

Ilse persevered through her cancer treatment. She worked her way through high school with an impressive list of extracurriculars and went on to earn a scholarship that eventually got her to the front steps of her dream school, the University of Washington.

When I met Ilse in 2013, she told me that after 15 years of waiting for her petition to obtain a visa, she lost the opportunity to obtain legal residency when she turned 21 years old. But thanks to the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, or DACA, she had a second chance. She said she doesn't know where she would be now without that second chance. She told me that DACA opened doors that were previously closed to her. And thanks to the increased certainty DACA brought and the amazing work ethic she has, Ilse was able to find jobs that helped pave her way through school.

Today she is able to continue to pursue her dream of helping others as a nurse and building a life in Washington State, her home.

I am pleased to report that Ilse has now been cancer free for over 14 years. So while I rise to talk about Ilse, I also wish to celebrate DACA.

Three years ago this week, Americans celebrated a historic step forward in protecting young, undocumented immigrants known as DREAMers, people such as Ilse. When DACA was enacted, the national dialogue on immigration policy forever changed. The administration announced that America is not a place that will deport someone who plays by the rules but through no fault of their own is an undocumented immigrant, someone who has known no other home than the United States, someone who is an American in all but name. This was a major step toward changing the lives of so many immigrant families.

During the past 3 years, more than 600,000 young immigrants have benefited from deferred action. In my home State of Washington, almost 15,000 DREAMers have been able to receive the stability and peace of mind that DACA brought.

Too often in this debate, it is difficult for some people to understand that millions of undocumented families in our country are already an important part of our community. Immigrants—documented or not—work hard. They send their children to schools throughout this country. They pay their taxes, and they help weave the fabric of our society. In all but name, they are Americans, and America would not be the same without them.

Despite the steps this administration has taken, only legislation from Congress can solve the underlying problem of a very broken immigration system.

So I am here today to say I stand ready to work with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to achieve that. Until Congress truly passes comprehensive immigration reform, I am going to continue working each day to help the

families and businesses—people such as Ilse—that are trapped by a broken system.

We must never forget the past and the fact that our Nation has long offered generations of immigrants a chance to achieve their dreams. Ilse is no different.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I wish to speak today about the National Defense Authorization Act, which was just passed on the floor after almost 3 weeks of debate on the Senate floor. Today, a very strong bipartisan majority passed this legislation. It is a very important bill.

TRAGEDY IN CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I wish to start by offering prayers and thoughts—I think of every Member of the Senate—to the families of those who were killed in last night's horrific, horrific shooting in South Carolina. No words can undo the incredible pain that they are going through, but I think knowing that Members of this body and the entire Congress are thinking and praying for these families is something that I just wish to state on the Senate floor before I begin to talk about this very important bill.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, as I mentioned, we passed the NDAA this afternoon after almost 3 weeks of debate, and I do wish to extend congratulations to the leadership, particularly to the chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, Senator McCAIN, and the ranking member, Senator REED, who did such an outstanding job of working in a bipartisan fashion on this bill.

In many ways, this bill is about something that is so critical to American foreign policy and national security interests. What is that? It is credibility, the credibility of the United States. In many ways it is the coin of the realm in international security—how our friends, how our allies, and how our adversaries view American credibility, particularly in the realm of national security, international affairs, and foreign policy. They pay close attention to what we are doing on this floor, in the White House, and overseas—credibility.

Unfortunately, as many are aware, both at home and certainly overseas, we are rapidly losing credibility around the world. In fact, much of the world is puzzled. What is happening to American credibility in terms of foreign pol-

icy? We used to be the shining city on the hill, a beacon of strength, a beacon of freedom. Countries that wanted to do us harm didn't because they feared us. Our allies respected and trusted us. But, unfortunately, that is starting to change. It is changing. Red lines have been crossed with no consequences in places such as Syria, Ukraine, Russia, and in the Iranian negotiations. Many say American credibility has declined. Some say American credibility overseas is in shambles. Nations that once counted on us as friends, as allies, are having a harder time trusting the United States and in some ways are even suspicious of our motives and our policies.

