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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable WILLIAM M. COWAN, a Senator from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

God of our forebears, You have been our refuge in every generation. Do not forsake us during these challenging days. Lord, enlighten our lawmakers so that they will be led by Your spirit, as they trust You to guide them with Your loving providence. Give them the wisdom to walk on the road beaten hard by the footsteps of saints, apostles, prophets, and martyrs. May they not forget the glorious heritage You have prepared for those who love You. Strengthen them, O God, with Your mighty arms, enabling them to serve Your purpose for their lives in this generation.

We pray in Your sovereign Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

The assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, June 19, 2013.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

appoint the Honorable WILLIAM M. COWAN, a Senator from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATRICK J. LEAHY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. COWAN thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, following the leader remarks of myself and Senator MCCONNELL the Senate will be in morning business for an hour. The Republicans will control the first half, the majority the final half. Following that morning business the Senate will resume consideration of the immigration bill.

We have in order a number of amendments that are now pending. I would hope the managers of this bill will work to get time agreements set for these amendments and we will work out a time to do these as quickly as we can. But if we have to have an agreement to move forward on these amendments—and I would suggest I do not want and I do not think we should have to move to table any of the amendments or anything like that; I think we should be able to have votes on these—I look forward to the managers working out a time agreement on these amendments so we can move forward and move on to something else on this bill as quickly as possible.

IMMIGRATION REFORM

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the life of a young woman by the name of Roxanna began as an immigration success story. Her parents came from Cuba in the 1950s, and they raised their daughter to

appreciate the freedoms and opportunities available to her. That was because she was born in the United States. Roxanna was born in the United States. She is an American citizen.

She wrote to me last month. Here is what she said:

I am proud to say that this country has always been my home.

But when she met her husband Genaro, she saw a different side of the American immigration system. He came to the United States 15 years ago, and he did not have proper documentation, proper paperwork.

He left Mexico for the same reasons Roxanna's parents left Cuba—to try, to try really hard to build a better life. He worked tremendously long hours when he got here, doing odd jobs for not very much—a few dollars a day, to be honest.

Then he moved to Nevada, got a job doing construction, did a little better, and there he did real well because he met Roxanna.

They married in 2003 and soon petitioned to have his undocumented status changed, adjusted. Although they initially received a letter from immigration officials that gave them hope, they have lived in limbo now for 10 years. Because he is undocumented, he worries every day of being arrested and deported—every day—and he has nightmares every night that he will be separated from the love of his life, his American wife.

This is what she wrote to me in addition to what I have recited earlier:

We pay our taxes. . . . We have never caused any harm to anyone or been in trouble with the law. We don't stand on corners asking for money. We work very hard to make ends meet. . . . We have friends and family here that we love and [who] love us. Yet [we] still feel like [we're] not wanted here.

Genaro is one of 11 million people living in America without proper documentation. Many of those 11 million are the parents, siblings, or spouses of U.S. citizens. Some of them overstayed

• This “bullet” symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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their visas. Some crossed the border illegally. Others were brought here by their parents when they were only children. I recited 2 days ago one example in Las Vegas: a 7-month-old when she came here, carried on her father's shoulders.

But regardless of how they got here or why they lack the proper documents, these 11 million people play a crucial role in our economy and a vital role in our communities.

That was proven last night at 5 o'clock when the Congressional Budget Office—this nonpartisan arm we look to for direction of what things cost and do not cost here on Capitol Hill with our legislation—issued a statement yesterday that this bill that is on the floor today certainly is good for the economy. As I will say a couple times during my brief remarks here, it is going to, over the next two decades—what is left in this one and the next decade—reduce the deficit in America by almost \$1 trillion.

Of course, as we have said here previously to getting the report from CBO, this legislation is good for the economy and good for security. That is a good package.

These 11 million people need a pathway to get right with the law. The commonsense, bipartisan reform proposal before the Senate will help them do just that. It will reduce illegal immigration by strengthening our borders, it will fix our broken legal immigration system, and it will crack down on unscrupulous employers who provide an incentive to come here illegally and take, in many instances, tremendous advantage of these people who are desperate.

This measure that is now on the Senate floor provides a route to earned citizenship—earned citizenship—for 11 million people who are already here. Some have been here for a long time. The process for them is not easy. They do not go to the front of the line. They go to the back of the line. But they at least are in the line. They will have to work, pay taxes, stay out of trouble, and work on English.

