

This amendment contains recommendations both from the SBA inspector general and the GAO for combating these reports of fraud and addresses vulnerabilities in the Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned small business program, the HUBZone program, and the 8(a) program. Additionally, the bill will work to change the culture at SBA to make the process of suspensions and debarments more transparent.

In order to effectively execute the small business contracting programs, the SBA needs a comprehensive framework to provide effective certification, continued surveillance and monitoring, and robust enforcement throughout the SBA's contracting portfolio. This bill aims to increase criminal prosecutions as well as suspension and debarments for businesses found to have attained contracts through fraudulent means, and requires the SBA to submit a report to Congress annually detailing the specific data on all suspensions, debarments, and cases referred to the Department of Justice for criminal prosecutions.

My amendment provides the SBA more stringent oversight capacity across all the SBA contracting programs. It is SBA's duty to utilize every fraud prevention measure at its disposal and this amendment puts the tools in place to punish the bad actors that have infiltrated the SBA contracting programs.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed for a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

THANKING BETTY HAMILTON

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I think most of us involved in public life realize that few people meet us and many more people meet those who represent us. That is why if you are a success as a Congressman or Senator or as an elected official, you really have to rely on the people who work for you, who time and again will represent you. Their approach, their sense of caring, their promptness, their courtesy will reflect on you.

If you are lucky—really lucky—you will have some extraordinary people working for you who cover you with glory every single day—even when you don't know it.

I started in politics and was lucky to have two early mentors. As a college student, the Senator who held this seat, Paul Douglas, inspired me to take an interest in government. Later, there was a man he introduced me to, Paul Simon, whom I succeeded in the Senate. I spent more time with Paul Simon, and he truly was my mentor. I

inherited many of my good habits from him.

I also inherited something else. I inherited one of his biggest fans and hardest workers, who came on my staff. Her name is Betty Hamilton. She first had her brush with public service in 1984 when she volunteered to work on the Senate campaign of Paul Simon. Paul had a way of bringing out the best in people and bringing the best people into politics. Betty sure fit the bill.

In that first campaign, Betty used to pull her two toddlers, Will and Ben, in a little wagon as she walked door-to-door in her neighborhood, knocking on doors and dropping campaign literature for Paul Simon. She was part of an army of volunteers who helped Paul score an upset victory in a very tough year, politically. Later, she signed on as volunteer coordinator and office manager for Paul Simon's reelection campaign.

After that election, Betty joined my staff when I was still in the House of Representatives. She has been with me ever since.

Betty works in casework. It sounds simple and routine, but it is not. Most of her work is with senior citizens. If an older person in southern Illinois calls my office because they are having a problem with Social Security or Medicare or some other Federal program or agency, Betty most often takes that call.

The people she works with often have no place else to turn. They can't afford lawyers. They just need someone who cares and who is competent. Maybe they have been incorrectly denied Medicare or disability payments or some other benefits they are entitled to, and they have tried but cannot cut through the bureaucracy to resolve their problems. Many of them are desperate. Some have spent every penny they have ever saved and have nothing left. They are on the verge sometimes of even losing their homes.

Betty Hamilton listens to them and she gets to work making phone calls, writing letters, sending e-mails, trying to make the wheels of government turn the way they should. She is an advocate for fairness and good government.

Over the years, Betty has talked with more than 8,000 people in Illinois. They are the lucky ones. She has saved hundreds of people from losing their homes. She has given them hope.

I go back on Fridays to Springfield, and I usually have a couple of thank-yous on my desk, and they always relate to staffers who have done a good job. Usually Betty's name is on them. I can't count the number of people who have written me about the work she has done. They say: Thank you for helping me. I greatly appreciate it. It is good to be able to pay my bills and take care of my kids, and a special thanks to Betty Hamilton.

I know Betty worries some nights about the people she tried to help. She has come in on many Saturdays to write one more letter or make one

more call she thinks might help. Just last week she helped someone in my State collect \$31,000 in disability payments that had been incorrectly denied them.

