

Harkin	Lugar	Rockefeller
Hatch	Manchin	Rubio
Heller	McCaskill	Sanders
Hoeven	McConnell	Schumer
Hutchison	Menendez	Sessions
Inhofe	Merkley	Shaheen
Isakson	Mikulski	Shelby
Johanns	Moran	Snowe
Johnson (SD)	Murkowski	Stabenow
Johnson (WI)	Murray	Tester
Kerry	Nelson (NE)	Thune
Klobuchar	Nelson (FL)	Udall (CO)
Kohl	Paul	Udall (NM)
Kyl	Portman	Warner
Landrieu	Pryor	Webb
Lautenberg	Reed	Whitehouse
Leahy	Reid	Wicker
Levin	Risch	Wyden
Lieberman	Roberts	

NAYS—1

Lee

NOT VOTING—7

Casey	Kirk	Vitter
DeMint	McCain	
Inouye	Toomey	

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will now resume legislative session. The Senator from Minnesota.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2011—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

POSTAL REFORM

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Madam President, I rise to discuss the importance of addressing the financial challenges now facing the U.S. Postal Service and our critical need to ensure that it remains a strong and reliable resource for the people of our country.

The American Postal Service was created over two centuries ago as a function of the Federal Government, acknowledged in the U.S. Constitution. In those last 220 years, the way we send mail and exchange correspondence has changed dramatically. We no longer need a stamp or an envelope; we can just shoot an e-mail or sign onto Facebook.

But even with all these changes, the fact remains that no matter who you are or where you live, odds are that the post office plays a vital role in your daily life. Seniors rely on the Postal Service to receive their medications, businesses rely on it to ship and receive goods, and countless jobs hinge on its services, both directly and indirectly.

No matter how far we have come with technology in this digital age, there are some things that simply cannot be sent by e-mail. That is why reliable timely mail service is something all Americans should be able to count on.

I have heard from numerous people in my State about the negative impact the closure of certain post offices or

mail processing facilities would have on their communities. I have heard from State and local leaders about the impact of closing the mail processing facilities in Duluth and Bemidji. I have heard from farmers who actually get their goods and ship their products through those mail processing centers.

That is why I have worked with Senator SANDERS and roughly 25 of my colleagues in the Senate, including Senator DURBIN—one-fourth of the entire Senate—to negotiate changes to this original bill. I thank Chairman LIEBERMAN and Senators COLLINS and CARPER for their great leadership. I am glad about some of the changes they have made.

The substitute amendment would, in fact, keep at a minimum 100 mail processing plants that are currently scheduled to close, and they would remain open for at least 3 years. Overnight delivery standards in regional areas will be protected. A large number of rural post offices that are being studied for closure will remain open.

I am a cosponsor of the amendment to the legislation that would provide important safeguards before closing mail processing facilities, and I have also cosponsored the McCaskill-Merkley amendment that would establish a 2-year moratorium on closing rural post offices and recognize the concerns of rural residents.

There is no doubt that changes need to be made to the Postal Service to make it more competitive in the digital world. I think a lot of those changes are contained in the substitute amendment. We can even make it stronger. I strongly believe we can reach a balance that makes necessary reforms, while maintaining the quick service on which Americans have come to rely.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

NLRB RULES

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, I come to the Senate floor this evening to express my strong opposition to the resolution of disapproval filed by Senate Republicans that seeks to overturn critical new NLRB rules that will protect workers across America. I strongly urge my colleagues to oppose it. Some of our colleagues on the other side of the aisle frequently complain about how we spend our time on the Senate floor. Today, I have to say I am disappointed that we are being forced to spend valuable time on this issue.

Middle-class families across America are continuing to struggle in this very tough economy, and it is hard to understand why Senate Republicans want to spend time attacking an agency's mission to protect workers and employers and is critical to protecting access to the middle class for workers and families.

Thankfully, as we all know, our economy seems to be stepping back from the precipice. But for so many workers today paychecks still have not caught

up, benefits continue to slip away, hours are getting cut, and job security is eroding. That is why I was very glad that at the end of last year, the NLRB voted to adopt modest commonsense rules that would make it easier for workers to fight for fair treatment in the workplace and help bring NLRB into the 21st century.

These new rules aren't going to solve every problem, but they are a step in the right direction and will help workers and families across the country. The new NLRB rules will strengthen and streamline the voting process by reducing unnecessary litigation and intentional delays. It will streamline pre- and postelection procedures, and it will facilitate the use of electronic communications and document filing. Those are all commonsense steps that should not be controversial.

