison, who always kept me grounded. Every day of public service has truly been an honor, and I am grateful to the people of Central Texas for that privilege, but throughout the years, it was the love from my family and my love for my family that always meant the most to me. It was their love that reminded me what life and public service should be about.

I can never say enough about the personal sacrifices and responsibilities that Lea Ann took on to make my work possible. She has been my personal hero throughout these years, and I love her with all my heart for who she is and what she has done as a wife, as a mother, as a USO cochair, and as a Boy Scout leader.

To our sons J.T. and Garrison, it is my hope that somehow I have shown them that trying to make a positive difference for others is part of our mission here on Earth, and that that mission begins with loving our families.

Serving the American family has been the privilege of my life, but the joy of my life has always been my family.

We the people are fortunate to live in the greatest Nation in the world. God has truly blessed us, and now it is up to us to be good stewards of those blessings.

Thank you.

THE DREAM ACT AND ITS WAY FORWARD

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, the gentleman from Colo-

rado (Mr. POLIS) is recognized for 30 minutes as the designee of the Majority Leader.

Mr. POLIS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to talk about the young people whose futures are impacted by our Congress' failure to find a path forward with regard to the DREAM Act or to find some way of determining what they should do, what they should be—these Stateless individuals, these young people, these children of our Nation.

The DREAM Act is truly one of the most, if not the most, important pieces of legislation that we have discussed on the floor of the House. Certainly, for the individuals involved, it means everything—everything—to hundreds of thousands of de facto Americans. To them and to all of us, it is extremely important. We have a choice between forcing a brain drain from our country or retaining the best and brightest to contribute to our economy and make our economy stronger and our Nation more prosperous.

I will discuss the moral, economic, educational, and security reasons why we should pass the DREAM Act. As this Congress failed to act on the DREAM Act, it remains an issue that we simply must address with regard to these young people, and it cannot be ignored. I also want to pose two questions.

One is: What would we ask of these young people? What do we want them to do? The second: What action would they undertake that is best for us and our country? What should we be asking them to do for us?

First of all, what we are talking about here are young people who grew up in this country, who were brought here when they were 2 years old, when they were 6 years old by parents who were illegal immigrants but who made no choice to ever violate our laws and grew up in this country as any other American does. The young people we are talking about are the children that any parent would be proud of—our sons and daughters, our classmates in our schools, our brothers and sisters of native-born Americans, kids who stayed in school and graduated, who work hard, who stay out of trouble, who serve in our military. They are the children of our great Nation.

We in our country should be proud—not proud of the broken and dysfunctional immigration system and lack of enforcement that put them in this situation; not proud of their parents' violations of our immigration laws, no matter how out of touch with reality those laws may be; certainly not proud of the indignities, discrimination, and fear that these young Americans have faced at every turn—but proud, proud of how these young Americans have overcome adversity and have demonstrated American exceptionalism, their pluck, their ingenuity, their ambition, their drive, and their creativity in pursuit of, as our Declaration of Independence puts it, life, liberty and the pursuit of

happiness. These young people embody the very best of our American values, and we should be proud to call them our countrymen.

I was touched, Madam Speaker, by the great risks that many of these young people took in putting themselves out there—allowing their names to appear in newspapers and their faces to appear on television—in putting their futures at risk simply to tell us the story that they know we would understand: that they are here and that they are American.

This is a great Nation, and we will be stronger still, greater still with the full participation of these young *de facto* Americans, each with the opportunity to go as far in life as their ambitions and abilities will take them. I want to talk about a few of these young people today.

Prior to our successful passage of the DREAM Act out of the House—unfortunately, it later died in the Senate—I talked on the phone to several of the young people in my district, my constituents, who would be directly impacted.

□ 2130

This debate is really about young women like Zandy. Zandy was brought to the United States when she was 4 years old from Zacatecas, Mexico. Zandy grew up in the United States and didn't even know that her parents had taken her illegally until she was 9 years old when one of her friends was flying to Montana and their family invited her but her parents told her she couldn't go because she didn't have papers. Zandy went to prom senior year like other high schoolers. It was really cool, she said. Finally, my mom let me and I wanted to look pretty for prom. I didn't have a date so me and my friends went together.

Now, Zandy has a passion for law enforcement. As she puts it, quote, I want to help stop the drug cartels. Zandy, who is currently enrolled at the Community College of Denver, wants to be a DEA agent. Our decision in Congress will determine if she engages in law enforcement to protect our laws or is pursued by law enforcement in violation of our laws. We will create either an agent of public safety, or we will criminalize a young woman because of actions that were not her own.