So it is a critical, critical issue. How do we, as a country, regain credibility in the world. It is something that everybody in this body and everybody in the Federal Government should be focused on.

The NDAA bill that we just passed, the National Defense Authorization Act, is a way to start regaining credibility for our country, and we did that this afternoon. A very strong bipartisan majority in the Senate, 71 Senators, voted to pass this very important bill. It is one of the most important bills that we are going to vote on all year.

This is an important signal. U.S. foreign policy—our national security is strongest when we act in a bipartisan manner, as we did on the Senate floor today, and when the executive and legislative branches are working together on foreign policy and national security issues. That is what this bill does.

In many ways, this bill does pretty much exactly what the President has asked in a whole host of areas regarding the military. For example, it funds the Department of Defense at the levels requested by the President. And again I congratulate Chairman McCAIN and Ranking Member REED for many of the key programs, many of the key reforms, and such a powerful bill that got through this body.

This bill also strongly endorses one of the President's signature foreign policy issues—the rebalance of our military focus to the Asia Pacific. There are many provisions in the NDAA that support this rebalance strategy. Most Members—Republicans and Democrats—of this body are supportive of the President's rebalance strategy.

There is even a directive in the bill from the Congress to the Department of Defense and our military leaders that states: "In order to properly implement the U.S. rebalance policy, United States forces under operational control of the U.S. Pacific Command should be increased"—increased, not decreased. That is strong language. That is supporting the President's rebalance. The Department of Defense needs to heed this language from Congress, and of course we will be keeping a close eye on whether they do.

So the NDAA just passed on the floor helps—it can help and it will help restore America's credibility in the world. But it would be another blow to our credibility—to U.S. credibility globally—if, after all the hard work that has gone into this bill, after the strong bipartisan support this bill achieved, the President would then decide to veto the NDAA. What would the world think of that? What would the world think of our commitment to our troops with a bill that strongly passed in the House and Senate to fund the U.S. military, to set policies that support the President's policies, if the President then vetoed the bill? This would further undermine U.S. credibility in the world right at a moment when the Congress is trying to be supportive and rebuild this credibility.

After today's vote, after passing the NDAA, it is not clear that Members of this body are going to move forward to actually appropriate the money to fund the military. Think about that. The NDAA passes with strong bipartisan support out of the Committee on Armed Services and strong bipartisan support on the Senate floor this afternoon and the President of the United States vetoes it. That is not going to help America's credibility.

Now we are moving to Defense appropriations, again with strong bipartisan support out of the Committee on Appropriations. Yet we are hearing rumors that our colleagues on the other side of the aisle are not going to fund the military, that they are going to filibuster this bill.

Playing politics with the funding of our defense, the funding of our men and women in uniform, is not going to help enhance America's credibility anywhere. I think Members are going to have a hard time explaining votes that don't look to fund the men and women who so courageously defend us day in and day out here and abroad. It just doesn't make sense. We have to recognize that these actions that are being taken on the floor and in the White House are not only being watched by Americans, they are being watched by our allies and our adversaries overseas.

Another way to start to restore America's credibility in the world and to support the President and the White House's rebalance strategy in the Asia Pacific is to pass trade promotion authority next week. We have all talked about that. We debated that here on the floor for many weeks. It will help increase jobs. It will make sure that we, the United States, are setting the rules of the road for international trade in the Asia Pacific and not China. But it also goes to America's credibility.

I had the honor of traveling a couple of weeks ago with Chairman McCAIN, Ranking Member REED, and the Senator from Iowa, Mrs. ERNST, to Vietnam and Singapore. We met with the Prime Minister of Singapore. All the discussion was on American engagement in the Asia Pacific. They want us

there. They want us leading. But the consensus was that if we can't move forward on TPA, it would be disastrous for our credibility.

