

for the economy, it will also be bad for the Republican Party.

It is time Republican leaders acknowledge that compromise—not reckless brinkmanship—will put America on the road to fiscal responsibility.

IMMIGRATION REFORM

Mr. REID. Mr. President, for 16 years, Blanca Gamez thought she was an average American girl. But when she turned 16, one by one her friends learned to drive. Her parents sat her down and explained an important truth she did not know at the time: She could not get her driver's license because she is an undocumented immigrant.

Blanca's parents brought her from Mexico to the United States when she was 7 months old. Because they came without proper paperwork, she was missing something really important. Blanca's parents told her: "You need nine numbers." That refers to a Social Security number, which she did not have. A Social Security number—those nine numbers—opens doors to American citizens, which American citizens take for granted.

I had an opportunity to visit with Blanca when I was in Las Vegas recently. She is a young woman with everything going for her. She is smart, she is driven, and she loves this country with a passion that is truly moving. In fact, she does not remember the country she was born in, Mexico. She was 7 months old when she came here. To her home means Nevada. That is our State song: "Home Means Nevada." And home certainly means Nevada to this young woman.

Unfortunately, without a Social Security number—those nine numbers—Blanca faced challenges her American-born peers simply did not.

But all that changed a year ago this week when President Obama signed a directive suspending deportation of upstanding young people such as Blanca who were brought to this country as children. As a result, she now has her nine numbers.

Almost 300,000 DREAMers—undocumented immigrants who came to this country as children—have already taken advantage of this opportunity.

Thanks to President Obama's courageous action, Blanca and hundreds of thousands of upstanding young men and women like her can rest easier knowing they are no longer in danger of being deported. They can now drive, they can work, and they can get the nine numbers that unlock a successful future—I repeat: a Social Security number.

Blanca's future—and the future of 800,000 young DREAMers—will remain uncertain until Congress passes commonsense immigration reform. President Obama's directive is only a temporary solution.

The Republican majority in the House of Representatives has taken aim at the DREAMers, voting recently

to resume deportation of promising young people such as Blanca.

The directive does not address the 10 million people living in this country without the proper documentation who do not qualify for deferred action. Many of these individuals are the parents or siblings of DREAMers such as Blanca. The bipartisan legislation before the Senate is the opportunity they have been waiting for. This bill offers a pathway to earned citizenship that begins by going to the back of the line, paying penalties and fines, working, paying taxes, staying out of trouble, learning English, getting right with the law.

The measure will be good for national security, it will be great for the economy, and it will be good for millions of immigrant families.

The bill is not perfect, but it takes important steps to reform our broken legal immigration system and strengthen border security.

I know many of my colleagues have ideas about how to improve this bill. I hope we will be able to process additional amendments soon so we can give these ideas the debate they deserve here in the Senate and, after that, of course, the votes they deserve.

We have five amendments pending. We could vote on four of them right away. I also think it would be fair to add the Heller amendment. That would mean three Republican amendments and two Democratic amendments.

My colleagues should be aware, unless we begin voting on amendments soon, we will need to work through the weekend in order to finish the bill before July 4.

Recognizing that this is a Nation founded by immigrants, I hope Senators will consider every amendment to this bill with compassion. Like generations before them, Blanca's parents and millions of other undocumented immigrants came here seeking a better life. The famous author C.S. Lewis said:

You are never too old . . . to dream a new dream.

It is time for Congress to help 11 million dreamers—young and old—get right with the law and unlock their potential.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Would the Chair announce the business of the day, please.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MURPHY). Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 5 o'clock p.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The Senator from Vermont.

COMMENDING THE MAJORITY LEADER

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, as always, I commend the distinguished majority leader for his words on immigra-

tion reform. We are on this bill because he set this time aside, and he, like I, hopes we will soon be voting on amendments. There are a lot of potential amendments, just as we had 300 amendments filed in the Senate Judiciary Committee. We were able to work through them. I know we do not expect that many here on the floor, but I know the leader has set aside time for us, and I know his commitment to get this filed and fulfilled, and I joined him on that. I think the time is right. We either do it now or we are never going to do it.