The question that will face us and the next Congress: Will we allow Zandy to become someone who protects us or someone who we must spend money criminalizing and hunting? Which benefits America more? Zandy said, I want to be in law enforcement in doing what I want to do in my life. Madam Speaker, we want Zandy as an American.

This debate is about Claudia. Claudia's 21 years old and is a third-year college student at the University of New Mexico. She attends college in New Mexico because, unfortunately and shamefully, my own State of Colorado doesn't offer in-State tuition to residents who have lived there 10 years,

15 years. Claudia was brought to the United States when she was 7 years old. In high school, she was vice president of the Latino Youth Leadership Club and engaged in hundreds of hours of community service tutoring younger kids. Claudia enjoyed tutoring younger children and wants to be an early childhood education teacher, teaching preschool and kindergarten.

She has no immediate family in Guadalajara, Mexico, where her family took her from. She was brought up here and she doesn't have any memories of her old country. She's a role model for her 11-year-old sister. She said, It's sad that we're looked upon differently than other people, even though we've been here long enough to know everything. This law would help me be near my family. Claudia, when this Congress manages to pass the DREAM Act and immigration reform, would likely transfer to the University of Colorado closer to her family. It poses a question for us. Put yourself in that situation: What would we do? What's the right thing to do? Madam Speaker, we want Claudia as an American.

This debate is about Luis. Luis was brought to the United States by his parents when he was 10 years old in 2001. I talked to him on the phone last week. He grew up as American as anybody else. He was active in the French club and was on the soccer team at Skyline High School. He was accepted into the University of Northern Colorado but couldn't attend because of his lack of status. He wants to be a psychiatrist, but he's not in school because of immigration status. He was accepted to the University of Colorado, assigned to a dorm, went to classes for the first day, went up there and registered, but wasn't able to attend because of out-of-state tuition. Luis said, There's never a difference between me and my peers.

Luis also seems to have a potential career ahead of him perhaps as a pundit or in public service or even perhaps as a, God forbid, lobbyist because the way he put it to me is in language that would translate to Members of this Chamber. Luis said, with understanding far beyond the average for his age of 19, Many of the Republicans are looking into the money side of things. What I would tell them is that they should look at us not as a burden but as someone who would brighten their future. We are here and we're not going to go anywhere, and we're going to make this country better, create jobs, and make the economy better.

And I would ask any of my colleagues, particularly those in this Chamber or the other Chamber that have not yet been supporters of the DREAM Act, why are they against making our country better, creating jobs, and making the economy better? Or is there somehow a disconnect and they don't believe that Luis as a psychologist versus Luis as a worker in the underground economy would make

our economy better, create jobs and prosperity for America? Luis said, America is the place where you can make things happen. Madam Speaker, we want Luis in America.

This debate is about Angel. Angel is a senior in high school, currently in my district in Colorado. His parents brought him from Zacatecas, Mexico, when he was 6 years old. In high school, he's very active and serves on the student council and the theater club. He won an essay contest a couple of years ago and got a trip to New York City where he told me how excited he was to meet members of the cast of "Wicked." The 4 days he spent in New York City helped show Angel a key interest in the arts, and he wants to go to college for the performing arts. He just turned 19 years old and serves as a role model for his brother, who is in the same situation and is 14 years old and was brought here when he was 1 year old. Angel has no memories of any other countries, and he's never been to Mexico. Madam Speaker, we want Angel as an American.

This debate is about Michelle, a constituent from my district. I talked to her on the phone last week. Michelle was brought to the United States when she was 7 years old. Her little sister had a skin disease caused by pollution in Mexico City. She had a good life in Mexico City. Her dad was a lawyer. Her mom stayed at home. Now, both her parents clean homes in the United States.

Michelle is now in her first semester at Community College of Denver. She went to Fairview High School and was on the girls soccer team as a forward. She also won an award from the Boulder Youth Advisory Board, or YOAB, for greatest helper in the Boulder community because of her community service. She credited one of her teachers, Mrs. Carpenter, for helping to get her involved with community service, including the Rotary Club. Michelle has never been back to Mexico City. She's now 18 years old. She found out she was undocumented in 8th grade when she wanted to go on a school trip to Washington, D.C., our Nation's capital.

