

my hour, then I will yield the floor back.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Does the gentleman yield back his time?

Mr. ELLISON. I have a parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman will state his inquiry.

Mr. ELLISON. My inquiry is, if I yield back, does the gentleman from Colorado get the balance of the time I have remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Colorado may serve as the designee of the minority leader for the remainder of the hour.

Mr. ELLISON. And further inquiry, are there 25 minutes left?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The minority hour has 24 minutes remaining.

Mr. ELLISON. In that case, I yield back the balance of my time.

IMMIGRATION REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. POLIS) is recognized for 24 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of passing comprehensive immigration reform as soon as possible.

CINDY SLOSSON

I have a story to share from a resident in my district, Cindy Slosson from Fort Collins, Colorado. Cindy wrote me that her daughter fell in love with a young man from Mexico when they were in high school. They had a dream about their future lives together, and part of that dream was of course helping him become an American citizen so he could go to college, find a job and support their family that they hoped to build together. They persisted tirelessly for 10 years, through everything that the American bureaucracy and Immigration Services threw at them, and today, finally, he's a citizen of the United States. He's pursuing his degree in aviation mechanics and wants to continue to go to school for an engineering degree.

Part of their dream is now a reality and they keep on building upon this dream to be contributing community members and leaders among their friends and family. Cindy writes that, unfortunately, some young people don't have the kind of support and focus and, frankly, patience that her children had.

Cindy writes:

Let's make their path a bit more attainable. I believe most everyone truly wants to do their best, so let's give them a chance to be their best in this country.

□ 1720

As Cindy writes, there are so many people that are caught up in indefinite waiting periods just to be reunited with their own family, people who give up hope and move from their family and friends and everybody they know

simply because they can't get through the unrealistic length of time it takes to navigate our legal system.

As part of comprehensive immigration reform, we need to have a system that reflects our values as Americans and one that's realistic for families to go through.

MONICA OLGUIN

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share a story from a constituent from my district, Monica Olguin from Boulder, Colorado. Now, her story is an interesting one because the U.S. came to her instead of her moving to the United States. Her family hails from the southwestern United States even before it was part of Mexico. Her family descended from Spanish colonial settlers in 1598 near Santa Fe, New Mexico. Over the following 300 years, they traveled north to Colorado to Conejos County, where the family has been for over 100 years.

Now, Monica writes:

Many of our best students today have been immigrant children.

Monica, herself, taught in our public schools for over 30 years.

Monica writes:

They enter our school system with great hopes and dreams and do not take education for granted. It isn't long, though, before they are able to express their fear of losing their place in this country, their fear of not belonging in their country of origin or their knowledge that there is no hope for success or dreams for their future in either their country of origin or in this country.

Monica shares the concerns of so many of us whose lives have touched those who live in this country every day in fear of the very government that should be there to protect them, in fear that it will detain them indefinitely, in fear that it will send them out of this country back to a country that they know no one in, that they might not have even been in since they were 3 years old or 8 years old or perhaps even to a country where the language that's spoken is not even a language that they're fluent in. That is the reality of our immigration system every day.

As Monica writes, it's critical that we replace our broken immigration system with one that works now. You're only a child once, and we need to make sure that our next generation of leaders has every opportunity to make our country greater.

PAUL EDWARD CONDON

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share a story from a constituent of mine in Lafayette, Colorado, Paul Edward Condon. Like so many Coloradans, Paul feels that we need to replace our broken immigration system with one that works for our country and make sure that we have a way to make sure that the people already here can get right with the law.

Paul writes that on his father's side he is descended from people who his daughter, Katherine, likes to say qualify her to be a member of the Daughters of the American Revolution. On

his mother's side, he's descended from immigrants from Bohemia in the 1890s who homesteaded in Oregon. So, like many Americans, Paul is a child of both one side of the family with long roots in our country dating from before our country existed and another side of his family recent immigrants.

As Paul writes, perhaps with the full sense of understanding that comes from his personal story, Paul writes:

We are all sons and daughters of immigrants, including those descended from the peoples who were already here when my earliest immigrant ancestor arrived and descended from the people who also arrived unwillingly in this country. All immigrants, all mingled together. And, indeed, even Congresspersons are descended from immigrants. Congresspersons who wish to restrict immigration and reject immigrants are rejecting their own heritage. They should be ashamed.

