

Little Kyle McCullough, when I first met him, was 8. He is probably now 10 or 11 years old. He has a very complicated disease for which he has to take \$3,000 injections. He will hit his lifetime limit in a matter of years and his family will be on the hook for every expense thereafter. The health care bill says no more annual, no more lifetime limits for health care coverage. You could have health care insurance that is going to take care of little Kyle McCullough for as long as he needs those injections, at whatever cost it is going to be.

It is insurance. Because for people who have a bad lot in life and have a big, complicated, expensive, illness they are going to be covered. If the health care bill is repealed, defunded, or whatever Republicans want to do, Kyle McCullough's family has to pay for that out of pocket for the rest of their life, as will thousands of other families like them.

That is what the stakes are. It is not a piece of paper. It is not a political football. It is life and death. It is hundreds, if not thousands, of dollars that hard-working families throughout this country desperately need and a health care system they need to be much more fair and much more compassionate.

It is not going to happen. It is political fantasy that Republicans are going to be able to defund or repeal the health care law as a consequence of the budget debates we are going to have over the next few weeks.

Let's be honest about what they are asking. They are asking for higher costs for seniors; they are asking for higher costs for middle-class families; they are asking for more bankruptcies; and they are asking for more misery for the thousands of families who are struggling to keep their heads above water when they deal with a complicated illness. That is the true reality of what is happening out there today in our health care system that is getting better by the day and will get even better if we move forward with the implementation of the health care law.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

IMMIGRATION

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, we continue to see that special interest groups remain undaunted in their efforts to ram through an immigration bill that will do real damage to the wages and job prospects of working Americans. That is just a plain fact. Consider the economic situation we find ourselves in now. Inflation-ad-

justed wages—that is the way to compare wages correctly over time—are lower today than they were in 1999. This is a steady decline. Actually, new numbers indicate they are lower than they have been since 1995. Working Americans are not having their wages go up. Their wages are going down. Median household income is lower today—median income, which is the best way to account for how families are doing—than it has been every single year since 1989. The size of the workforce today has shrunk to a 35-year low. We have the lowest workplace participation since 1975, and a record number of Americans are on welfare, including almost one in six on food stamps.

But we still have this determination, it seems, by our masters of the universe—people who know so much better—that what we really need in America is more workers. I would contend it is quite plain—with high unemployment and low job prospects, declining workplace participation, and declining wages—that what we have a shortage of is not workers, but we have a shortage of jobs, and we need to put our people in those jobs. That is a very simple concept, and I think it is undisputable.

That is why I care about this issue, and I think we have to talk about it. What we are talking about, remember now, is not the end of immigration. We are not talking about anything like that. We are talking about maintaining the greatest immigration flow of any nation in the world—maybe in the history of the world—with 1.1 million a year, plus a very generous guest worker program, where people come in just to work. And we can support that, but this bill that passed the Senate would have doubled the number of guest workers and increased by at least 50 percent—over 1.5 million a year—those coming permanently, in addition to legalizing 11 million who entered unlawfully. I truly believe that cannot be sustained and that this is good for the vast majority of the American people.

What we are seeing routinely is the one interest that is being omitted in all of the debate is the interest of the average working American—the average citizen of this country who goes to work every day. Everybody else has their interest represented. Everybody else is raising money, putting ads on the television, spinning this and spinning that, but the average guy is getting hammered by this. It just is so.

Let me cite some of the things that are going on, and I will run through this because I think it is important for us to know. Here in Politico, September 17, it starts off saying:

Nancy Pelosi is huddling with Facebook's Mark Zuckerberg, top labor leaders and former AOL leader Steve Case in separate meetings this week as supporters of immigration reform try to revive the issue.

After they got so badly hammered by the American people when it passed through the Senate, it is now dead on arrival in the House and they are trying to revive it.

The article goes on to state:

House Republicans bristled when a group of Senators met with outside groups supporting immigration reform and formulated a campaign-style strategy to target more than 100 House Republicans over the August recess.

To try to pound them into submission, I guess.

Despite the blowback, Schumer, the so-called leader of the Gang of Eight—

The leader of the Gang of 8, to be frank

continued to work the phones over the August recess with a clear message: Please get active on immigration and back reform in the Republican-led House.

The article says he reached out to all his allies to tell them to go forward. He said:

We had a very good August. But I don't think it's dead by any stretch of the imagination.

Well, I think he does not want it dead and I think he is working hard to keep it alive, but somebody needs to make it clear to the American people that it is not dead and it could be revived. There are special interests out there, traditional Republican allies as well as strong Democratic and liberal activists who are pushing for this legislation.

Our friends say they want comprehensive immigration reform, but what does this phrase really mean? What does it really mean? Isn't that what we should ask? They want a large increase in future low-skilled immigration combined with immediate amnesty for those here illegally and a promise of enforcement in the future. And that promise was proven to be worthless.

