

children across this country—some of them in Emmons, WV, and some of them in my hometown of Mansfield, OH—now have access to health care, health care that they would not have otherwise. He continues that fight always on health care.

I want to close with this. I have seen a lot of Senators come and go. I have seen a lot of Members come and go. I have seen a lot of public officials come and go. There can be a shortage of humility in these jobs. As Members of the House and Members of the Senate, sometimes we are a little puffed up about our titles and about the power that many of us have, and we are caught up in the way we are treated. People are often obsequious to Members in Congress, and all of that.

What stands out to me—it is even more remarkable when you consider his family and what he came from—is JAY ROCKEFELLER's humility. Here is the best example, I think. I found out almost by accident what JAY, as a member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, would do regularly during his time in the Senate is he would send all the staff away, he would send the press away, and he would go to someone's home or community center or rec center or labor hall and he would sit with a number of veterans and listen to their stories. He would take notes and help those individually who might need help. Most importantly, he was listening to their stories.

It reminds me of another story from Abraham Lincoln. Lincoln's staff watched him, during one of his public opinion baths, talk to a number of people who were pushing him on something that mattered to them personally.

His staff wanted to send them away. Lincoln said, "No, I am not going to do that." Then Lincoln said—about these people who were talking to him, ordinary citizens outside the White House or anywhere else the President of the United States may have been—Lincoln said: They don't want much. They get so little. Each one considers his business of great importance. I know how I should feel if I were in their place.

I can see JAY ROCKEFELLER meeting with veterans, many of whom had never been thanked for their service. Many of them were suffering from war-time injuries from their time in the service, coming back to West Virginia and eking out a living. I can see JAY ROCKEFELLER saying the same thing: They don't want much. They get so little. Each one considers his business of great importance. I know how I should feel if I were in their place.

Going back 2 weeks ago to JAY's farewell speech across the aisle at this desk, he called upon us to remember that "our north star must always be the real needs of the people we serve." JAY used his farewell speech to exhort us to do better on behalf of miners, on behalf of veterans, on behalf of single parents, on behalf of children, on behalf of sick people, people who do not always get a fair shake in life.

He found his north star in public service, a career he chose because he wanted a mission to complete, a cause to believe in, a dream to follow. He found that mission. He found that cause. He found that dream in Emmons, WV, in 1964. It never left him. That is my friend JAY ROCKEFELLER. For all of that we are so grateful.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

Ms. HIRONO. Madam President, I rise today in support of the nomination of Sarah Saldana to serve as Director of the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, better known as ICE.

Before I proceed, I would like to thank the good Senator from Ohio for his tributary remarks regarding JAY ROCKEFELLER, an uncommon man of the people.

Prior to supporting Ms. Saldana's nomination in the Judiciary Committee, I did have a chance to meet with her. Growing up in a large family near our southern border in Corpus Christi, TX, Ms. Saldana managed to overcome hardship and become the first Latina U.S. Attorney in Texas history.

Sarah Saldana is fully qualified to serve as ICE's Director. She is a senior Federal law enforcement official for a border State district that spans almost 100,000 miles. Ms. Saldana has been on the ground in Texas and fully understands the complexities and challenges we face with our immigration system.

Republicans and Democrats agree that our immigration system is broken. Until recently, we also agreed, Republicans and Democrats alike, that Sarah Saldana needed to be confirmed as the Director of ICE. However, now Republicans are playing politics with this nomination to a critical homeland security agency. ICE is responsible for important law enforcement issues that make us all safer and has been without a permanent Director for over a year.

ICE's 19,000 people are responsible for enforcement of our immigration laws, for drug interdiction, for fighting child exploitation, and for keeping us safe from national security threats. The Senate needs to do its job and let Sarah Saldana get to work as the permanent Director of ICE. I understand that some of my colleagues on the Republican side now oppose Sarah Saldana because of the President's Executive order on immigration.