I agree with Paul. We are all, in this country, descended from immigrants. And whether those immigrants arrived thousands of years ago, hundreds of years ago, decades ago, or last week, our future is intertwined with the very definition of America as an immigrant Nation, a Nation of laws, a Nation of immigrants.

Those two need to be reconciled. We need laws that reflect our values as Americans, our values as a Nation of immigrants; laws that are enforceable and in touch with reality rather than laws that tear families apart every day in this country and deny—deny people who have worked hard here and contributed to society the opportunity to fully partake in our great country and to someday become Americans themselves.

SEMAY DIBEKULU NELSON

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share a story from a constituent in Colorado from the Second Congressional District, Semay Dibekulu Nelson, from Boulder, Colorado, who shared a story with me about immigration, that speaks to the need to reform our immigration system today to ensure that everybody gets a chance to succeed in this country.

Semay writes:

As a first generation immigrant American having received political asylum under life-threatening conditions, I feel the pain of undocumented immigrants and their fear of being deported. I am honored to have received your message, and I would like to reflect on this important topic. I'm aware there's no time to waste while millions are being underpaid for an honest day's work while living in fear of detention and deportation. I hope our government brings this agonizing issue to a positive resolution. The time is over in which we can afford to ignore an issue that has led to this humanitarian catastrophe.

I agree with Semay. Hers is a firsthand story of many legal immigrants like Semay who have firsthand knowledge of the process of leaving everything they know and coming to a new country without friends and without family. How difficult is that? Yet, today, our government is active tearing families apart, at taxpayer expense

taking mothers from daughters and placing them in detention at the cost to taxpayers of tens of thousands of dollars.

We need to replace our broken immigration system with one that works for our country and reflects our values as Americans, as even our newest Americans like Semay agree with.

JOHN HOFFMAN

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share a story from John Hoffman in Boulder, Colorado. Like so many Coloradans and like so many Americans, John feels that we need to replace our broken immigration system with one that works and allows a way for the 11 million people who are here without status to get right with the law and fulfill their destiny.

John writes:

My great-great German grandparents settled in Germantown in Louisville, Kentucky. They were hardworking and industrious and eventually got into the vaunted "middle class." Let the Latinos do the same.

IZABELLA PESZEK

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share a story from Izabella Peszek from Lafayette, Colorado. Izabella wrote me to share her immigration story and her passion for making sure that we replace our broken immigration system with one that works and reflects our values as Americans.

Izabella and her husband were recruited to join a graduate program in math at the University of Maryland in 1989. When they decided to go for it, they thought they would return to their home country, Poland. That was their plan when they got their degrees. But fate decided otherwise. When they graduated, Robert in 2 years and Izabella in 2½, the country that they knew in their childhood was gone, and they were being offered some very tempting positions in the United States. Robert went to CMU for a postdoc, and Izabella joined the pharma industry.

Eventually, they got green cards and became citizens of the United States and of our great State of Colorado, which is now their home, where both of them are respected in their fields and are happy doing what they do best.

Now Izabella and Robert can't imagine living anywhere else. And they work hard to make their new home in the United States even better, just as so many other immigrant families contribute to this country, are an asset to this country, are an asset to America, are part of America, and are as American as anybody else, which is why we need an immigration system that reflects our values and our priorities as Americans and ensures that others have the ability to give back to this great country just as Izabella and Robert have and continue to do every day.

JANICE GREEN

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share a story from Janice Green from Westminster, Colorado, about why we need to fix our broken immigration system to help reunite families.

Janice writes:

My family has been in the United States for many generations, but my daughter-in-law is prevented from joining my daughter here because of the Defense of Marriage Act. They were legally married in Portugal, and my daughter may have to leave the United States to be with her spouse.

□ 1730

Under current immigration law today, same-sex couples are not accepted under immigration law, even though there are a number of States where same-sex couples have the same marriage rights as opposite-sex couples. Because of the Defense of Marriage Act, federally that marriage is not counted for purposes of immigration.

Janice's daughter might be driven from the country she loves and can contribute so much to because there's no viable path for her family to stay together. That's why I support JERRY NADLER's United American Families Act, and we need to work hard to make sure that as we replace our broken immigration system with one that works, it's fair to all Americans and treats all Americans fairly and reflects our value as Americans of keeping families like Janice's daughter and daughter-in-law together.

JEAN HODGES

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share a story from Jean Hodges of Boulder, Colorado, about why we need to improve our immigration system.