The first legislation, which stayed on the floor for weeks and went through the committee, would only have reduced the illegal flow by about 25 percent. They promised it was the toughest bill in history, but the Congressional Budget Office—our independent analysis—proved it would have only minor impact on the illegality while doubling the number of guest workers, increasing substantially the number in terms of annual flow of immigrants who want to be here permanently, plus amnesty for the 11 million. Instead of what we would normally expect to legalize over 10 years—10 million—we would legalize 30 million under this bill. That is what they proposed here in the Senate. Well, I don't think this is good for America, and I don't think the American people want that to happen.

Notice that the one group not represented in all of this is U.S. citizens—the American people. In a recent interview, the President of the U.S. Chamber of Congress, Mr. Tom Donohue—a great American, and I know him and respect him—said this about what is going on, and people who are concerned about this issue need to pay attention because he is one of the driving forces. He is meeting with La Raza and meeting with the Democrats and Senator SCHUMER and meeting with others. He wants more workers, apparently.

Reading from BusinessReport.com:

An agreement between the national business lobby and the AFL-CIO was crucial to passing immigration reform in the Senate, says U.S. Chamber of Commerce President Thomas Donohue, who spoke today at a breakfast by BRAC. Unions are looking for new members, Donahue says, while businesses need both laborers and highly skilled workers.

This is a frank statement. I give Mr. Donahue credit. He lays it right out there. If you want to know the forces at work here, unions believe that if we legalize and bring in more people, they will have a better chance of adding union members.

Unions are looking for new members, Donahue says—

That is their interest. They have forgotten the interests of their workers, the ones who were working and whose average wages have declined and who are being laid off—

while businesses need both laborers and highly skilled workers.

We can bring in new workers under the current guest worker immigration program, and we can deal compassionately with people who have been here a long time. We can do that but not with the legislation that came out of the Senate.

Listen to this:

Donahue says the House doesn't need to pass a "comprehensive reform," suggesting problems could be fixed with smaller bills. "Take the whole thing, go to conference with the Senate, and we'll build a bill."

Those of us who care about how legislation is crafted can feel the hair rise on the back of our necks when we hear this because this is exactly what they are trying to accomplish. They want the House to pass a bill or two to look like it is tough on enforcement, then go to conference and take the Senate bill, which is a total disaster, and build a bill that he likes, bring it back to the floor of both Chambers where no amendments can be offered, and ram it through, to some degree like the massive health care bill was rammed through. That is what they want to do.

I think the House needs to be careful about this. Once you go to conference, once you start meeting with these special groups—the Democrats want votes, union members want members, businesses want cheap labor, immigrant groups want to bring more and more. Where are the American people in this? Who is paying for these ads they run on television? Not the average guy. I don't know any average guy sending them money to run these ads. It is people who have a special interest in it.

Just a few days ago, a remarkable event happened. The human resource managers for some of the Nation's largest businesses groups—that is, the people in charge of hiring—sent a letter to House leaders claiming:

Many of our companies continue to have difficulty finding sufficient American workers to fill certain lesser-skilled positions. Thus, in addition to addressing the need for more highly skilled immigrants, we strongly support efforts to bolster the availability of a workforce at all skill levels. . . .

They originally tried to say this bill was designed to bring in more high-skilled workers and reduce the numbers of low-skilled workers because of our unemployment problems and other reasons, but they openly say they want all skills.

The question is, Are these businesses really suffering from a labor shortage? Byron York, an excellent writer—writing, I believe, in the Washington Examiner—looked at that question. This is what he found:

. . . at the same time the corporate officers seek higher numbers of immigrants, both low-skill and high-skill, many of their companies are laying off thousands of workers.

Isn't that something? Could that be true? Well, let's look at his article. Pretty damning, it seems to me. Remember, this letter I just read saying that they have to have more low-skilled workers from the human resource officials was analyzed by Mr. Byron York. He finds this:

The officials represent companies with a vast array of business interests: General Electric, The Walt Disney Company, Marriott International, Hilton Worldwide, Hyatt Hotels Corporation, McDonald's Corporation, The Wendy's Company, Coca-Cola, The Cheesecake Factory, Johnson & Johnson, Verizon Communications, Hewlett-Packard, General Mills, and many more. All want to see increases in immigration levels for low-skill as well as high-skill workers, in addition to a path to citizenship for the millions of immigrants currently in the U.S. illegally.

Well, what did Mr. York discover?

Of course, the U.S. unemployment rate is at 7.3 percent, with millions of American workers at all skill levels out of work, and millions more so discouraged that they have left the work force altogether. In addition, at the same time the corporate officers seek higher numbers of immigrants, both low-skill and high-skill, many of their companies are laying off thousands of workers.