I am extremely disappointed that Senate Republicans want to now eliminate these rules and roll back the clock on worker protections. The resolution we are going to vote on would eliminate steps to standardize and add transparency to the employee election process. It would eliminate steps that reduce frivolous litigation and create a more cohesive and productive workplace for workers and businesses. It will fundamentally weaken NLRB processes and procedures that workers and businesses rely on when they are trying to settle disputes.

It is bad for business, bad for working families, and it should not pass. Workers across this country deserve a fair process in the workplace. The NLRB rule this resolution would eliminate removes some of the unfair and unnecessary roadblocks so many workers face every day. I have to say that while we are discussing this issue, I want to express my disappointment and anger at the recent report from the inspector general about improper and politicized activities by a current Republican member of the NLRB board, an individual who previously worked for another board member who is a former staffer for a Republican Member of the Senate. That report details multiple instances of ethics misconduct, including the sharing of confidential information with outside parties. I am hopeful that issue will be fully investigated. I am deeply worried about the actions some people will take to undermine an agency with a mission to protect the rights of workers and employers. And honestly, I find it to be a sad statement about the nature of our politics today, because the NLRB is doing a lot of good work for workers in America and it shouldn't be tarnished with this sort of ethics issue.

This agency has borne the brunt of political attacks over the last year from special interest groups and elected officials trying to score political points at the expense of workers and families. Many of these attacks have been inaccurate; many have been unfair. Some have used the case involving Boeing and workers in my home State

of Washington to weaken the agency, even while the NLRB work is what allowed the two sides to come together and find a solution to that challenge. So I think this is wrong and these attacks should end.

The NLRB election rules are modest, they are commonsense steps toward a fairer system for workers and businesses and will help us move toward a system that works for everyone, and they will help make sure our workers can simply exercise their rights to bargain for fair wages, for benefits and equitable treatment under the law. That is what our workers expect, it is what they deserve, and it is what the NLRB is working to deliver.

Once again, I urge our colleagues to vote against that resolution of disapproval. It is the wrong way to go for workers. It is the wrong way to go for businesses and for the middle class.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, let me join in the remarks by the Senator from Washington. This National Labor Relations Board rule which will be voted on by the Senate tomorrow is one that was needed. The rule change was needed and the attempt on the floor, of course, is to undo this decision by the National Labor Relations Board.

If they say justice is denied, look at the current situation when it comes to a vote by workers on collective bargaining. If delayed at every potential opportunity, and sometimes it happens, workers have to wait, on average—average—198 days—that is 6½ months—to have a simple vote deciding if they would be represented by the union. In some extreme cases they have been forced to wait 13 years for the right to vote on collective bargaining.

One in five workers who openly advocate for unions during an election campaign is fired. As a result of these tactics, 35 percent of workers give up and withdraw from the election before a vote is held. The proposed NLRB rule changes will remove unnecessary delays to the process, cut down on unnecessary litigation, and provide workers a meaningful vote in a reasonable period of time. The proposed rules will apply the same way to workers attempting to decertify a union as they do to workers trying to form a union. So from the business side, if they think workers no longer wish to belong to a union, there will be a timely vote on that as well. It applies the same way to unions and employers.

This rule is fundamentally fair, and that is why I encourage my colleagues to join with me and Senator MURRAY and many others in voting against this effort by Senator ENZI to overturn the proposed National Labor Relations Board rule.

As I said earlier, Madam President, the rule applies the same way to unions and employers. But it does not require that elections be held within a

specific time period and it does not deny companies the opportunity to express their opinion about union representation. The only real impact of the rule changes will be to better protect workers' right to make a determination for themselves through a reasonable fair timely election.

The NLRB rules create a uniform process for resolving pre- and post-election disputes to provide consistency and remove unnecessary obstacles to workers' right to vote.

NLRB hearing officers will be empowered to dismiss claims that would not impact the election. At the pre-election hearing, employers and unions can raise their concerns about the petition, but they can't play games to stall the election.

The rules consolidates the pre-election and post-election appeals into a single postelection procedure, which saves the parties from having to file and brief appeals that may be costly and useless based on the outcome of the election.

The new rules make Board review of the regional directors' decisions discretionary. This change will require parties to identify compelling reason for Board review, allowing the Board to devote its limited time to cases where its review is warranted.

The new rules apply to both elections seeking to certify a union and elections seeking to decertify a union. Further, the new rules do not alter in any way an employer's ability to communicate with workers during the election period and do not require that elections be held within a certain period of time.

In the view of organized labor, these rules, even in their scaled back form, are one of few positive actions taken by Congress or the administration in the last year. Unions argue that the old rules are subject to manipulation, causing significant pre-election delay and leading to petitions being withdrawn prior to an election or avoidance of Board processes altogether. If an employer takes advantage of every opportunity for delay, the average time before workers vote is 198 days.