Jean writes that both sides of her family immigrated in the 1800s from Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. They began life in Virginia and moved to Ohio around the Civil War. So Jean doesn't share the immediacy of immigrant parentage that many others do, but Jean does write that she understands the privilege of being a U.S. citizen and all that provides: for all of us to find a path to equality and whatever our pursuit of happiness may be.

Jean, like so many Coloradans and so many Americans says, "I wish that for all immigrants."

Jean understands the reasons that her forebearers might have left everything and everyone they knew to come to this country.

I know Jean. And the way that she has given back to our community as a school teacher, as a leader for equality, her work to support parents of LGBT kids, has been of tremendous value to our country, like the tremendous value that today's immigrants will provide through their public service, their community involvement, through their efforts as teachers, as firefighters, as policemen, as lawyers, as doctors, as successful business people who will lead our country to a more prosperous and bright future.

DAN MCLELLAN

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share a story from Dan McLellan of Boulder, Colorado, about why we need to fix our broken immigration system and replace it with one that reflects our values as Americans.

Dan is a fourth-generation Coloradan. In fact, on his father's side, he has ties all the way back to the Mayflower. On his mother's side, the family came from Ireland, Italy, Germany, and Scotland. Like many Americans of mixed blood, he remembers memorizing when he was in fifth grade his ancestry. He would quickly list it off: English, Irish, German, Italian, and Scottish.

But recently, Dan fell in love with a Canadian. It was love at first sight, and last March they got married in New York. The plan was that Dan and his spouse were going to spend their lives together. But you know what? Right now they don't know where because Dan's spouse is another man. Unlike if Dan's spouse was a woman, Dan doesn't have the same kind of right to allow his husband, Michael, to be a legal resident of our country. Dan writes that he's forced to have to choose between the country he loves, the country his ancestors worked hard to get to, and being united with his own family and his husband.

Dan calls upon us in Congress—and I pass this challenge to our colleagues—to pass a comprehensive immigration reform package that treats families fairly, that treats families equally, that ensures that families are united. That's why I'm a proud sponsor of JERRY NADLER's United American Families Act, and I call upon this body to include respect for marriage as an important bed-stone principle of comprehensive immigration reform.

SALLY MILLER

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share the story of Sally Miller from Broomfield, Colorado, and her strong support for fixing our broken immigration system. Sally is a social worker, and her story is about several pieces of her own personal experience working with people in the Denver metro area.

Sally has worked with immigrants who came to our country 20 years ago. They raised their families, they hoped for a better life, their kids are U.S. citizens, have succeeded in school, and are giving back. But Sally writes that the parents of one of their families are constantly in fear that the father may be caught on the way to or from his cleaning job and sent back to a country that he left, torn apart from his family at taxpayer expense.

One of their three children graduated from high school just this past June and is working and taking college classes. The other kids are 16 and 14. Sally writes that her friend and his wife hope to stay in the Denver area until all three of their kids graduate from high school, but every day the kids come home from school, they live in constant fear that our government sees their parents and sends them back to another country.

Sally writes:

The parents are good decent people, loving parents, and have always felt their sacrifices for their children's sake have been worth the price.

There are so many families that risk being torn apart because our immigration system is completely out of touch with our values as Americans. Rather than reuniting families, it tears families apart; rather than encouraging people to follow the law, it rewards unscrupulous business people who hire people under the table and encourages the violation of the law and identity theft.

We need to replace our immigration system with one that works for our country, allow people who've been here and are hardworking and contribute to our country to get right with the law, and, yes, some day enjoy the same benefits of citizenship that Sally herself enjoys.

I call upon my colleagues to pass comprehensive immigration reform now.

ANN HARROUN

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share the story of Ann Harroun from Loveland, Colorado, who wrote to me with regard to her support for comprehensive immigration reform and her own family's story.

Ann writes that her relatives first came to Canada from France and England; the French in the 1700s and the English a little later. Ann's great-great grandmother was becalmed in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean for a time, and both sides of her family were farmers in Quebec before wandering into northern New Hampshire in the 1920s.

Ann writes, "Were they legal? Who knows?" She further writes that the French had large families and soon outgrew their farms. They moved on from New Hampshire. Her mother moved from New Hampshire to Maine in 1942 after the death of her father, and she worked for Maine Blue Cross for 30 years.

Ann moved to California after high school and saw an opportunity to attend college, married, had children, joined the League of Women Voters, finally graduated in 1980, and promptly won an election to the Vermont house. Ann was the first in her family to attend college, vote, own a house, and hold public office.