So I thank the leader again.

MANDATORY MINIMUM SENTENCES

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, there are two matters I want to talk about. Before I speak about the immigration, I want to speak about the Supreme Court ruling today in *Alleyne v. the United States*, that facts underlying mandatory minimum sentences must be proved to a jury beyond a reasonable doubt.

I continue to believe our criminal justice system's reliance on mandatory minimum sentences is a mistake.

In March, Senator PAUL and I introduced the Justice Safety Valve Act of 2013, to give Federal judges greater flexibility in sentencing in cases where a mandatory minimum is not only unnecessary but often counterproductive.

Mandatory minimum sentences imprison some people, particularly non-violent offenders, for far longer than is just or beneficial.

Looking at it just from a fiscal point of view, as a result of mandatory minimums the Federal prison population has exploded in recent years. This has placed enormous strain on the Justice Department's budget. That means less money for Federal law enforcement, less aid to State and local law enforcement, less funding for crime prevention programs that make us safer, plus less money for prisoner reentry programs.

Sentencing reform has worked at the State level. The Justice Safety Valve Act is an important step toward the sentencing reform our Federal system desperately needs. I applaud the Supreme Court decision today in *Alleyne*. I have long felt that when legislative bodies pass mandatory minimums, it is a feel-good response to crime, but it does no good.

Judges need discretion. Every case that comes before a judge is different. Now, do judges always get it right out of the tens of thousands of cases that come before them? No. Of course not. Sometimes they might not, but they are far more often right than wrong. They are always more right than a legislative one-size-fits-all approach. Mandatory minimum laws are one size fits all. Anybody who has spent time in the criminal justice system either as a defense counsel or as a prosecutor or as a judge knows that one size does not fit all. We should get rid of all of our mandatory minimums, have real standards

that judges will follow, and then let the individual men and woman who sit on the bench make the decision.

IMMIGRATION REFORM

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, as we continue yet another week debating S. 744, the bipartisan immigration bill, I hope we can start making some progress on this vital legislation. The American people know what some of us have to realize: our immigration system is broken; it has to be fixed. If we are going to have an effective solution to this complex problem, we cannot focus simply and effectively on one border or any single aspect of our immigration system. We have to address all parts of our immigration system.

Of course, we all agree we have to secure our borders, but we must also reduce the incentives people have to come here illegally or to overstay their visas. It means we have to implement E-Verify so employers stop hiring those who are not authorized to work here. We also have to eliminate the extensive backlogs that tear so many families apart.

We have to respond to the needs of American farmers and technology companies and investors who create jobs in this country. We also need to remember that our history and the future of the Nation is based on immigrants when we are considering the legalization process provided in this bill.

Almost 4 weeks ago the Judiciary Committee voted to report this immigration reform bill with a strong bipartisan vote of 13 to 5. I understand the Congressional Budget Office's task is a difficult one, with complex, comprehensive measures such as this. We expected their score today. I hope they are able to get the official score early tomorrow so we can move forward and complete consideration of this bill. As we closed out each title during our extended mark ups, we forwarded the text to the CBO, so they have had the border security title and the non-immigrant visa title for well over a month. I look forward to reviewing their analysis when we receive it.

In addition to the CBO score we are awaiting, we should also credit the extensive testimony the Judiciary Committee received from former CBO Director Douglas Holtz-Eakin. He testified that immigration reform "will increase the productivity growth in the U.S. economy, the fundamental building block of higher standards of living, and generate larger economic growth numbers than we have seen in recent years."

Specifically, he estimated reform of this nature would increase growth so that "the overall growth rate and real GDP would rise from 3 percent to 3.9 percent, on average annually, over the first 10 years. The upshot of GDP after 10 years would be higher—a difference of \$64,700 per capita versus \$62,900 per capita. This higher per capita income of \$1,700 after 10 years is a core benefit of immigration reform."