President Obama's Executive action allows millions of fathers, mothers, and students to step out of the shadows, pass background checks, work legally, and pay their taxes. The President's action is rooted in the reality that our immigration system is broken and that we need to exercise prosecutorial discretion on who to go after with our limited resources.

As Director of ICE, it is Ms. Saldana's responsibility to focus on homeland security resources on deporting felons and other criminals who have crossed our borders. It is simply not possible for the Federal Govern-

ment to remove all 11 million undocumented persons in this country.

That is another point on which most Republicans and Democrats agree. We have to prioritize the resources we have. That is what the President's order does. It prioritizes deporting felons, not families. Let me repeat that: Deporting felons, that is all we need to do, not breaking apart families. President Obama's action is grounded on precedent and Executive powers.

Every single President since Eisenhower has used Executive action to provide discretionary relief from deportation. Nonetheless, the President's critics have relentlessly attacked the legitimacy of his action. Some of my colleagues have emphasized that we must enforce our immigration laws and secure our borders in their opposition to Ms. Saldana.

Ironically, my Republican colleagues are opposing the nomination of the Director of an agency responsible for these very things: securing our border and enforcing our immigration laws. Some Republicans do not even want to fund the Department of Homeland Security at all.

Those who are concerned about immigration enforcement and border security should ask themselves: How does opposing Sarah Saldana's nomination and putting DHS funding in question make our borders more secure? How do these actions ensure effective enforcement of our laws? They do not.

If you want to truly and permanently address our broken immigration system, we need Congress to work together to pass comprehensive immigration reform, which the American people overwhelmingly support. It has been over a year since comprehensive immigration reform was passed on the Senate floor. Congress must continue working to pass commonsense, humane reform that puts families first.

As the President himself has said, Executive action does not replace congressional action. To those in Congress concerned with what he has done, we need to step up. We need to pass comprehensive reform. But in the meantime, we need to confirm Sarah Saldana so she can get on with the job at ICE.

I urge my colleagues to vote yes on her nomination.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now recess until 2:15 p.m.; that following the 2:30 p.m. votes, the clerk report Executive Calendar No. 1150, the Blinken nomination, and the time until 5 p.m. be equally divided in the usual form, with all other provisions of the previous order remaining in effect.

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

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 1:08 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Ms. BALDWIN).

NOMINATION OF SARAH R. SALDANA TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF HOMELAND SECURITY—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 2:30 p.m. will be equally divided in the usual form.

Who yields time?

If neither side yields time, both sides will be equally charged.

The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. CARPER. Madam President, I rise today to urge my colleagues to vote in a few minutes to confirm Sarah Saldana to be Assistant Secretary for Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

A number of our friends have come to the floor opposing Ms. Saldana's nomination, but incredibly enough, I have not heard them question her qualifications. Their opposition appears to be in response to the President's decision to bring 5 million hard-working, law-abiding immigrants out of the shadows earlier this month.

Let me just say, as one Member of the Senate, we can quarrel about the timing and we can quarrel about the policy. I think for the most part the policy in the President's proposal is good. Do I wish we had done it as a body? Do I wish we had done our job? You bet I do. But I wish the President had delayed the announcement until a little bit later this year. He did not. So that is where we are.

Whether you like the President's Executive order or not, today it is about whether we take our responsibility seriously to ensure that Federal agencies have the leadership they need to operate efficiently and effectively.

The single most important ingredient of any organization, I do not care whether it is a governmental entity—I spent some time in the Navy—whether it is a military unit, whether it is a sports team, whether it is a school, business, whatever it might be, the single most important ingredient to the success of that entity is leadership.

This is an agency where we are talking about filling a big gap in leadership in Immigration and Customs Enforcement. We call it ICE. It is critical. It is a critical law enforcement agency within the Department of Homeland Security. Listen to this: It has been without a Presidentially appointed leader now for more than 16 months. That is far too long, particularly when we consider all the issues we face along our borders and the more than 400 laws that this agency, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, enforces.