Michelle wants to transfer to study marine biology. She said, I would love to study marine biology, but I'm not sure they will let me because of my situation. She continued on the phone with me last week, My life is here now. It's not our decision to come here, but we came and we're studying and we're trying to make our life better than our parents and to make a good life for ourselves. They are stopping the dreams for students who don't have papers. I don't know if they want us to work in McDonald's or Wendy's. I don't know what they want us to do. They aren't letting us reach our goals or our dreams.

Madam Speaker, I ask all of us, What do we want Michelle to do? I believe, Madam Speaker, that we want Michelle as an American.

Constituent service is one of the most fulfilling components of our job on both sides of the aisle. An elected office, it's fundamentally a helping occupation. We enjoy helping people. We might have different ideas about how to do it, but that's why we're here. There is little satisfaction as good as helping a veteran who served our country get the benefits that he's entitled to but had been wrongfully turned down by a faceless bureaucracy. We're fundamentally in this business to help people. When a constituent can stay in their home because of our work and finding an alternative to foreclosure, what thrill can top that for a Member of this body?

And then, Madam Speaker, there's times when we're not able to help. Chih Tsung Kao is 24 years old. His story started when he was 4. He entered the States with his mother with a visitor's visa, which was later changed to a student visa. I talked to him on the phone last week. He said, I was basically dropped off at my grandmother's in Boulder, Colorado, as my mother left back for Taiwan.

During his stay with his paternal grandparents, his student visa expired due to their negligence. They forgot to renew it. Chih was 17 years old before he learned that his visa had expired. Since then he's looked for different legal routes to obtain some sort of legal status, all leading to that end. I was impotent in my office, as were our Senators, to help young Chih find any route that would allow him to contribute to this country. Chih is a college graduate with a civil engineering degree from the Colorado School of Mines, our premier engineering university in Golden, Colorado.

And now, Madam Speaker, Chih is serving in the Taiwanese military due to their conscription policy, and he's trying to readjust to his life there. This is how he describes his life. He said, I'm illiterate in Chinese which makes simple, everyday tasks here in the military difficult. I'm trying to learn basic spoken Chinese, but I can't even understand their basic commands. I try to move when others move. I will see how they will utilize me after my basic training ends and I'm assigned to a new post, but many superiors have told me they're not sure what they're going to do with me.

□ 2140

Now, you know, Chih contacted my office for help, but I wasn't able to intervene. And America lost this great mind, this great contributor, this great engineer.

He wrote to me an email. He said he hopes that his story helps paint a small piece of a larger picture for those who don't understand the situation and the feeling of helplessness that many students and young people have. He said, It's a hard thing, feeling like the country you consider home doesn't want you in the country at all.

Visualize this image, Madam Speaker, of a young man with an engineering

degree from Colorado's premier engineering school, forced to serve in the military of a foreign country where he knows no one, trying to obey orders in a language he doesn't understand. It's farcical. This is a waste of human capital, a waste of our taxpayer money to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars educating Chih, only to force him to serve in the military of a country where he doesn't even speak the language and has no loyalty. It's absurd. And it happens every day.

The DREAM Act, which our House passed and the Senate failed to act on, will solve it; and it will be the challenge for all of us in this body in the next Congress to answer how we can help Chih and others like him. We hold their futures in our hands, Madam Speaker. And while this Congress failed to act, the question doesn't go away. It puts all of us in a position of having to go back to these young people—Claudia, Zandy, Chih—and say, Not yet, when we all know it's inevitable.

This debate is about how to make our country stronger, more secure, more prosperous. This debate is about our values. This debate is about Zandy and Luis. This debate is about our country and our future.

We've invested over \$70,000 of taxpayer money in Michelle's education. Now it's our choice: Do we want her to be a respected marine biologist or an illegal immigrant cleaning buildings for \$6 an hour? It's up to us. Which is better for us? Which is better for our Nation? In our shoes, what do we want them to do, these young people, to better us and to better our Nation? Is somehow consigning a future scientist who might discover the cure to cancer to clean offices at 2 in the morning at minimum wage or below wise?

Michael Crow, president of Arizona State University said, "There is a million-dollar difference, over a lifetime, between the earning capacity of a high school graduate and a college graduate." Drew Faust, president of Harvard said, "The DREAM Act would throw a lifeline to these students who are already working hard in our middle and high schools and living in our communities by granting them the temporary legal status that would allow them to pursue postsecondary education."

By fixing this, Madam Speaker, we will not only help these young people, but we will help eliminate the achievement gap in our schools and inspire other students to achieve, by upping the ante of performance in our public schools.