They say they need more workers. How can it be they are laying off workers?

For example, Hewlett-Packard, whose Executive Vice President for Human Resources Tracy Keogh signed the letter, laid off 29,000 employees in 2012.

So they want more foreign workers and they just laid off 29,000 Americans? Oh, boy. That is a stunning number.

It goes on.

In August of this year, Cisco Systems, whose Senior Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer Kathleen Weslock signed the letter, announced plans to lay off 4,000—in addition to the 8,000 cut in the last two years.

So they have laid off 12,000 people, and now they can't find people willing to work.

United Technologies, whose Senior Vice President of Human Resources and Organization Elizabeth B. Amato signed the letter, announced layoffs of 3,000 this year. American Express, whose Chief Human Resources Officer L. Kevin Cox signed the letter, cut 5,400 jobs this year.

Maybe they ought to try to give some of those jobs to people they laid off, many of whom probably worked for them for 20 years or more.

Proctor & Gamble, whose Chief Human Resources Officer Mark F. Biegger signed the letter, announced plans to cut 5,700 jobs in 2012.

This is really offensive to me, as I think it should be to all Americans. This is the kind of leadership we have in corporate America. They come in here and say they have to have workers, totally ignoring the fact that they are laying them off by the thousands. Maybe they find some who work cheaper. Maybe that is what the interest is.

Those are just a few of the layoffs at companies whose officials signed the letter. A few more: T-Mobile announced 2,250 layoffs in 2012. Archer-Daniels-Midland laid off 1,200. Texas Instruments, [laid off] nearly 2,000. Cigna, 1,300. Verizon sought to cut 1,700 jobs by buyouts and layoffs. Marriott announced "hundreds" of layoffs this year. International Paper has closed plants and laid off dozens.

I will note parenthetically that last week it was announced in Alabama that International Paper was closing a plant, and 1,100 people who had worked there 25 and 30 years will be out of work. The plant shuttered. But they signed the bill saying they need more workers.

And General Mills, in what the Minneapolis Star-Tribune called a "rare mass layoff," laid off 850 people last year.

There are more still. . . . According to a recent Reuters report, U.S. employers announced 50,462 layoffs in August, up 34 percent from the previous month and up 57 percent from August 2012.

"It is difficult to understand how these companies can feel justified in demanding" that we ram through an immigration bill doubling the number of workers, increasing dramatically the number of people who would be permanent residents of the United States, claiming they need workers, while these very same companies all signed letters. We are laying off thousands of workers. We have to be realistic.

Senator SCHUMER is meeting with business groups to pressure Republicans to join him in conference. But what do conservative thinkers have to say about Senator SCHUMER's plan? I will share a few comments—and there are many more—from intellectuals and writers, some conservative, some maybe not conservative.

The National Review wrote this:

By more than doubling the number of so-called guest workers admitted each year, the bill would help create a permanent underclass of foreign workers. . . . The creation of a large population of second-class workers is undesirable from the point of view of the American national interest, which should be our guiding force in this matter. . . . The United States is a nation with an economy, not an economy with a nation.

Bill Kristol of Fox News, the editor of the Weekly Standard, joined with Rich Lowry, the editor of the National Review, in an unusual joint editorial and went on to lay out deep concerns about the passage of this.

Passing any version of the Gang of Eight's bill would be worse public policy than passing nothing. House Republicans can do the country a service by putting a stake through its heart.

Victor Davis Hanson, who has written a book on immigration, is an excellent columnist in California.

The United States may be suffering the most persistent unemployment since the Great Depression. There may be an unemployment rate of over 15 percent in many small towns in the American Southwest.

American businesses may be flush with record amounts of cash, and farm prices may be at record levels. But we are still lectured that without cheap labor from south of the border, businesses simply cannot profit.

Peter Kirsanow, a member of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights who has dealt with these issues for years and has had hearings on and tried to analyze the meaning and impact of these immigration flows, wrote this:

Recent history shows that a grant of legal status to illegal immigrants results in a further influx of illegal immigrants who will crowd out low-skilled workers from the workforce. . . . Before the federal government grants legal status to illegal immigrants, serious deliberations must be given to the effect such grant will have on the employment and earnings prospects of low-skilled Americans. History shows that granting such legal status is not without profound and substantial costs to American workers. Does Congress care?

Thomas Sowell, the great African-American writer, says this:

"Jobs that Americans will not do" are in fact jobs at which not enough Americans will work at the current wage rate that some employers are offering. This is not an uncommon situation. That is why labor "shortages" lead to higher wage rates. . . . Virtually every kind of work Americans will not do is, in fact, work that Americans have done for generations.