So, again, the world is watching. We cannot afford to lose U.S. credibility in another region of the world. I am hopeful that next week, as this bill comes to the floor of the Senate, we will once again vote to pass trade promotion authority because that goes to not only helping spur economic growth and greater job growth in our own country, but it goes to America's leadership and credibility in the world.

Finally, I want to talk about another area of the world where U.S. credibility is at stake, and that is the Arctic. Fortunately, Congress has begun to recognize this fact. In the bill we just debated and passed on the floor today, the NDAA, there is an important provision about the national security of the United States in the Arctic. It is now up to the administration and the Department of Defense to start to focus on this very important area of the United States but also the world.

Nobody spoke more eloquently and compellingly about peace through strength and about our country's credibility in the world than former President Ronald Reagan. President Reagan's philosophy to win the Cold War was simple. As he put it, "We maintain the peace through our strength; weakness only invites aggression."

The important thing President Reagan did was he matched his rhetoric with credible actions. Under President Reagan, we strengthened our NATO allies, strengthened our military, provided strong funding for the men and women who defend us, modernized our strategic defense systems, and countered potential Soviet threats throughout the world.

As a result of this credible policy that people and countries around the world believed whether they were our allies or adversaries, the efforts of the Soviet Union to build an empire based on aggression were thwarted and the Soviet Union itself ended up collapsing.

Today, the Soviet Union no longer exists, but make no mistake—the imperialist dreams of expansion that have dominated much of Russian history since the days of the czars is still alive. Today's Russia is again a threat to its neighbors and to the peace of the world. Think about Russia's unlawful military aggression in the Ukraine. But that is not all. There are other vital areas of the world in which Russia is now taking new actions that should concern us. One of these areas is the Arctic.

We don't hear much about the Arctic from the mainstream media. That is largely because it is hard to get reporters and television cameras out to the Arctic. But America is an Arctic nation. We are an Arctic nation because of my State, the great State of Alaska. And there is much at stake in the Arctic—new transportation routes, huge

opportunities for energy. As a recent column in the Wall Street Journal pointed out, "No wonder Moscow has been racing to reopen old Soviet bases on its territory across the Arctic and develop new ones."

The signs are everywhere that Russia is making a new push into the Arctic. Let me provide a few examples. Earlier this year, the Russian military held 5 days of Arctic war exercises that included close to 40,000 troops, 50 surface ships, 13 submarines, and 110 aircraft. The chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Dempsey, said recently that the Russians are increasing their military forces by six combat brigades, four of which will be stationed in the Arctic. President Putin has said he wants to build at least 13 new airfields, and they are starting in the Arctic. They are establishing a new Arctic command, with several new ice-breakers to add to their robust fleet.

In the paper just today, there was another report of the Russians planning yet another large-scale exercise in the Arctic involving two Arctic brigades.

Just last week, in a study called "America in the Arctic," CSIS talked about what the Russians are doing. The article said:

Recent actions taken by Russia do not instill confidence that the Arctic will be exempt from recent geopolitical tensions. The Kremlin continues to hold unannounced military exercises in the Arctic, which engage significant numbers of forces . . . and simulate the use of nuclear weapons. Moscow's authorization of the use of military force to protect Russian interests in the Arctic . . . the planned reopening of over 50 Soviet-era bases along Russia's Arctic coastline, and Russia's recently Unified Arctic Command, as well as Russian Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin's pronouncement that "the Arctic is Russia's Mecca," have all raised serious questions regarding Russia's intent in the Arctic.

I want to put this in perspective with a map. This shows the new push by the Russians into the Arctic. It shows the new airfields, the new bases. If we look at the map here, we see red on these different spots. These red spots are the new or existing Russian bases and airfields in the Arctic. The three blue spots on this map are the U.S. presence—a small airfield and radar station in Greenland and Alaska. America's Arctic. Two combat brigades in the great State of Alaska.