In the words of Secretary Arne Duncan of Education, he said, "Passing the DREAM Act will unleash the full potential of young people who live out values that all Americans cherish—a strong work ethic, service to others, and a deep loyalty to our country."

If not the DREAM Act, then what? What do we tell these young people? What do I tell Michelle? What do I tell Zandy? How do any of us answer these

constituents of ours who are stateless individuals?

The theme of my service in Congress is human capital issues: improving our schools, our education, increasing access to higher education, taking on entrenched interests where necessary to improve our human capital. But the flip side of the education aspect of developing human capital is immigration. Not only do we want to grow the next generation of global leaders here at home, but we want to import the best and brightest from around the world, and we keep shooting ourselves in our own foot in this regard.

We lost Chih not because of him but because of us. We turned a highly trained taxpayer-financed engineer into an incompetent enlistee in a foreign military. It doesn't sound very smart to me. We should want to provide students with powerful incentives to stay in school, do well, and graduate.

A 2010 study by the UCLA North American Integration and Development Center estimated that the earnings from the beneficiaries of the DREAM Act over the course of their working lives would be between \$1.4 trillion and \$3.6 trillion for America. We want them working in America. We are causing a brain drain of our own making, a drain in which the very best of a generation, the college-bound, the graduate school-bound, the doctors, the servicemen, the scientists and poets are given a terrible choice: go to a distant land where you have no connections, may not even speak the language, or stay here and work in an underground, unskilled labor market.

Fixing immigration and the DREAM Act would also improve our national security. Leaders from the armed services have been nearly unanimous in their support of the bill because they recognize it would help our military shape and maintain a mission-ready, all-volunteer force. Former Secretary of State General Colin Powell and military leaders from both parties have spoken in support of the DREAM Act, as has Defense Secretary Robert Gates.

You know, I don't frequently make moral arguments in this Chamber. I heard one of the earlier speeches by Mr. GOHMERT. And our theology doesn't have a lot in common, Madam Speaker, but we try to find common ground. I think the Members of this Chamber, whether they come from the faith traditions of Christianity or Judaism, Islam or Buddhism, agnosticism or atheism, various strings of orthodoxy within their traditions, we like to consider ourselves moral people.

Let me quote from Deuteronomy 24:16: "Fathers shall not be put to death for their sons, nor shall sons be put to death for their fathers." There is not a moral code prevalent in Judeo-Christian thought that suggests that it's moral for humanity to visit the sins of the father upon the son.

These commonsense values are reflected in our legal code. When someone dies, their debts aren't passed to

the son or daughter. When an adult is pulled over for a speeding ticket, no ticket is given to the 2-year-old riding in the child's seat in back. But that's exactly what, in this debate, some people are advocating: Ticket the 2-year-old who was along for the ride, they say. What that 2-year-old was doing was illegal. They were speeding too. The child was speeding.

But regardless of one's faith, punishing the wrong person for a crime because of a blood relation, because of happenstance defies our ethical sense. Some have said, This is some kind of amnesty. One can't grant amnesty to people who haven't committed any wrong, who have not violated any law.

It makes no sense to talk of amnesty for a 2-year-old who is brought along on a ride that they didn't choose. Ticketing the 2-year-old makes no more sense than penalizing a child for passively being brought here by their parents. A 2-year-old, a 5-year-old, an 11-year-old not only is incompetent to make a choice to violate the law; but even if you assume that they were, and a 6-year-old was competent for their decisions to violate our immigration laws, they are, in practice, unable to economically or socially separate from the family unit that provides for their sustenance. No one with any degree of common sense can say a 6-year-old should leave their parents if their parents are violating some law. A child has to go with their parents. There is nothing else a child can do.

With our proposals, we were willing to even say we don't even go up to the age of 18. To eliminate any question, we said, If you are 17, if you are 16, then you are going to somehow be responsible. You should know better. You should leave your parents and home and support structure. And that's a painful concession to make because I think many of us know in our hearts that 16-year-olds, 17-year-olds that we know, are they really mature and capable enough to leave their parents and survive completely on their own? Some might be, but many are not.

So we set the maximum age of 15 in the DREAM Act. That's a concession we made, we thought, to make this bill low-hanging fruit to get it passed because no one can argue that an 8-year-old or a 12-year-old is capable of what we expect a 17- or 18-year-old to have done under this bill. The lack of having some mechanism of adjusting the status of these stateless individuals, these de facto Americans is immoral for our Nation and forces underage children to bear the heavy costs of their parents' decision to violate our laws.