Business groups are opposed to the new NLRB rules arguing it will limit their ability to present their side in an election. Most of their points against the rule relate to provisions of the proposed rule that were not included in the final rule. Their position also stems from general opposition to the NLRB for the now settled Boeing issue, new worker rights posting requirements, the President's NLRB recess appointments, and other NLRB decisions.

IMMIGRATION

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, this Wednesday the Supreme Court will hear a challenge to Arizona's controversial immigration law. I thought about this law over the weekend in Springfield, IL. There is an annual event where a special award is given to those sons and daughters of Illinois who have given great service to our State and Nation. Admiral Ron

Thunman, one of my neighbors in Springfield, was a graduate of Springfield High School and enlisted in the Navy. He worked his way up to the rank of vice admiral in the U.S. Navy and at one point commanded our submarine fleet. To think of this young man from the middle of the Midwest ending up in charge of our submarine fleet is a great testament to his ability and to the opportunity the Navy gave him to serve his country.

When Admiral Thunman got up to receive his award—this Lincoln Award—he said: I stand here humbled by the memory of my father who was an illegal immigrant to this country from Norway, who came here jumping off a ship as a sailor and lived in the United States illegally until the time he was prepared to volunteer to serve our Nation in World War II.

Admiral Thunman tells that story over and over. What a reminder it is that the sons and daughters of immigrants to this country, as well as those immigrants themselves, literally made America what it is today.

One hundred one years ago, my mother arrived on a boat from Lithuania. Her boat came to Baltimore, MD, and my grandmother took herself, her sister, and brother, to East St. Louis, IL, where I grew up many years later. That is my story. It is an American story that is repeated over and over. Immigrants are part of America. It is the diversity of America that gives us our strength.

Those who hate and loathe immigrants have always been here. Probably as soon as the Mayflower landed, they looked over their shoulder and said, We hope nobody else is coming. But the fact is people have been coming from all over the world, and they still would rather come to this country than leave it, which is quite a testament to this Nation. Senator LIEBERMAN made that point on the floor the other day.

This week, the Supreme Court is going to take up an important question on immigration—the Arizona law. Under the Arizona law, any undocumented immigrant can be arrested and charged with a State crime—an Arizona crime—solely on the basis of their immigration status. It is a crime for an illegal immigrant in Arizona to fail to carry documents proving their legal status under this law. Under our Constitution, States don't have the right to pass their own laws preempting Federal laws on immigration. That is why the Justice Department filed the case the Supreme Court will hear this week.

Let us be clear. It is wrong to criminalize people because of their immigration status. That is not the way we treat immigrants in America. It is not right to make criminals of people who go to work every day, cook our food, clean our hotel rooms, care for our aging parents in nursing homes, and care for our children as well. It is not right to make criminals of those who worship with us in our churches, synagogues, and mosques, and people who

send their children to the same schools as our children.

Here is the reality. This approach that Arizona law suggests will not help combat illegal immigration. Law enforcement doesn't have the time or resources to prosecute and incarcerate millions of people. Making undocumented immigrants into criminals will simply drive them farther into the shadows. The Arizona Association of Chiefs of Police took a look at the new Arizona law and came out in opposition to it. They said it makes it more difficult for them to maintain order and enforce law in Arizona. Immigrants, because of this law, the chiefs of police have said, will be much less likely to cooperate, and they need their cooperation to continue to fight crime.

There is another troubling aspect of the Arizona immigration law. According to experts, the law encourages racial profiling. I chair the Senate Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on Constitution, Civil Rights, and Human Rights. Last week, at a hearing on racial profiling, we had the first hearing on the subject since 9/11/2001. One of the subjects we examined at the hearing is the state of Federal, State, and local measures in recent years under the guise of combating illegal immigration that have subjected Hispanic Americans to an increase in racial profiling. The Arizona immigration law is a prime example, and let me explain why.

Arizona's law requires police officers to check the immigration status of any individual if they have "reasonable suspicion" the person is undocumented. What is the basis for reasonable suspicion? Arizona's guidance on the law tells police officers to consider factors such as how someone is dressed and their ability to communicate in English.

Two former Arizona attorneys general, joined by 42 other former State attorneys general, filed a brief in the Arizona case and they said "application of the law requires racial profiling."

One of the witnesses in our hearing was Ron Davis, chief of police at East Palo Alto, CA. Chief Davis, along with 16 other current and former chief law enforcement officers, the Major Cities Chiefs of Police Association, and the Police Executive Research Forum, filed a brief in the Arizona case. Here is what the brief filed by the chiefs of police in the Arizona case before the Supreme Court said:

The statutory standard of "reasonable suspicion" of unlawful presence in the United States will as a practical matter produce a focus on minorities, and specifically Latinos.