Look, salaries do make a difference.
David Frum:

The United States is entering its sixth year of extraordinarily high unemployment. Twelve million Americans who want work cannot find it. Millions more have quit searching. Slack labor markets have depressed wages throughout the economy. . . . Yet however little workers earn, there is always somebody who wishes they earned less. And for those somebodies, the solution is: Import more cheap labor. But not just any cheap labor—cheap labor that cannot quit, that cannot accept a better offer, that cannot complain.

There is too much truth in that. I am concerned about it and I think Americans should be concerned about it. This is a bill that is antiworker.

President Obama has said recently that Republicans want to accelerate the gap, the wealth gap between the rich and the poor. That is not so. But his own White House has been the central entity driving—behind the scenes as much as they possibly can be because they do not want their fingerprints on it or they do not want it to be identified with the White House—but they have been the central entity pushing the bill. It will have a direct impact on the wages and employment status of millions of Americans, particularly low-income Americans who are the ones who had their wages decline the most.

Professor Borjas, at Harvard, himself a refugee, is the leading expert on

wages. It has been documented. We have had a significant decline in wages over the last 30 years and a significant portion of that decline is directly related to the large flow of immigrant labor into America.

Of course, it has been accelerated by the illegality that is occurring in our country. I think we could sustain something like the current legal flow, but we need to end the present illegality, and we should not pass legislation that doubles the number that will be coming in.

Polls show overwhelmingly that the American people do not support a large increase in guest workers or low-skilled immigration. For instance, by a 3-to-1 margin, Americans earning under \$30,000 support a decrease in legal immigration, not an increase, not a doubling of it. I am sure most do not have any idea that Congress is about to pass a law that would double the amount.

But the one group that has not been represented in this conversation has been the hard-working people of this country. All Americans, immigrants, millions who have come to our country, and the native-born alike will be hurt by an immigration plan that is guaranteed to reduce wages and permits even more lawlessness in the future.

What makes America unique is the special reverence we place in the rule of law and the special faith we place in the everyday citizen. Let's stay fast to those principles. Let's stand firm for those principles.

Let me say one more time: The heart of the American people on the question of immigration is good and decent. They have been misrepresented as opposing all immigration and that is not so. But they are concerned about the lawlessness. They believe a great nation, their nation, should have a lawful system of immigration and people ought not, by the millions, violate those laws. Congress and the Presidents have failed to respond to their legitimate requests, year after year, decade after decade.

It is time for that to end. We need a lawful system of immigration that serves our national interests that we can be proud of, that allows a number of people to come to this country, as many as we can. But we have to know they have a chance to get a good job, their children will have a chance to get a good job, and we are not displacing American workers who need jobs and a bit higher wage instead of a falling wage.

That is what this country ought to be about. It was not part of the bill that passed this Senate that is now waiting to go to the House. The House needs to be very careful when they move forward, if they move forward, with any legislation, that they do not go to a secret conference committee and include all kinds of provisions driven by the AFL-CIO and by the chamber of commerce and by La Raza and by Demo-

cratic politicians who wanted votes. They have to be sure that is not who is writing this bill because that is who has been writing it so far. It ought not to happen.

The openness with which the advocates of this bill have discussed what they are trying to do is rather remarkable. I hope it is a signal to our House Members to be alert, to do the right thing as they go forward in trying to move a bill that ends the illegality, that identifies what the right flow of immigrants into America is and creates a system that will actually work in a practical way in the future and will deal compassionately with people who have been here a long time and who have tried to otherwise be good citizens and do the right thing.

I yield the floor.

EASTSIDE FORESTRY

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I rise today to acknowledge a success story that is unfolding in Oregon just this week. It is a success story about forestry, economic development, and collaboration. It is a success story about real jobs guaranteed today and into the future at a time when many rural communities are struggling.

In December 2009, I brought together representatives of the timber industry and conservationists, two groups that had been at odds with each other for years over Federal timber policy. These two factions reached an historic agreement that was referred to as "the end of the timber wars." While this agreement never became law, the Forest Service embraced portions of it and helped pave the way for the 10-year stewardship contract on the Malheur National Forest, valued at \$69 million, that was just awarded to a consortium of local companies.

This contract will be a major step in creating a healthier, more fire-resistant forest while providing millions of board feet of timber to a local mill; in other words, jobs in the woods and jobs in the mills. After that contract was announced, Ochoco Lumber, owners of the last remaining mill in Grant County, immediately announced that it will invest \$2 million to \$4 million in its plant. Ochoco Lumber's forward-thinking owner, John Shelk, has consistently sought to innovate and use technology to keep up with the changing timber landscape.

In partnership with Iron Triangle, another local timber company, Ochoco is poised to stay in the timber business, and keep those paychecks coming, for years to come.

These investments in healthy forests and innovative mills are having impacts throughout Grant County. Another partner in the consortium has announced that they have purchased an historic hotel in order to make sure that there is housing for the influx of workers that everyone knows are going to be coming.

This is economic development and job creation at the speed of light when