This legislation will also recognize that the alternative to earned citizenship; that is, deporting 11 million people, is simply not sensible. We do not have the money. We cannot do it fiscally and we cannot do it physically, and that is for sure.

Detaining and deporting every unauthorized immigrant would cost more each year than the entire budget for the Department of Homeland Security. And not only is mass deportation impractical—not to mention cruel—it is the wrong approach for our economy—again, a trillion-dollar reduction in our deficit if we pass this bill, which we will here in the Senate.

Immigration reform that includes a roadmap to citizenship will boost our national economy, I repeat, and increase our security.

Helping 8 million immigrants who are already working—of the 11 million

who are here, they are working, some, as we heard from Roxanna, in jobs that are not that great, but they are working. As she says, they are already working. They need to get right with the law. And it will mean billions of new revenue for our country. It will mean every U.S. resident pays his or her fair share.

That is one reason an overwhelming majority of Americans support the legislation that is on the floor—not 51 to 49—an overwhelming number of Americans, Democrats, Independents, and Republicans.

But immigration reform is not just an economic issue. It is a moral issue. This bipartisan proposal will allow immigrants to stay with those they love, with their U.S. citizen children in many instances, siblings and spouses. It will allow Genaro to stay with his American wife.

This is Roxanna's final plea to me in this letter that she wrote:

I pray that you would open your hearts to the millions like me. . . . All we ask is a chance [at] a pathway to citizenship and the peace of mind to live our lives as meaningful citizens of this great country.

Her country, my country, our country.

I urge all my Senators on this side of the aisle, as we say, and the Republican Senators to keep her wish, her prayer—a prayer and a wish she shares with 11 million human beings who are here in America today. This prayer, this wish, should be in all of our minds and in our hearts the next few days.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

OBAMACARE

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, last year President Obama was asked about the lessons he has learned from his first term. Instead of focusing on errors in judgment or policy, he seemed to indicate that he needed to do a better job—just a better job—of telling “a story to the American people.” In other words, the policy was just fine, and if Americans did not get it, it was because they had a listening problem. Well, that is an attitude that has come to define this administration.

I would say that is why folks will be rallying on the Capitol grounds today. They, like a growing number of Americans, are losing faith in government. They think it is working against them, not for them. And for good reason.

Let's take ObamaCare. This law has been pretty unpopular for several years now. It is not as though the American people have not been exposed—probably overexposed—to the arguments on both sides of the issue. ObamaCare must have been discussed hundreds of thousands—maybe even millions—of times over the past few years. That in-

cludes political debates, more speeches than any of us care to count, issue ads both pro and con, and—guess what—Americans still do not like the idea of ObamaCare, not because they are unable to understand or because they have not “seen the right messenger.” It is because most of them like their health care plan and want to keep it. It is because they do not want to pay more to the health insurance companies. And it is because they do not think the law is going to work as promised.

Yet the Washington Democrats' explanation for ObamaCare's enduring unpopularity still seems to be that the law is too complicated for their constituents to understand, and the Washington Democratic solution seems to be not to actually change the policy but to spend millions in a campaign-style PR—PR—blitz.

So the news flash would be this: If you still do not think Americans are able to understand a law you passed more than 3 years ago, then there is something wrong with the law, not with the American people.

Instead of going around the country trying to convince Americans why they are wrong, the administration could actually listen for a change. I think they should start over on health care and embrace the types of commonsense, step-by-step reforms that would actually lower the cost. I am not holding my breath that is going to happen.

So at a minimum they need to at least do this: The President, members of his Cabinet, and the congressional Democrats—congressional Democrats who voted for this law—need to get out and explain to Americans what is headed their way. Do not feed them the sunny picture painted in the ObamaCare ads the President's campaign team is already running but actually explain the reality of the situation to them. For instance, Americans need to know about the coming wave of premium hikes. We have already seen projected double-digit increases in some States. They need to know we are likely to see even more Americans lose the health care they want to keep, just like the thousands of Californians who will probably have to look for new plans after Aetna pulled out of the individual market in their State, almost certainly because of ObamaCare. They need to know they could lose their jobs or see their hours cut or struggle to find work in the first place. In fact, a recent survey showed that about 70 percent—70 percent—of small businesses say the law will make it harder for them to hire. Americans need to know all of these things because they need to prepare for them.

It is supremely unhelpful when the President claims that those who already have health care will not see changes, as he did just a few weeks ago. He knows that is not what many experts are saying. He owes it to the country to be frank about that. So it is time to get off the campaign trial, call