Let me be clear: I believe—and I think most Americans share this belief—the vast majority of law enforcement officers in America perform their jobs admirably and courageously. When they wake up in the morning and put that badge on, they literally put their lives on the line for you, for me, and for all of us in America. Unfortunately,

the inappropriate actions of a few, who engage in racial profiling, create mistrust and suspicion, and that hurts all police officers. The evidence clearly demonstrates that racial profiling doesn't solve crimes, it doesn't work, and that is what Chief of Police Ron Davis told us as well. That is why so many law enforcement leaders strongly oppose racial profiling and the Arizona immigration law.

Instead of measures that harm law enforcement and promote racial profiling, such as the Arizona immigration law, we need to support practical solutions to fix America's broken immigration system. And if I could say one word in defense of Arizona, it is the fact that our failure—Congress's failure, Washington's failure—to deal with immigration has brought on this effort by many States and localities. We have our own responsibility.

Let me tell you where I think we should start. We should start our reform on immigration with the DREAM Act. Eleven years ago, I introduced this bill, legislation that allows a select group of immigrant students with great potential to contribute to America. The DREAM Act would give these students a chance to earn legal status, and ultimately citizenship, if they came to the United States as children or have been long-term U.S. residents with good moral character, have graduated from high school and have completed 2 years of college or military service in good standing.

Russell Pearce, the author of the Arizona immigration law, had this to say about the DREAM Act, and I quote:

The DREAM Act is one of the greatest legislative threats to America's sovereignty, national security and economic future.

Well, I see it differently, and so do people such as GEN Colin Powell and former Defense Secretary Robert Gates. They support the DREAM Act because it would make America a stronger Nation, giving these talented immigrants a chance to serve our military and to improve and contribute to our economy. Tens of thousands of highly qualified, well-educated young people would enlist in the armed services if the DREAM Act becomes law. Studies have found DREAM Act participants would contribute literally trillions of dollars to the U.S. economy during their working lives.

The best way to understand the need for the DREAM Act is to meet the Dreamers. Today I want to introduce you to a Dreamer from Arizona. Here she is. Her name is Dulce Matuz. She was brought to the United States by her parents from Mexico as a young child. At Carl Hayden High School in Phoenix, AZ, Dulce became a dedicated member of the school's robotics club where she found her true love—engineering.

She went on to graduate from Arizona State University, and we see her standing here with the mascot. She earned a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering. As a senior, Dulce re-

ceived an internship to work on the NASA space station. But after she graduated, reality set in. Because Dulce is undocumented—one of the Dreamers—she can't work as an engineer in America. She can't become licensed in any State. She has no country.

In 2008, Dulce cofounded the Arizona DREAM Act Coalition, an organization of more than 200 DREAM Act students in predicaments like hers. She continues to volunteer at the high school she attended. Today, Dulce is 27 years old. Last week, this amazing young woman was named one of the hundred most influential people in the world by Time magazine.

Time published a profile of Dulce written by the actress Eva Longoria. Here is what the profile said:

Dulce represents the finest of her generation, an undocumented Latina confronted with legal barriers to pursuing her engineering dream. She chose to fight for the right to contribute to the country she has called home since she was very young. Dulce takes on powerful opponents with grace and conviction, saying, "We are Americans, and Americans don't give up."

Dulce is right. Americans don't give up. We have been fighting for the DREAM Act now for 11 years. We are not going to give up until it is signed into law by a President of the United States. I am honored that this President, President Barack Obama, when he was a Senator was a cosponsor of my legislation. I know where his heart is when it comes to the DREAM Act.

Unlike the Arizona immigration law, the DREAM Act is a practical solution to a serious problem with our broken immigration system. I hope the Supreme Court will strike down the Arizona immigration law, and I again beg my colleagues to support the DREAM Act. It is the right thing to do, and it will make America a stronger nation.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as if in morning business for up to 10 minutes.

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

GI BILL CONSUMER AWARENESS

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Madam President, late last month I brought to Washington 55 or so college presidents from Ohio—presidents of 2-year and 4-year private and public colleges and universities—to discuss a whole host of issues. One subject that always comes up when you talk about young people, when you talk about college, when you talk about universities, is access to higher education, that far too many of our young people simply can't afford to go to college.