There are so many today that would be the first to go to college, that would be the first to vote, that would be the first to own a house, that would be the first to hold public office, that would be the first to be captains of industry, that would be the first to have advanced degrees if only we can find a way where they have the ability to get right with the law and get paperwork that allows them to pursue the great opportunities that this country offers.

As Ann says, "Were they illegal? Who knows?" Were they illegal? Who cares? When my family came here in 1906, they got off the boat and registered. There was no quota or process or thing they had to deal with on the legal front. They just showed up here. You know what? They were welcomed. And you know what? Their grandson on one side and great-grandson on the other is

now a United States Congress person, just as Ann was the first in her family after they wandered down from Canada to New Hampshire. Ann has given so much for her country, just as so many of today's immigrants will if we only give them today's opportunity.

DARYL SHUTE

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share the story of Daryl Shute from Littleton, Colorado. Daryl writes with regard to the critical need to replace our broken immigration system with one that works.

Daryl's grandfather, Joseph Giangreco, emigrated from Sicily to the United States to join his mother, who was already living in Buffalo, New York, in the mid-nineteen teens. Daryl writes that Italians were the unwanted immigrants of that day. Daryl writes that he returned to Canada, walked across the border, and rejoined his mother after he was deported from New York.

He was caught and given a choice to fight for the Allies in Europe to earn his citizenship. He accepted that. And Daryl's grandfather, Joseph, went to war for the American Dream. Unfortunately, he received injuries during that war that affected him the rest of his life. Even so, he was hardworking and worked hard from the back of a horse-drawn cart to support his family for many years.

□ 1740

Even to this day, immigrants give so much of themselves through their hard work, their toil, their sweat and tears, which all of us as Americans prosper from and benefit from. We need to find a way, just as Joseph's grandfather did, so that people can get right with the law.

What is being discussed and what needs to be discussed is not an amnesty any more than if you get a speeding ticket and you enter a plea bargain it's an amnesty. It's essentially a plea bargain. Yes, you violated the law. Let's figure out how you get right with the law: register, pay a fine, get your working permit. It's not realistic in any way, shape or form to try to round up large numbers of people who are giving so much to our country every day and who, in many cases, have American children. That's why we need to pass immigration reform and replace our broken immigration system with one that reflects our values as Americans.

MARTHA DENNEY

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share a story from Martha Denney in Fort Collins, Colorado. It's her own personal story and the story of her family's immigration and why we need to replace our broken immigration system with one that works and pass comprehensive immigration reform now.

Martha's grandmother's family members were immigrants from Montbeliard, France, but they were actually Swiss Mennonites. They were driven from Switzerland as followers of

the Mennonite faith. They followed the teachings that defied the teachings of the Catholic Church, and they were discriminated against. Many Swiss farmers became valued and trusted workers on estates in France, where they went to escape persecution. When they were able to emigrate to the U.S. in the late 1800s, they came to Wayland, Iowa, which was a small Mennonite community.

Martha has worked for more than 30 years in the area of international exchange at a large American university, Colorado State University, in Fort Collins. She has worked with issues of visas and student visas and the immigration of students. She has observations about the process that she has tried to share over the years with Representatives of our United States Government, but she believes that, up until now, they weren't in a position to hear them because they weren't focusing on immigration reform.

I call upon this body to focus on immigration reform, to heed the stories of those like Martha's and of the many others who interact every day—whether it's as an employer or an educator or a social worker—with those who are here in this country and are working hard to make our country greater but who lack the paperwork that verifies their own existence, who lack the paperwork that allows them to exist under the rule of law in this country.

We need to replace our broken immigration system with one that reflects our American values, with one that allows people to step out of the darkness and into the light, to get right with the law, to be able to fully pursue their destinies as future Americans. We are a Nation of immigrants, and we all benefit from the tremendous benefits that immigrants give to this country every day.

I hope that now is the time that Representatives of our United States Government in this House of Representatives will be in a position to hear and will be in a position to focus on immigration reform in order to make our country stronger, to make our country safer, to make our country more prosperous.

Mr. Speaker, I call upon my colleagues to support comprehensive immigration reform and to pass it now. We must replace our broken immigration system with one that works for our country and our values.

I yield back the balance of my time.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today.

Mr. CULBERSON (at the request of Mr. CANTOR) for today on account of illness.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.