According to Holtz-Eakin this increase in growth would also help lower our deficit. In fact, he testified that "Over 10 years an additional 0.1 percentage in average economic growth will reduce the federal deficit by a bit over \$300 billion. In this context, the rules imply that over the first 10 years of the benchmark immigration reform the federal deficit would be reduced by a cumulative amount of \$2.7 trillion."

Also, the Judiciary Committee received powerful testimony from Grover Norquist. He was asked repeatedly by those who oppose this bill whether legalizing immigrants would lead to a drain on our safety net. His response was that just the opposite would occur. He testified that "immigrants come at the beginning of their working lives, which means they will have years to pay taxes and contribute to the economy before being eligible for entitlements." Furthermore, Mr. Norquist testified that "Some argue that the fiscal burden of America's entitlement programs make more immigration cost prohibitive. That is a false choice. That our entitlement systems are broken is not an argument for less immigration; it is an argument to fix our entitlement systems."

It is not every day that I agree with these very conservative commentators and advocates, but I was happy to invite them to testify before the committee and commend their analysis to Members who are concerned about the approximate 'cost' of reforming our broken immigration system. All the valid testimony—all the valid testimony we received says that fixing the broken immigration system adds to our bottom line in a beneficial way.

One of the hallmarks of this country is how we have historically treated those who have sought shelter and refuge on our shores. America protects the most vulnerable among us. This includes survivors of domestic violence and human trafficking, as well as pregnant women and children. I am proud to report that there are strong protections in this bill for the treatment of children caught in the broken immigration enforcement system.

In the Judiciary Committee we added to those protections for domestic violence and human trafficking victims. But the Judiciary Committee also considered and rejected, as it should, several amendments that sought to take away protections in our safety net programs for immigrants who need them. I know some may want to punish the 11 million undocumented people currently living here in the shadows. The bill specifically contains a steep financial penalty for that purpose. The undocumented also need to go to the back of the line and take classes to learn English, but even these tough steps are not enough for those who oppose this bipartisan bill.

While some may want to look like they are being even tougher on the undocumented population, we all need to consider how further punitive measures

may deter people from coming out of the shadows. When children and pregnant women are put at risk by an urge to punish millions of people who are trying to make a better life for their families, as my grandparents did, we do not live up to our American values and we do not make this a safer country. Last week, Senator HATCH filed several amendments to deny or delay protections for the millions of people who apply for registered provisional immigrant status. I will oppose all of those amendments. They are not fair. They deter people from coming forward to register. That makes us all less safe.

It is a cruel irony when my friends on the other side of the aisle talk about border security, the high cost of implementing their proposed measures is always absent from the discussion. But when we are talking about programs that help children who live near the poverty line, well, then suddenly fiscal concerns are paramount.

So if we are talking about a specific type of fencing, or a new expensive exit program, our concern is supposed to trump any hesitancy about government spending. Spend whatever it takes. Spend whatever it takes, and at the same time dramatically increase the boon that their proposals give to the government contracting firms that make money off of them.

However, if we are talking about programs literally to feed the hungry or provide vaccinations to children, vaccinations which make us all healthier because of the disease it stops, then we hear lectures as to how we cannot afford those programs in the current fiscal environment. Maybe some of these contractors with their lobbyists ought to be covering those programs. Maybe we will hear more need for them.

I would say from a moral point of view, as an indication of how great a country we are, we ought to be saying: Hungry children, children who can be saved from childhood illnesses, it is in our moral core as a Nation, the most wealthy, powerful Nation on Earth to help them. The bill we are considering prohibits immigrants in registered provisional immigrant status from accessing Federal means-tested public benefit programs throughout their time in provisional status.

In addition, as a result of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, even qualified legal permanent resident immigrants must wait an additional 5 years after they are legalized to receive any safety net protections. We have already put all kinds of barriers up here.

So including the 5-year bar, most immigrants who are working their way through the path to legalization will have to wait anywhere from 13 to 15 years before having any access to safety net programs. Given the penalties and the fines they have to pay, it is wrong to further deny these low-income families protection that some may desperately need.