My wife, a graduate of Kent State some 30 years ago, was privileged in those days even though nobody in her family had ever gone to college. Her dad carried a union card, was a utility worker in Ashtabula, OH, working as a

maintenance worker in a local power-plant. She was able to go to school because in those days college was more accessible—Pell grants, some loans, tuition was significantly lower—and she was able to be the first in her family to go to college, and she went to Kent State University. Today it is much harder. Tuition is far too high. Pell grants haven't kept up with the cost of education the way they might have 30 years ago.

One of the options we have, the subsidized Stafford loan, which is available to students based on need and is often the main pathway to college for a number of them, is under stress, if you will. If we do nothing, if Congress doesn't do anything, the interest on these critical loans will double for borrowers beginning July 1, 2012. So the interest rates will actually double on those students if Congress does nothing. The interest rate right now is 3.4 percent. That is why they are called subsidized Stafford loans.

We know that investing in our young people this way, giving them an opportunity to go to college, which they couldn't otherwise, could make such a difference in their lives. A number of people don't want to go to college. That is fine. Those who want to go should have that opportunity.

Student debt in this country has reached about \$870 billion, exceeding credit cards and auto loans. As more and more students continue to enroll in higher education, balances are expected to continue climbing. This means fewer of our young adults will be able to buy a home, start a business, or continue on to graduate school. Already, students graduate from 4-year colleges and universities in Ohio with, on average, about \$27,000 in student loan debt. If the interest rates double, it will add another \$2,000 in debt for the average borrower and as much as an additional \$5,000 for the neediest borrower on subsidized Stafford student loans. A number in this institution in the Senate on the Democratic side are trying to convince our colleagues how important it is that we stop this interest rate from doubling. We must act before July 1.

Just as we have an obligation to keep college affordable for middle-class Americans and working-class Americans, we have as great an obligation to keep college accessible to American veterans. This year more than 500,000 servicemembers and veterans are expected to take advantage of the post-9/11 GI bill, a bill we passed out of the Veterans' Affairs Committee to ensure that all veterans could afford the rising cost of college. The VA is expected to spend some \$11 billion in education benefits and other GI bill benefits this year alone.

We know in the 1940s and 1950s what the first GI bill did—signed near the end of World War II—how it created a whole generation of prosperity and a strong middle class. We know that the GI Bill of Rights, which the House and

Senate passed I believe 3 years ago, has begun to help large numbers of veterans again. Unfortunately, servicemembers and veterans are often aggressively recruited by some educational institutions that use misleading information. For instance, if you visit the Web site gibill.com, it directs a veteran to enter his or her personal and contact information to obtain information about the GI bill's educational benefits. It looks just like a government Web site, but it is not. It turns around and sells that veteran's information, often to for-profit colleges.

Earlier today, I was welcomed at a VFW post in Cleveland by Jason Plezko, the commander of that post. I met with Brad Sonenstein, a U.S. Air Force veteran now studying at Kent State, and Joshua Rider, the assistant director of the Center for Adult and Veteran Services at Kent State University. Brad explained how he was inundated with offers and letters when he was exploring how to utilize his well-earned GI benefits. Those offers overwhelmingly came from for-profit colleges. He said they were more interested in their own bottom line than helping those who served in the front lines. That is simply not right.

No one is in a better position to make a decision as to what is best for them as a veteran than the veteran herself or the veteran himself. We can play a role in assisting them. The GI Bill Consumer Awareness Act provides veterans with more and better information about their benefits, calls for improved education counseling, and gives colleges new resources to hire people such as Joshua Rider to help returning veterans. It requires all institutions of higher education to disclose critical information, such as the average student loan debt, the transferability of credits, and accurate job-placement data. We do that at our State universities. We do that at most of our not-for-profit private schools. We do that at our 2-year community colleges.

Those using the GI bill tend to be older than the average student population. They choose to serve our Nation, often right out of high school rather than going straight to college. Because of this many have families and careers and other challenges their classmates don't have. Giving our veterans the tools to make the best possible decisions benefits all of them. That is the importance of the GI Bill Consumer Awareness Act.

I particularly thank Senator MURRAY, chair of the Veterans' Committee, for her work on this legislation. This body should pass it immediately.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION ACT

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Madam President, I would like to first express my appreciation to the Senator from Ohio for his work on these education issues, particularly the importance of the

Stafford loan and avoiding the interest rate jump that is scheduled to take place. And I would point out that had we passed the so-called Buffett rule bill so that Americans who earn well over \$1 million a year would actually all pay a fair share of taxes, that would have created somewhere between \$47 billion and \$163 billion in revenues, and that would readily pay for keeping the student loan rate down. So I hope we can find another way to do it, but that would have been one good way.

The reason I am on the floor this evening is because I was at Wickford Junction in Rhode Island earlier today, where a new commuter rail station has been built, largely through the energy and effort of my senior Senator, JACK REED, over many years. Secretary LaHood, the U.S. Secretary of Transportation, came to be present at that event, and that reminded me, of course, of the highway bill, which is probably the biggest jobs bill we could pass here in Congress.

We tend to talk a good game on jobs. Recently, we even referred to a bill as a JOBS bill. It had kind of a trick: It was actually called Jumpstart Our Business Startups, J-O-B-S. They made an acronym so that it sounded like a jobs bill when what it really did was to allow people to market stocks without the usual safeguards that protect investors and consumers.

So we do a lot to try to convince people we are working on jobs here in Congress, but the one bill that indisputably is really going to be helpful to the American economy to provide jobs would be the highway bill that the Senate passed—2.9 billion jobs protected or created. In my State of Rhode Island, it is 9,000 jobs, and I promise you we could use those 9,000 jobs in Rhode Island right now. The bill passed the Senate with flying colors, with every kind of credit you could associate with a piece of legislation. It passed 74 to 22. A 75th Senator indicated that he would have supported it but he was called out of town for a funeral. And obviously, with a 74-to-22 lopsided vote, his vote was not necessary. But, in effect, 75 Senators are on record supporting that bill, which in this Senate, as everybody knows, is a considerable landslide of a majority.

Now, 2.9 million jobs is a serious thing in this economy, with 9,000 in Rhode Island that we desperately need. And the bill left not only with the support of a unanimous Environment and Public Works committee, where it came from originally—and I commend both Senator BOXER and Senator INHOFE, the chair and the ranking member, for pulling that together. As people who watch the Senate know, Senator BOXER and Senator INHOFE come from rather different political persuasions, and yet they were able to agree on this and bring a bill out of committee unanimously.

It then came to the floor and went forward. We had 5 weeks of floor debate. We added 40 amendments either

by vote or agreement. It was very bipartisan, it was very transparent, and we ended up with that 75-to-22 expression of support by the Senate for that bill.

There was a rather different story on the House side. They knew the March 31 deadline was approaching—it had been a matter of law for a long time—and they blew the deadline. They had no bill going into it. They tried several times to come up with something, and they couldn't do a thing. They had no bill at all.

So without a bill, one would hope they could have passed the Senate bill. They certainly had the votes. All they had to do was call it up and pass it. Democrats and Republicans would have voted for it, and we would be getting those jobs out there right now. Instead, they had no bill, and they chose to pass an extension. The extension is actually pretty harmful. They actually passed two, and they are both harmful.

The first short-term extension—I spoke to my DOT director in Rhode Island. He was at Wickford Junction as well, and we have done a couple of other events in the past week or so to try to bring attention to this. He has a list of roughly 95 or 96 projects they want to get done in Rhode Island in the summer building season, the highway construction season. He estimates that probably 40 of those jobs are going to fall off the list because they don't know what their long-term funding is, and they can't commit to those jobs until this gets settled. So these short-term extensions are very harmful. They cost jobs. They are job killers. Yet the House has passed two of them.

To make it even more complicated, they threw on the last one—a requirement that the Keystone Pipeline be bulldozed through all the regulatory and environmental reviews that are necessary. Say what you want about the Keystone Pipeline, it is a completely contentious, controversial issue here in Congress. They did not make an effort to resolve it on the House side. This was not something where they brought people together, came to a resolution on the Keystone Pipeline, and then added it to the bill. No. They just took their Republican version of it without any effort to be bipartisan and stuffed it into the highway extension.

So they have missed the chance to pass really good bipartisan legislation out of the Senate, they have passed a job-killing extension that is very harmful to folks doing highway work around the country, and they have complicated it further by throwing a controversial issue on top.

If you are serious about jobs—and I know we talk a lot about it in the Senate—if you are serious about jobs, we should stop that nonsense and take up the Senate bill and pass it in the House and get everybody to work. In the absence of that, we need to make sure that we move to conference very quickly, that we appoint conferees, and that we get going.

This is important to Rhode Island. As I said, we desperately need these highway jobs. So I am going to continue, along with many of my colleagues, coming to the Senate floor to put the pressure on to do something that is very simple: pass a highway bill. This is not complicated. We have been doing it since Eisenhower was President, and the fact that we can't do it now says a lot about the capacity for governance of the House of Representatives under this Speaker.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

POSTAL SERVICE REFORM

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Madam President, after our work on this important bill to reform the Postal Service is complete, we will be turning to another important bill, one that has a long history of bipartisan support. That bill, the Violence Against Women Act, is a law that has literally changed the way we think about violence against women in the United States.

The Violence Against Women Act is one of the great legislative success stories of this generation. Since it was first passed in 1994—and I will tell you that then-Senator BIDEN was involved in drafting that legislation and led that effort, he and someone we miss very dearly in Minnesota, Paul Wellstone. He and his wife Sheila were also involved in getting this important bill passed. Since that time, annual domestic violence rates have fallen by 50 percent as communities nationwide have stopped looking at these issues as family issues and started treating domestic violence and sexual assault as the serious crimes they are.

Before I came to the Senate I spent 8 years as chief prosecutor for Minnesota's largest county, Hennepin County. During that time, both prevention and the prosecution of domestic violence were one of my top priorities. We were very proud of the Domestic Violence Service Center, which was cutting edge in the Nation, a one-stop shop where people could go when they were victims of domestic violence, a place for their kids; shelters, prosecutors would be able to charge out complaints, police would be there for protective orders. It was a way to help people who were at the point where they thought no one was there for them, for women to be able to come in and find one place that was safe for them.

As we all know, there is still a lot of work to be done. According to a recent survey conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 24 people per minute are victims of rape, physical violence, or stalking. Approximately one in four women has experienced severe physical violence by an intimate partner at some point in their lifetime, and 45 percent of the women killed in the United States every year are killed by an intimate partner. Every year close to 17,000 people lose their lives to domestic violence.

These statistics mean domestic violence and sexual assault and stalking are still problems in America. As far as we have come, we can still do better. That is why it is such a good thing that we passed the Violence Against Women Act reauthorization out of our Judiciary Committee and the bill now has the support of 61 Senators, including 8 Republicans. I am hopeful we will be able to pass this bill quickly after we take it up later this week. It has taken too long.

Combating domestic violence and sexual assault is an issue on which we should all be able to agree. Many of the provisions in the reauthorization bill make important changes to the current law. The bill consolidates duplicative programs and streamlines others. It provides greater flexibility in the use of grant money by adding more "purpose areas" to the list of allowable uses. It has new training requirements for people providing legal assistance to victims, and it takes important steps to address the disproportionately high domestic violence rates in the Native American communities.

The bill also fills some gaps in the system. I am pleased to say it includes legislation I introduced with Senator HUTCHISON to address high-tech stalking, cases where the stalker uses technology such as the Internet, video surveillance, and bugging to stalk their victims. Sadly, we are seeing more of this. This bill will give law enforcement better tools for cracking down on stalkers.

Just as with physical stalking, high-tech stalking may foreshadow more serious behavior down the road. It is an issue to take seriously, and we in law enforcement must be as sophisticated as those who are breaking the law. That is why we need to update this law.

We also should not lose sight of the fact that the VAWA reauthorization has strong support from law enforcement. The Fraternal Order of Police, the Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association, the National Sheriffs' Association, and the International Association of Chiefs of Police support this bill.

Recent events in my State have shown me and the entire population of Minnesota in the worst possible way just how closely domestic violence is linked with the safety of our law enforcement officers. I don't think people always think about that. They realize when police officers are out driving on the road, drunk drivers are out driving on the road—that it is risky. Because the police are constantly on the road. What they don't realize is one of the leading causes of death of officers is domestic violence-related incidents.

A couple of months ago I attended the funeral of Shawn Schneider, a young police officer from Lake City, MN. Officer Schneider died responding to a domestic violence call—a 17-year-old girl who was being abused by her boyfriend. When Officer Schneider arrived at the scene, he was shot in the

head. The girl survived, but Officer Schneider literally gave his life to save another. I attended that funeral, and I will never forget the heartbreaking scene of his two young sons walking down the church aisle with the little girl, his daughter, in a blue dress covered with stars. I think it reminds all of us that domestic violence just doesn't hurt the immediate victim, it hurts entire families, entire communities.

This has never been a partisan bill. It is crucial to pass this bill. We have made a lot of progress over the years, and we have been able to work across the aisle to build on VAWA's success. That is something that means a lot to me, and it certainly means a lot to the millions of people who are victims of domestic abuse and sexual assault every single year.

I urge my colleagues to support our efforts to bring this bill to the floor quickly. We can pass it this week. We can provide desperately needed help to victims of domestic assault, domestic violence, and other such crimes.

I yield the floor. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that upon disposition of S. 1789 but no earlier than Wednesday, April 25, the Senate adopt the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 312, S. 1925.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

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

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

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, today marks the beginning of the 31st annual National Crime Victims' Rights Week. It is a time to recognize the losses faced by victims of crimes and their families and to acknowledge the efforts being made to help them recover and rebuild their lives in the wake of tragedy. It is a time to reflect on all we have accomplished and focus on what we have to yet do to help victims.