The agency plays a critical role in securing our borders. They take dangerous criminals off the streets. They send them back to their own countries in many instances. In fact, on any

given day ICE arrests some 370 criminal aliens in the interior of our country, they have some 34,000 people in detention in this country, and they remove nearly 500 criminal aliens from our country every day. Every day all that happens.

Managing such a large agency, with one of the most complex missions in the Federal Government, is a tall, tall order. This mission is made all the harder when the agency is forced to go month after month without permanent leadership.

Immigration and Customs Enforcement had the unfortunate distinction of finishing last in the annual survey of employee morale among Federal agencies. That is right—actually, not last; they were tied for last. In how many agencies were the employees really quizzed or questioned about whether they are satisfied with their work? They finished last out of not 100, not 200, not 300, but out of 314 agencies. When I visited the agency recently, employees told me that one of their biggest frustrations was the lack of Senate-confirmed leadership. Thankfully, this is one problem we can remedy, and we can remedy it today.

Ms. Saldana is a true American success story. She rose from humble beginnings in South Texas as the youngest of seven children. She went on to become an accomplished partner at a major law firm. She is now one of the Nation's top law enforcement officers. She could not be more qualified to lead Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

But do not take my word for it. One of our good friends here in the Senate, Mr. JOHN CORNYN, the senior Senator from Texas, felt strongly enough about her qualifications that he was good enough to come and introduce Ms. Saldana at her confirmation hearing before the committee I chair and the Presiding Officer serves on, the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs. Senator CORNYN told us that day that she was highly qualified, fiercely independent, and had served her State with honor.

This is what he said:

If respect for the rule of law is our standard, and I think it should be, we would be hard pressed to find a person more qualified to enforce the law than Ms. Saldana.

His comments. That is high praise, and I could not agree more.

Nevertheless, Senator CORNYN and some of his colleagues now oppose Sarah Saldana's nomination—not because she is unqualified, not because she does not work hard, not because she does not have good values, but because she will have to carry out the President's recent Executive order on immigration. That may be understandable. I think it is also unfortunate. It does not punish the President to leave this position unfilled. It does not just punish the employees to leave this position unfilled. In the end, it punishes the citizens of this country. It makes it harder for Immigration and Customs

Enforcement to accomplish its critical mission of helping to secure our borders. It makes it harder for them to do their job in terms of taking dangerous criminals off of our streets. And it hurts the men and women at ICE who deserve a leader to ensure this important agency runs as effectively as possible.

I believe the President acted within the bounds—I know not everyone agrees with me on this, but I believe the President acted within the bounds of the law in announcing his Executive action. While I may quarrel with the timing of it, I also feel very deeply if we—not in this body but in the other body on the other side of the Capitol—had done our job with respect to immigration reform, we would not have this dustup today over this nomination. But whether or not you agree with me, opposing Ms. Saldana's nomination will do nothing to change what the President has done—nothing.

I said it before; I will say it again. It is irresponsible for us to leave a critical agency such as this without a proven leader. It has been more than 16 months. It should not be another month or two or three.

So I hope Ms. Saldana—the first Hispanic person and the second woman ever to be nominated to run Immigration and Customs Enforcement—does not fall victim to politics here in the Senate. By all accounts, she is exactly what this critical agency needs: a proven leader, a respected member of the law enforcement community.

I urge all of my colleagues—Democratic and Republican and even the two Independents who are here with us serving their States—I urge you to support her. I am proud to do that today.

Thank you, Madam President.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The bill clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Sarah R. Saldana, of Texas, to be an Assistant Secretary of Homeland Security.

Harry Reid, Thomas R. Carper, Patrick J. Leahy, Patty Murray, Tom Udall, Brian Schatz, Charles E. Schumer, Barbara Boxer, Benjamin L. Cardin, Richard Blumenthal, Jeff Merkley, Al Franken, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Martin Heinrich, Elizabeth Warren, Richard J. Durbin, Christopher Murphy.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Sarah R. Saldana, of Texas, to be an Assistant Secretary of Homeland Security, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER)