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Senate

The Senate met at 2 p.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

PRAAYER

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

Let us pray.

Holy One, teach us to do Your will. Help us to see life's troubles from a spiritual perspective as we continue to place our trust in You. May our hearts find repose in You.

Direct our Senators in all their doings, surrounding them with Your favor. Lord, be continually available to help them in their work so that Your Name will be glorified and righteousness will exalt our Nation. Keep our lawmakers captive only to Your Spirit, that they may be free from bondage to self. Guide them so that they will pursue only what is good and true and just, as You empower them to live God-centered lives.

We pray in Your mighty Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore 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.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COTTON). The Democratic leader is recognized.

IMMIGRATION REFORM

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the Statue of Liberty stands as a universal symbol of hope and freedom. Engraved within its pedestal are the words of Emma Lazarus, a call etched for the world to see.

Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, the wretched refuse of your teeming shore. Send these, the homeless, the tempest-tost to me. I lift my lamp beside the golden door!

For countless generations, our fathers and grandfathers, mothers and grandmothers, have braved oceans, deserts, and rivers to answer that call. As a result, the United States has been empowered by the contributions of immigrants from around the world—immigrants who came in pursuit of the American dream and have pursued this dream through strong family values, hard work, and love of country.

My wife's father, my father-in-law, emigrated here from Russia. My grandmother came from England. My family, like so many American families, has its immigrant stories to tell.

This month is Immigrant Heritage Month. As we celebrate our shared immigrant heritage, we must work to ensure that America welcomes future generations of immigrants with the dignity and respect we wish for our own families.

The United States has become the greatest Nation on Earth because of the hard work, dedication, and diversity immigrants brought to these shores. Our strength lies in our ability to embrace the richness immigrants bring to the American story. Just look at some of our Nation's most successful companies: Google, Yahoo, General Electric, IBM. These are all modern companies, but over the centuries, we have had life stories, where just like Google, Yahoo, General Electric, and IBM, all these American companies were founded by immigrants or the children of immigrants.

I have seen personally the contributions of immigrants and the positive impact that a diversity of backgrounds has on shaping public policy. My staff represents generations of immigrants brought to this country. One staff member was born in the Philippines and emigrated with her mother to Las Vegas. Another left Nicaragua in the

1980s in the midst of a brutal civil war and settled in Carson City. Others came from Mexico, El Salvador, and Poland. Much like our Nation, my office is all the better because it reflects the diverse backgrounds, communities, and perspectives of those who have immigrated to Nevada.

Nevada has a particularly vibrant international community. Las Vegas is home to large Latino, Asian, Pacific Islander, and Armenian communities. Northern Nevada has the same, but in addition to that, it is the home to proud descendants of immigrants from the Basque Country.

Without the contributions made by generations of proud immigrants, Nevada would not be the State that it is today. Immigrants have been leaders. They protect our Nation, and they have taught our children. The immigrants who heeded the call engraved on the Statue of Liberty have altered this country for the better. We are and will always be a Nation of immigrants.

I have devoted years of legislative effort to fixing our broken immigration system. In 2010 after Republicans blocked the DREAM Act, it became clear to me and to other Senators that Republicans were not going to cooperate. So we urged the President to take administrative action as the Republicans continued to block legislative efforts.

Three years ago today, the President announced that young people who do not present a risk to national security would become eligible for relief from deportation through the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Program. As a result of this action, over 660,000 DREAMers have been approved, including almost 12,000 Nevadans. These individuals no longer live in fear of deportation. They can now contribute more fully to our country, as college students, teachers, small business owners, and artisans. These individuals were brought here as young children. Most do not remember the countries in

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



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which they were born. When they pledge allegiance it is to the United States. They love this country and are Americans in all but paperwork. These young people can now become teachers, own businesses, and further contribute to the American economy. They can secure a better future for themselves, their families, and our country. The program is a temporary solution for a broken immigration system.

Comprehensive immigration reform is the best way to repair our immigration system and preserve the integrity of the American dream. In the Senate we passed a bill almost 2 years ago for comprehensive immigration reform, but House Republicans refused even to allow a vote on that legislation. Had they allowed a vote on the legislation, it would have passed by a big margin because virtually every Democrat would have voted for it and a number of Republicans would have voted for it. But the Speaker decided no, they wouldn't allow a vote on it, and they haven't. But because the Republicans would not pass immigration reform, President Obama acted again within his legal authority to create a new program for the parents of U.S. citizens and green card holders that would in effect take care of the parents of these DREAMers. Those programs would be in effect now if it were not for a politically motivated lawsuit filed by a Republican challenging the program.

The Republicans say it is about the President, but they really are attacking and separating American families. In the Senate, Republicans have tried repeatedly to stop President Obama's efforts.

The Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Program has transformed the lives of hundreds of thousands of young people over the past 3 years. Shutting down this program would cause the deportation of young men and women to countries they don't know.

We, with the President, will do everything in our power to protect and defend this program and to fight the baseless lawsuit that is preventing over 5 million additional people for the American dream. The Supreme Court has been clear that Presidents have the authority for Federal immigration enforcement priorities. I am confident that the President's actions will ultimately be upheld, and I will continue to fight to protect those programs and keep families together.

I look forward to the day when programs such as DACA are replaced with permanent comprehensive immigration reform, which is so vitally important.

Before closing, on the floor today is the assistant Democratic leader. He has been on this floor articulating the importance of these DREAMers and what they do for our country, and what initially was their potential for our country. Now of course it has already been proven that their potential was even underscored. They have done so much more than we even anticipated they could do. I appreciate very much

my friend, the senior Senator from Illinois, for his advocacy of this program and his tireless efforts for justice in America.

So I hope that we will live up to the words on the Statue of Liberty, at the lamp beside the golden door, which is beckoning to people from other shores.

Mr. President, will you announce the business of the day.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business for 1 hour, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The assistant Democratic leader.

3RD ANNIVERSARY OF DACA PROGRAM

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I want to thank the Democratic leader for his kind words.

Today is the third anniversary of DACA.

It was 15 years ago when I received a call to my Senate office in Chicago. A Korean-American woman who worked at a drycleaners in the city of Chicago had a question for me. It turned out that her daughter, Tereza Lee, had been offered an opportunity to go to school at one of the best music schools in America, but she had problems filling out her application.

The whole story is that this family had come through Brazil from Korea to the United States years before. The family, including Tereza, who was then 2 years old, came in on a tourist visa. The idea behind their arrival in America was that her father was going to open a church. He would be a minister with his own congregation. It was a dream that was never realized. The family struggled. They were very poor. Tereza's mother went to work at a drycleaners. Her father didn't work much. He had health problems.

Luckily, Tereza, this young girl, when she was about 10 or 12 years old, was enrolled in a music program in Chicago called the Merit Music Program. The Merit Music Program offers to children from poor families musical instruction and instruments. They introduced Tereza to the piano, and an amazing thing happened. She turned out to be an incredible musician. So she was finishing high school and was offered an opportunity to go to school in New York to a music school—the Manhattan School of Music.

She had other offers, too, but when she went to fill out the application and they asked her to put in her citizenship and nationality, she asked her dad and mom: What am I supposed to put

there? They said: We didn't file any papers for you. You are technically undocumented in America. Your sister and brother were born here and are legal citizens. We have become legal in America, but as for you, we are not sure. So what should we do? Let's call DURBIN's office.

They called my Senate office and the law is very clear. If you were brought to the United States undocumented and lived your entire life here and wanted to stay here, the law said you had to leave the United States for 10 years and then apply to come back.

They asked me if there was anything else under the law, and I said no, that was it. It is because of that that I introduced the DREAM Act 15 years ago. This DREAM Act said that young people under circumstances like Tereza's, who were brought to the United States at a very young age, were raised in this country, were finishing school, and who had no criminal record, would be given a chance—a chance to become legal in America, the DREAM Act.

Well, that DREAM Act has been a dream for 15 years. It is not a law. But, fortunately for me, when I served in the Senate, at one point I had a colleague named Barack Obama, who was my fellow Senator and cosponsor of the DREAM Act in his day. When he became President and it became clear we were not going to pass comprehensive immigration reform or make the DREAM Act the law of the land, this President said: I will give to these young people who would qualify for the DREAM Act temporary status so they can stay in America on a temporary basis without fear of deportation. That is what the President did 3 years ago with DACA, deferred action for childhood arrivals.

As the Democratic leader reported, 660,000 young people have signed up, paid a hefty filing fee, had a criminal background check, and submitted their names to the government. It was a leap of faith for these young people to do this because if you grew up undocumented in America, you were told at a very early age by your parents: For goodness' sakes, keep your head down; don't ever get arrested; don't try to drive a car. Not only could you get deported, our whole family could get deported.

Well, these young people wanted to be heard, and they stepped up and they signed up for the President's program.

It has been an incredible story. Five years ago, in April 2010, I joined with my former colleague Richard Lugar in writing a letter to President Obama asking him to establish this program. Later that year, Senator REID, who just spoke, brought the DREAM Act to the Senate floor. The Senate Gallery was filled with young people, undocumented people, who came for that bill to be considered wearing caps and gowns. They wanted to make it clear they were not looking for a free ride in America. They were looking for a chance. But despite the fact that 55