You know, I wish that we had passed comprehensive immigration reform and replaced our broken immigration system with one that worked, and I am proud to say I am a cosponsor of the House bill to have done that. We should reduce the number of illegal immigrants from about 15 million to about close to zero. And we know how, and we can. But we did not, so we are where we are.

We're talking about, with regard to these young people, one of the politically easiest, bipartisan, most economically important, most morally pressing elements of immigration reform, recognizing the hundreds of thousands of de facto Americans who were brought here as minors without their knowledge or consent and that our taxpayer dollars have educated and will be living their lives in our Nation as legal entities with potential to eventually obtain the full rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

You know, passing the DREAM Act would reduce the number of illegal immigrants in our country by 500,000 people. Those who oppose the DREAM Act support the ongoing presence of over 500,000 more illegal aliens within our borders. Opponents of the DREAM Act make a travesty of the rule of law and facilitate the ongoing presence of undocumented foreign nationals inside our country which hurts the budgets of counties, cities, and frustrates States, with good reason. Opponents of the DREAM Act would make a criminal, rather than a police officer, out of Zendy.

□ 2150

States like Arizona have taken actions against illegal immigration precisely because of the size of this issue and Congress' complete failure to do anything about it.

With the DREAM Act, we had a chance to cut illegal immigration instantly by 5 percent. That's substantial. I'd rather cut it by 100 percent, but 5 percent is something we can be proud of, a first step to show the American people we're serious about solving the immigration issue.

At the same time, it strengthens our economy, improves our schools, makes money for taxpayers, \$1.7 billion, and restores the rule of law to our Nation.

The CBO said that it will reduce the deficit by \$1.7 billion. That doesn't even include the future income streams we talked about earlier. I certainly expect that all Members who are serious about reducing the deficit will enthusiastically support deploying the talent that these young people have to bear in our country.

In my home State of Colorado, roughly 46,000 people would have been eligible under the DREAM Act. Madam Speaker, I have to go back to them and tell them, Not yet. Be patient. Keep playing by the rules. Study hard. Work hard. Our country will get it right. I hope it's next year. I hope it's the year after. But not yet.

Our decision before us was clear. We had the choice of making a marine scientist out of Claudia or an illegal immigrant. Last week, I'm sad to say, Madam Speaker, that while our House would have made a marine scientist out of Claudia, the failure of action in the Senate has made Claudia an illegal immigrant. Our Nation deserves more scientists and engineers, not more illegal immigrants.

I want to pose two questions. One is: What would we ask of them? What do we want these young people to do? That's what they ask me. What would you have us do?

And the second: What is best for us and our country?

Claudia posed it well. What do they want us to do? she said.

Instead of going to college and serving in the military, are we telling Claudia to clean buildings at night? Are we telling her to become a nanny or a construction worker? Are we telling her to go to a country where she doesn't know anyone, barely speaks the language, and hasn't even been to in her memory?

I want Claudia to be the best darn marine scientist in the United States and to make great scientific discoveries that benefit humanity and improve our knowledge of the ocean.

For those who oppose the DREAM Act, I ask them: What do you want Claudia to do?

These stateless young people will be a credit to any nation. Let's make it our Nation.

Madam Speaker, this debate is about Ray. Ray was brought here when she was 2 years old. Her parents told her that she was born in the United States so she wouldn't feel the stigma of being foreign born. So Ray grew up not knowing she was foreign born until she was a teenager. Ray wanted to be involved with fashion. Her tough, can-do attitude led her to start her own lace business. Now, unfortunately Ray is no longer with us. She passed away. But don't fret. This immigrant story ends happily. Ray Keller, my great grandmother, passed away at the age of 98 in 1989. Without friendly immigration laws that allowed people to naturalize, I wouldn't be standing here before you today as a Member of Congress.

So too, Madam Speaker, there are future generations of Americans including, I'm sure, future Members of this body who are relying on Congress to act to recognize their forebears as the excellent Americans they already are.

Madam Speaker, Ray Keller was a proud American. This speech tonight is not a eulogy for a lost opportunity to pass the DREAM Act and replace our broken immigration system; rather, this speech is a challenge, a challenge to the next Congress to give all of us an answer, an answer for what Claudia should do, an answer for what these young people, these children of our country should do with their lives, should do with their lives to pursue their own dreams and should do with their lives to contribute to the only country they know—the United States of America.

LAME DUCK CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Madam Speaker, it's always a privilege and an honor to