Like most people who grew up in St. Louis, Betty is a die-hard St. Louis Cardinals baseball fan. So she knows what I mean when I say I consider Betty Hamilton the Stan Musial of casework. Like Stan the Man, who played for the Cardinals for 22 years, she has worked for me for two decades. Like him, she is a modest person, and like Stan Musial, Betty has compiled a long and consistent record of success that is likely to remain unbroken for a very long time.

Betty didn't take to government initially. She has a master's degree in horticulture. Four years ago, she and her husband John, then retired from the State of Illinois, decided they would buy a farm near Springfield where they could raise produce—some of the best green beans and tomatoes you ever tasted. You could find them at the Springfield Farmers' Market downtown on Wednesdays and Saturdays. I know, I have seen them there the last two Saturdays. Don't miss their stand; it is the best. That is where I am going to be able to see her from now on.

Betty is retiring from my office, and I will miss her. More importantly, the people who have had her fine public service will miss her too. We are going to miss her greatly.

BEST WISHES TO SARA FROELICH

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, back in the year 2000, my wife Loretta and I went to the Democratic Convention in Los Angeles, and we ran into a young college coed from Illinois. She was a student at Wesleyan University in Bloomington, IL—originally from the Twin Cities of Minnesota. At that time, her name was Sara Nelson.

Sara Nelson had a class assignment to cover the convention for a weekly newspaper in Illinois. She was out there sleeping on the floor of somebody's apartment and wandering around trying to write a story for a weekly newspaper. She was a bright-smiling young woman, and Loretta and I liked her instantly.

As fate would have it, we ended up on the same plane flying back to Chicago when the convention had ended. We landed at Midway late, and as Loretta and I were leaving the baggage section, we saw Sara Nelson sitting on her bag by the curb. We said: Sara, where are you going?

She said: I missed my bus down to Bloomington—which is a little over 100 miles away—and I have to wait for one that will come later tonight.

I said: You're in luck because Loretta and I are driving down there. Get in the car.

She hopped in the car with us, and we drove down to Bloomington.

During the course of the trip, we got to know her and liked her even more.

She told us how much she loved politics and government and that she was soon going to graduate from Illinois Wesleyan University.

So I said: Why don't you call me sometime. Maybe you can be an intern in my office.

She agreed. She was not only an intern, she was one of the best. As soon as she graduated, we hired her. A year later, she was promoted to handle immigration and citizenship casework, and she did a great job. Then there was an opportunity for her to work as my deputy director for the entire downstate portion of Illinois. This was in 2006.

So Sara Nelson took off and became my representative, going all over the State and speaking for me at meetings and representing me and working on projects as important as the new courthouse in Rockford, IL, and the new bridge across the Mississippi River connecting Granite City with downtown St. Louis. There was no project too daunting for her. She took them on.

In the meantime, to nobody's surprise, she found the person she wanted to marry, John Froelich. She and John got married several years ago, and we went to the wedding—a beautiful event. Her family came down from Minnesota, and the two of them were perfect. John was in medical school studying to be an orthopedic surgeon. Lo and behold, shortly, about a year or so after that, along comes baby Naomi. I cannot tell you how much she loves that baby. She replaced politics, soccer, and the World Cup in her list of most important things. I see Sara out in the park on weekends pushing the stroller, sometimes running behind it with little Naomi giggling along the way.

There is some good news for Minnesotans and bad news for Illinois as this story comes to an end. John Froelich is a medical student and will start his fellowship at Mayo Clinic in Rochester in a few weeks, so Sara and Naomi and John are moving on. I will miss her. She has been a terrific asset on my staff and a terrific person. She is a great mom and has been a great ally in the course of the years she has worked for me.

Loretta and I wish Sara and John and Naomi the very best and thank them for the wonderful years of service they have given to me and the State of Illinois.

THE DREAM ACT

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, 2 years ago, I embarked on a legislative mission to pass a bill called the DREAM Act. The purpose of the DREAM Act was to give to young people who came to this country as children, and who were raised in the United States, who have graduated high school, who have done a well and made a good life in this country, a chance to become legal residents in the United States of America. They are

long-term U.S. residents. They have good moral character. They have graduated high school, and we say: If you will complete at least 2 years of college and military service in good standing, we will give you a chance to become legal.

