

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

Senators out of 100 voted for it, we did not get the magic number—60—and the DREAM Act did not become law.

Senator REID joined me, with 22 other Democratic Senators, asking President Obama to create this DACA Program so these children could sign up. The President did. It is an amazing success. What has happened to these DREAMers when they are given a chance to have a future in America, when they are not afraid of the knock on the door and being deported? Well, what has happened? Amazing things have happened. They are beginning to contribute to America as engineers, teachers, small business owners, and more.

I know this policy of the President to give these young people a chance to be part of America absolutely infuriates most of my Republican colleagues. They cannot stand the thought that the President by Executive order would give these young people a chance. In fact, the House of Representatives on several occasions has tried to reverse this and take away this recognition that these young people can stay here on a temporary basis without being deported.

Last fall, the President extended the program in what is known as DAPA—deferred action for parental accountability—for those who have been here for a long period of time and would also be given temporary status, registered with the government, and be able to work in our country.

Today, the Center for American Progress released a new report on the impact on the economy of the United States of these people eligible for DACA, the young people, and DAPA, their parents. Over the next 10 years, in my home State of Illinois, these two Presidential policies will increase my State's gross domestic product by almost \$15 billion, and it will increase the overall earnings of the people living in my State.

How is that possible? How is it possible to take these undocumented people and turn them into a positive for the economy? Well, I will tell you, that is what happens when they are on the books and working and paying their taxes, as they want to be, as they should be.

Senator JOHN MCCAIN of Arizona was just on the floor. He was one of four Republican Senators—it took some courage—who stepped up and worked with four of us on the Democratic side to write a comprehensive immigration bill. We believe that our immigration system is broken in America, and we want to fix it. We met together for months working on that bill. One of the good reports that came out of the bill was that a comprehensive immigration system where people register, submit themselves to a background check, and pay their taxes has a positive impact on the economy of the United States.

Unfortunately, the expansion of these two programs has been blocked by a lawsuit in Texas filed against the President. Earlier this month, Repub-

licans in the House of Representatives voted to block the administration from any money to defend this lawsuit. That amendment was offered by a Republican Congressman from Iowa named STEVE KING, who has falsely claimed that DREAMers are actually drug dealers with “calves the size of cantaloupes”—a direct quote from Congressman KING—because they are carrying drugs across our border. That is a cruel game Congressman KING is playing with the lives of these young people. And now they want to fix the game by blocking the Obama administration from defending the lawsuit. Clearly, the proponents of this lawsuit and their destructive efforts will ultimately fail. But the Supreme Court has been clear—the President has the power to make these policies.

It is so troubling that so many on the other side of the aisle are determined to block immigration in America.

I have come to the floor many times to tell the stories of these DREAMers, and I would like to tell one of those stories today on the third anniversary of this DACA Program.

As shown in picture, this is Denisse Rojas. In 1990, when she was just a little infant, her parents carried her across the southwest border with the hope of giving her and her siblings a better life. Denisse and her family settled in Fremont, CA. Denisse said: “In grade school, I recall feeling different from my peers. . . . my skin color was darker, my English was stilted, I was poor, and I was undocumented.”

Denisse remembers her dad in a restaurant uniform studying late at night so he could pass the GED test. And her mother attended community college part time for 7 years to earn a nursing degree. It was this perseverance that inspired Denisse to try harder.

In high school she was an excellent student and athlete. She graduated with a 4.3 grade point average, and she received the U.S. Army Reserve National Scholar Athlete Award.

Denisse was accepted to the University of California, Berkeley—one of the best colleges in the country—but because of her undocumented status, she did not qualify for any financial aid or government help. Denisse worked 30 hours a week while attending school full time, and she commuted an hour each way to and from school every day so she could live in affordable housing.

At Berkeley, Denisse Rojas majored in integrative biology and sociology. Because she was such a good student, she was selected to work in the genetics lab. Her research was published in the journal *Science*.

I ask unanimous consent for 2 additional minutes. I know the Senator is anxious, but if I could have 2 minutes.

Mr. MCCAIN. Will the Senator allow me to propound a unanimous consent request?

Mr. DURBIN. Of course.

I am sorry, the staff said we have one more thing to check. If you will give me 2 minutes.

Mr. MCCAIN. Please proceed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DURBIN. I thank the Presiding Officer.

I would have gladly yielded to my friend from Arizona but a higher order prevails.

As a senior at Berkeley, Denisse co-founded Pre-Health Dreamers, a national organization of undocumented students who want to become health care professionals.

She volunteers at the San Francisco General Hospital Community to Clinic Linkage Program, where she helps patients who are seeking affordable housing, healthy food, and employment.

In 2012, when President Obama established DACA—its third anniversary today—her life changed. As a DACA recipient, Denisse's dreams finally seemed within reach.

In this picture I have in the Chamber, Denisse is holding her letter of acceptance to Mount Sinai Medical School in New York. She will be in classes this fall. She wrote me a letter. She said:

I have pledged allegiance to this nation's values since my first day of school; I consider the United States my home. Furthermore, serving others has instilled in me the notion that everyone deserves the opportunity for prosperity. I thus aim to dedicate my life to serving others as a physician and continuing to be a voice for immigrants.

Would America be a better country if she were deported? Would we be better as a nation if Denisse Rojas was told: Leave. We don't need you. We don't want you. The fact that you have spent your entire life here means nothing. The fact that you are an exceptional student means nothing. Leave.

It sounds like a harsh point of view, but it is shared by many in Congress.

This last weekend, I took my two little grandkids—my wife and I did—out to the Statue of Liberty on Ellis Island. I took a look at that statue and was reminded that we are a nation of immigrants. I was blessed that my mother came to this country as an immigrant, and I stand on the Senate floor trying to do my best to make it a better country.

There are people like Denisse Rojas who want to make this a better America. DACA has given them that chance. Today, we celebrate the third anniversary of this Executive order, but more importantly, we celebrate who we are—a nation of immigrants always striving to make life better for the next generation.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and thank my colleague from Arizona.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

EXPRESSING APPRECIATION TO THE SENATOR FROM ILLINOIS

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I would like to express my appreciation to the Senator from Illinois for his passion, for his commitment, for his advocacy for people who sometimes do not have