

United States and know only the United States as home. We need comprehensive immigration reform, but this is an instance where current law is unfairly penalizing thousands of young adults who did nothing wrong.

I want to take this opportunity to highlight the story of a young New Yorker who exemplifies the DREAM Act. Cesar Vargas was brought by his parents to the United States when he was only 5 years old. It was not his decision to come here, but he grew up in New York, graduated from high school, completed college, and is now in his final year of school at City University of New York School of Law, with a 3.8 GPA. He dreams of becoming a military lawyer after he graduates. But, he cannot fulfill his dream of serving in our military because he is undocumented. Our country would benefit from the dedication of young men and women like Cesar, who grew up as our neighbors and our children's classmates and friends—young men and women who want to serve this great nation of immigrants and give back to the country they call home.

This legislation creates opportunities for young people who did not come here on their own choosing, and ensures that they will become productive members of our society. For these reasons, I support this measure and I implore my colleagues in the Senate to vote in support of this measure, as well.

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. President, I wish to reiterate what I have long believed to be the right step to take in addressing a longstanding issue that affects young people in my State of Colorado and across this country. That step is to pass legislation known as the DREAM Act that will ensure that upstanding young adults who were brought into this country illegally by no fault of their own have the opportunity to attend college and contribute to our economy or join the military and serve our country.

Just over 3 years ago there was a large bipartisan group of Senators that understood that children who were brought to this country by no fault of their own should not be blamed for the sins of their parents. It is mind-boggling to me that we now have to struggle to get those same Members who are still in the Senate today to support that commonsense notion, which underlies the DREAM Act. I respect the decisions of my colleagues and I want to give my colleagues who have had a change of heart the benefit of the doubt, but my guess is that partisanship is what has prevailed here. I believe this because the bipartisan-approved legislation that the House of Representatives has sent us is more stringent than previous versions of this legislation that was once sponsored and supported by both Republicans and Democrats.

When you run down the list of fees, restrictions, requirements, waiting periods, and other criteria for eligibility in the DREAM Act, you begin to see

that this is a robust plan to give high-achieving young people an opportunity to contribute positively to our country. Not only will individuals who were brought to this country before the age of 16 have to prove they have been in the United States for at least 5 years before applying, they will also have to show that they are in good health, pass a background check, provide biometric data, and pay fees and taxes. Only then will they be allowed to enter a "conditional non-immigrant" status that would allow them to pursue their education or enter the military.

During the 10 years of their conditional status, they would be ineligible for entitlement programs such as welfare, Federal education grants and would be unable to sponsor family members for immigration purposes. They would also have to remain in good standing with the law and prove that they have command of the English language and American civics. If they meet those and other requirements after 10 years, they will then have to get in at the back of the line to wait their turn for a minimum of 3 more years—for an opportunity to naturalize as U.S. citizens. That seems more than fair to me.

The DREAM Act provides a robust and fair-minded plan to help America attract bright and talented individuals to contribute to our economy and strengthen our military. As military leaders who have served under Presidents of both parties have said, this bill will strengthen our readiness by giving these young men and women the chance to join our armed services. Furthermore, studies have shown that students who can realize their full earning potential can ultimately help pump billions of dollars back into our economy. These individuals are future businessmen, scientists, and innovators that could help our economy grow. In fact, the Congressional Budget Office has determined that this legislation would even help to reduce our deficit.

The DREAM Act has been debated for several years. It is finally time for us to do what is right in this situation, put aside partisanship and support this legislation.

DON'T ASK, DON'T TELL

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I rise today to speak in support of repealing the so-called don't ask, don't tell policy.

It has been 17 years since this misguided policy was enacted. I believed then, as I believe now, that it was wrong for Congress to legislate in this area. Prohibiting gays and lesbians from openly serving in our Armed Forces is contrary to our Nation's values and weakens our military's ability to recruit and retain competent individuals with critical skills.

By codifying a policy that reinforces discrimination, intolerance, and inequality, we established a system that is inconsistent with the rights em-

bodied in our Constitution and the fundamental notion that a person should be judged squarely on the basis of his or her qualifications—not the color of their skin, religious beliefs, or sexual orientation.

I recently had the opportunity to visit President Franklin Roosevelt's home in New York—there was a quote that I saw that was particularly moving. In a campaign address delivered in 1940, FDR stated:

I see an America devoted to our freedom—unified by tolerance and by religious faith—a people consecrated to peace, a people confident in strength because their body and their spirit are secure and unafraid.

I think this quote does a good job of capturing the true strength of America—a tolerant people committed to the preservation of freedom.

The ability of a person to serve in our Nation's military should be based on his or her experience, qualifications and conduct. Since the inception of the don't ask, don't tell policy in 1993, over 14,000 gay and lesbian servicemembers have been discharged solely because of their sexuality.

We have lost decorated soldiers and those with mission critical skills, such as Arabic linguists and intelligence specialists. Aside from the loss of necessary expertise, we've also wasted hundreds of millions of dollars in taxpayer money in discharging and replacing individuals who were completely willing and able to serve our country.

The policy is also contrary to the values held by our military professionals. In testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee, Admiral Mullen, Chairman of the Joints Chiefs of Staff, eloquently expressed this point:

No matter how I look at the issue, I cannot escape being troubled by the fact that we have in place a policy which forces young men and women to lie about who they are in order to defend their fellow citizens. For me personally, it comes down to integrity—theirs as individuals and ours as an institution.

When a person enlists in our Armed Forces and puts his or her life in harm's way in defense of our country, they should be able to serve with honor and dignity without being asked to live a life of deception.

Secretary Gates ordered that a comprehensive review be conducted to assess the impact the repeal of the law could have on military effectiveness and to make recommendations about how a change could be implemented. The report, which was released a couple of weeks ago, surveyed thousands of active and reserve servicemembers as well as their families, veterans groups, health officials, and service academies. It is my understanding that this unprecedented report was the most comprehensive review of a personnel matter ever conducted.

The key finding from this review is that the risk of repealing the don't ask, don't tell policy to overall military effectiveness is low and that the limited disruptions that may occur in

the short-term can be addressed adequately through leadership, education, and training. In short, the Armed Forces are capable of accommodating this change without hampering unit cohesion, readiness, recruiting, and combat operations.

There will never be complete unanimity when it comes to these types of controversial issues. However, the study found that 70 percent of military personnel believed that repealing the law would have positive, mixed, or no effect on them doing their jobs—only 30 percent anticipated that there would be negative consequences. And it is particularly telling that 92 percent of troops who served with a gay or lesbian servicemember believed their ability to work together was very good, good, or neither good or bad.

We've had almost two decades to evaluate the success or failure of this policy and the legislation we are debating takes a very judicious approach. The bill stipulates that the repeal of the policy will not take effect until 60 days after the President, Secretary of Defense, and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff make certain certifications. In particular, that sufficient implementation procedures are in place to ensure the repeal could be carried out in a manner consistent with standards of military readiness, effectiveness, unit cohesion, and recruiting and retention. In my view this is a very reasonable approach.

The reality is that it is no longer a question of whether this policy should be repealed, it is a matter of how it should be and in what matter. If Congress fails to act, it is very likely that the courts will. If this occurs, implementation may be more difficult and the changes may occur in a more haphazard manner as cases move slowly through the courts.

Keeping this law in place doesn't make us any safer and it is inconsistent with our Nation's commitment to equality. I urge my colleagues to support the repeal of this ill-advised policy.

TRIBUTES TO RETIRING SENATORS

BYRON DORGAN

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, at the end of each session of Congress it has long been a tradition in the Senate to take a moment to express our appreciation and say goodbye to those who will not be returning in January for the beginning of the next Congress. One of those I know I will miss who will be heading home to North Dakota to begin the next chapter of his life is BYRON DORGAN.

BYRON was raised in the ranching and wheat growing region of North Dakota in the town of Regent. Looking back, he has often said that he graduated in the top 10 of his high school class. "There were nine of us," he then adds with a smile.

Growing up in a community that was so heavily involved in agriculture gave

him an early taste of what rural life is all about. He experienced firsthand the importance of farming to his home State and the hard work associated with taking good care of the land and the resources it provides. He saw the way people who live on farms schedule their days—working from sunrise to sunset, going from task to task knowing there was always more work to be done than there were hours in the day. It was a lesson about the true meaning of hard work that would stay with him throughout his life and help direct his efforts and his service in the Senate.

One issue we shared an interest in and worked together on for years has been sales tax fairness. BYRON took his experience as a former tax administrator and I used my background as an accountant to focus our work on the issue. BYRON's understanding of our tax system and how it must work efficiently to provide the government with the resources that are needed to fund its operations was very impressive. That should come as no surprise to anyone since he had been appointed the tax commissioner of North Dakota at the age of 26, which made him the youngest constitutional officer in the State's history.

We also worked together on the Freedom to Travel to Cuba Act. We hope to change our current policies there because for 40 years they have failed to bring about the results we hope to achieve. It was clear to us both that if we wanted to bring our democratic ideas to Cuba to effect the changes we wanted to achieve, we had to find another way to do it. Fortunately, BYRON's leadership style and his speaking ability were again a great addition to the effort and helped to win us the support we needed to get things rolling.

Looking back on these and other issues, it is clear that BYRON's career has been guided by the lessons he learned as he was growing up about the importance of hard work and always giving your best to the task at hand every day. That is why you will always find him fighting for the needs of rural America and promoting a sense of fairness and equity in our tax system. There can be little doubt that he has accomplished a great deal during his service in the Senate. He has been a champion for rural America, and farmers and ranchers not only in North Dakota but all across the country have been grateful for his efforts and the results he has been able to achieve.

I don't know what BYRON has planned as he begins the next chapter of his life, but I am certain we have not heard the last from him and his wife Kim. They have been a team over the years as they have worked together for the people of North Dakota. They have made a difference, and they have a great deal to show for their efforts.

In the coming session, I know we will all miss BYRON's effective way of speaking and addressing the concerns of the people of his State. He has a

great sense of humor, and his ability to present the case for "his side" has won many an argument—some of them before they had even begun.

Good luck, BYRON. Keep in touch. We will always be pleased to hear from you.

GEORGE VOINOVICH

Mr. President, at the end of each session of Congress, as is our tradition, we take a moment to say goodbye and express our appreciation to those Members who will be returning home at the end of the year. I know we will miss them and the contributions they have made over the years to the debates and deliberations they have participated in on the Senate floor and in committee. One retiring Member I know I will especially miss is GEORGE VOINOVICH.

If ever it could be said of someone that they have never lost touch with their roots, it would be said of GEORGE. GEORGE was raised on Cleveland's east side, and he still lives there. His dad was an architect, and his mother was a schoolteacher. For his own part, until he was in his teens, GEORGE was determined to be a doctor. As he grew up, he found that he didn't get along very well with science, so right about then his direction and his focus changed. Fortunately for Cleveland and all of Ohio, GEORGE then decided that someday he would run for mayor and for Governor, which put him on the path that brought him years later to the U.S. Senate.

Those were big dreams for someone who up until then had only his success as high school class president to show on his political resume. That was also the time when his fellow classmates voted him most likely to succeed. It must have served as his inspiration because he proved them right. Over the years GEORGE proved to be a success at just about everything he set his mind to. That helped him to accomplish just about all that he had predicted and much, much more.

As any observer knows, one of the constant themes that runs through GEORGE's political career has been his determination to be a good steward of the resources we have been blessed to receive. It unsettles him to see waste of any kind, especially when it comes to our budget and the funds taxpayers all across the country send to Washington to run our government.

At each post he has served—mayor, Governor, and now, in the Senate—people have looked to him for his leadership and his willingness to make the tough choices that must be made if we are to provide our children with a fair chance to live their own version of the American dream. GEORGE has warned us more than once. If we continue to spend so much of our children's future resources, we will leave them with a huge debt and an economy so weak and sluggish as to offer them little hope of ever freeing themselves from it. We ought to listen to him and take his advice—for our sake and theirs.