There are thousands of young people who fit this description in the United States. They were brought here as kids. If their parents came to the United States and overstayed a visa or crossed the border when they shouldn't have, these children shouldn't be held accountable. They were children. We don't hold children accountable for any wrongdoing by their parents. They grew up here, they pledge allegiance to the flag in their classrooms here, they sing our national anthem, and many of them speak no other language other than English.

The purpose of the DREAM Act is that we should not punish children for their parents' actions. That is not the American way. Instead, the DREAM Act says to these students: America is going to give you a chance, a chance to continue living here and to make this an even better nation.

The DREAM Act is not just the right thing to do, it makes America a better country. The young people who would qualify for the DREAM Act are class valedictorians, star athletes, honor roll students, and ROTC leaders. They are the future doctors, soldiers, computer scientists, and engineers who will make this country even better.

The DREAM Act would strengthen our national security by giving thousands of highly qualified, well-educated young people the chance to enlist in the Armed Forces. The DREAM Act has the support of not only Secretary of Defense Robert Gates but also GEN Colin Powell.

The DREAM Act will help our economy by giving these talented young people the chance to become engineers and entrepreneurs, doctors, lawyers, teachers, small business owners, and nurses. That is why the DREAM Act has the support of business leaders from across the country, such as Rupert Murdoch and the CEOs of companies such as Microsoft and Pfizer.

The talented young people who would be eligible for the DREAM Act call themselves Dreamers. When I first embarked on this mission 10 years ago, they used to kind of hold back in the shadows of a meeting, kind of whisper to me as I went by that they would be saved if the DREAM Act were passed. Well, now they are stepping forward, and I am glad they are, so America can see who they are.

Every day these Dreamers contact my office to tell me their stories. These stories have energized me to keep up the fight. The last time we had a vote on this act on the Senate floor was last December. We had a majority. But when it comes to controversial issues, it takes 60 votes. I want to take this up again and give these young people a chance.

I want to tell you about two of these DREAM Act-eligible people.

Herta Llusho was brought to the United States from Albania when she was 11. She and her mother settled in Grosse Pointe, MI, a suburb of Detroit. Herta came here legally, but shortly after arriving, Herta's mother filed an application to stay in the United States.

Herta quickly learned English and became an academic star. She graduated from Grosse Pointe South High School with a 4.05 grade point average. In high school, she was a member of the varsity track team, won an Advanced Placement Scholar Award, and was a member of the National Honor Society.

Here is a picture of Herta at graduation. Herta is currently a junior at the University of Detroit Mercy, where she is an honors student studying to be an electrical engineer. She has a grade point average of 3.98 and has completed two internships at engineering firms.

She is also very involved in the community, volunteering at homeless shelters, tutoring programs, and her church. Listen to what one of her friends says about Herta:

I am humbled by Herta's willingness and desire to serve. I have had the privilege of going to the same church at which she faithfully serves. She spends hours tutoring kids and volunteering with the junior high Sunday school class. It is a joy to watch so many children run up to her at church because of the love they receive when they are with her.

In 2009, after 9 years of legal proceedings and deportation proceedings, here is what Herta said about being placed in deportation.

I was shocked. My friends are here, my education is here, my community is here. All of a sudden, I was asked to leave behind everything I know and go back to a country I barely know. When I lived there, I was little, so I don't remember much and I barely speak Albanian any more.

Herta's community rose to her defense. Thousands of people signed an online petition to stop her deportation. Last year, the Department of Homeland Security granted Herta a 1-year stay—just 1 year. The Department is now considering whether to delay it for another year. I sincerely hope they will.

Would it be a good use of taxpayer dollars to deport Herta? Of course not. There is so much discussion in America today about what we need from our young people for America to succeed in the future in the so-called STEM fields—science, technology, engineering, and math. Every year we issue thousands of H-1B visas to bring foreign workers to the United States in the STEM fields.

Herta is a straight-A student in electrical engineering, a STEM field. She doesn't need an H-1B visa. She is a homegrown American talent. Why in the world would we create a law to allow someone who has never lived in the United States to come here and legally reside to become an electrical engineer and tell Herta, who has lived