Of course, one of the best tools for delivering that help is the Crime Victims Fund. Unfortunately, in recent months, some have sought to violate the Victims of Crime Act. They want to take money out of the trust fund for purposes and programs not authorized by the Victims of Crime Act. I have worked with Senators from both sides of the aisle. We have been able to stop

this raid on crime victims' funding. I wish to commend Senators MIKULSKI and HUTCHISON, the chair and ranking member of the Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science of the Committee on Appropriations for their important efforts in this regard in the appropriations bill we reported to the Senate last week.

The Senate Appropriations Committee, on which I serve, has reported a bill that preserves the Crime Victims Fund, and we succeeded in increasing the funding next year for victims' compensation and assistance to \$775 million. To be able to increase Federal assistance by \$70 million from last year's cap is extraordinary in these economic times, and it is an indication here in the Senate of our commitment to crime victims. This is a matter on which I have worked with Senator CRAPO as well as Senator MIKULSKI over the years. I appreciate their leadership in this effort.

The Crime Victims Fund is not taxpayers' money. It comes from penalties and fines. It comes from wrongdoers. We designed it to help victims of crime. We created it as a trust fund for crime victims' needs and services. I have tried to respect the trust fund and to protect it, to ensure that it is used and available for crime victims and their families who depend on its support in times of need. We all know the States are being forced to tighten their belts, and when they do, victims' services are being cut all over the country. Without the Federal assistance from this trust fund, victims' compensation programs and victims' assistance programs and services will be unavailable to many.

Another important law that strengthens crime victims' rights and improves crime victims' services is currently pending before the Judiciary Committee. The Justice For All Reauthorization Act strengthens the rights guaranteed to crime victims in the criminal justice process and ensures that basic services, like the rapid testing of rape kits, help victims receive the justice, safety, and closure they deserve. I look forward to working with Senators from both sides of the aisle to move that legislation forward as well.

Currently pending before the Senate is the majority leader's motion to proceed against the Violence Against Women's Act, S. 1925. I introduced this legislation with Senator CRAPO last year. We have 61 bipartisan cosponsors from both parties. When we enacted the Violence Against Women Act nearly 18 years ago, it sent a powerful message that we will not tolerate crime against women and forever altered the way our Nation combats domestic and sexual violence. Our legislation offers support to the victims of these terrible crimes and helps them find safety and rebuild their lives. The bill we will debate this week is based on the recommendations of victims and the tireless professionals who work with them every day.

April is also Sexual Assault Awareness Month and our bill takes the important step of focusing increased attention on sexual assaults, including those against the most vulnerable among us.

As I listened to Senator MURRAY, Senator FEINSTEIN, Senator SHAHEEN, and Senator GILLIBRAND—and, as a matter of fact, I spoke with Senator HAGAN last week about the pending motion to proceed to the VAWA reauthorization legislation—I thought how fortunate we all are to serve with them and with Senators MIKULSKI, BOXER, SNOWE, LANDRIEU, COLLINS, STABENOW, CANTWELL, MURKOWSKI, MCCASKILL, KLOBUCHAR, and AYOTTE. In fact, 16 women senators are cosponsors of our Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act, and their input has strengthened this critical legislation. I appreciate their strong bipartisan support for this measure and their willingness to speak out time and again on the need to pass this bill without delay.

We recently honored the senior Senator from Maryland for her services as the longest-serving woman Senator and as the woman who has also served the longest in Congress. I can remember back before 1993, when Senator Carol Mosely Braun became the first woman to serve as a member of the Senate Judiciary Committee. We are fortunate now to have both Senator FEINSTEIN and Senator KLOBUCHAR as active members of our Committee.

I remember when nine women Senators joined together to contribute to the book "Nine and Counting" about their paths to the U.S. Senate. These women have served as role models for many other young women and young girls. Even as Senator Clinton has gone on to become our Secretary of State, there have been other changes. Six of the nine Senators who were subjects of the book in 2001 still serve in this institution today. They have been joined by nine additional women Senators from around the country. This book, "Nine and Counting," was a title for looking to the future. Today, 17 women serve in the U.S. Senate. That is a great step forward. They have farther to go, of course, but it is a lot better than when I came to the Senate when we had no women serving. Sixteen of them have joined from both sides of the aisle to bring their leadership and their strong support, but also their experience, to the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act.

Our bill includes a number of provisions they have championed and suggested. To will give one example, our bill includes the provisions that Senator KLOBUCHAR and Senator HUTCHISON suggested and introduced as the Stalkers Act of 2011. That provision is new to VAWA. It would not have been included if we had simply introduced a one-sentence reauthorization of VAWA rather than a comprehensive bill. I thought it was a good provision, intended to update the Federal antistalking statute to capture the