Our U.S. military commanders are starting to wake up to the fact that the red is clearly expanding on this map, and it is concerning them. Even Secretary of Defense Ash Carter said just 2 months ago:

The Arctic is going to be a major area of importance to the United States, both strategically and economically in the future—it's fair to say that we're late to the recognition of that.

We are late. So what are we doing? The Russians have Arctic exercises, new airfields, a new Arctic command, and four new Arctic combat brigades, according to our own Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. What are we doing? The Department of Defense has

a 13-page Arctic strategy. That is it—13 pages. That is what the United States of America has—the greatest military force in the world right now—as this is happening. We have this.

I want to talk about credibility. This is not credible. This is not credible. Worse—much worse—the Department of Defense is thinking about removing one or maybe two brigade combat teams from America's Arctic.

Let me repeat that. As the Russians are building up everywhere, we are looking at possibly removing the BCTs right here—these two blue dots—one or two, gone. That is not credible. These are the only U.S. soldiers in the Arctic. They are Arctic-tough soldiers, cold-weather trained. This is the only Arctic airborne brigade in the United States. This is the only airborne brigade in the entire Asia-Pacific, right here, Fort Richardson, Alaska. These soldiers, thousands of them, are capable, well-trained, tough U.S. soldiers, and they are the only ones capable of protecting our country's interests in the Arctic, as that part of the world becomes more and more an area that Russia becomes interested in.

So we have this, 13 pages. We have announced we are seriously contemplating removing these forces from the Arctic. Let me just say, Vladimir Putin must surely be smiling somewhere in Moscow as he makes these moves and he hears that the Department of Defense is thinking about removing our only Arctic forces out of the Arctic. This is not credible.

We are not only showing a lack of credibility, removing Army troops from the Arctic, removing them from Alaska, will show the world weakness. As President Reagan noted, weakness is provocative. We can be assured of that.

This strategy defies logic. Importantly, it also defies the direction of the U.S. Senate and the NDAA, which we just passed by large bipartisan numbers. As I mentioned at the outset, the bill we just passed states that the Department of Defense should increase troops in the Asia-Pacific region—increase troops—under the command of the PACOM commander, which includes these troops right here.

Fortunately, as I said, there are also provisions in the NDAA to start making sure our country wakes up to the security interests we have in the Arctic. The bill we just passed on the floor provides an important first step toward ensuring that the Arctic remains a peaceful, stable, and prosperous place.

The NDAA requires our military to lay out a specific strategy—not just 13 pages—in the Arctic region that protects our interests there. It requires the Secretary of Defense to update the Congress on the U.S. military strategy in the Arctic region, and, importantly, requires a military operations plan for the protection of our security interests in this important region of the world.

The Department of Defense, the U.S. Army, should not even contemplate

moving one single soldier out of America's Arctic until all of this has been completed, and they should look hard at this bill—that we hope the President will not veto—with regard to the direction of the Congress on the importance of increasing U.S. military forces in the Asia-Pacific to add credibility to our rebalanced strategy. That means keeping appropriate troop levels in appropriate places—like the Asia-Pacific, like the Arctic, and like Alaska—as required by the bill that we just passed by an overwhelming majority.

Alaska is the northern anchor of the Pacific rebalance. It is the gateway to the Arctic. It is what makes America an Arctic nation. It is our only Arctic State, and it probably is the single greatest repository of untapped energy resources that will power our Nation's future. That is why, in the words of Gen. Billy Mitchell—the father of the U.S. Air Force—it is the most strategic place in the world.

We need a strong rebalanced strategy that is credible.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

TRAGEDY IN CHARLESTON

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, let me say, before turning to the topic at hand, those of us from Connecticut—especially those of us in and around Sandy Hook, CT—our hearts go out to the community in Charleston. The grief and tragedy they are working and sifting through today is hard for anyone to imagine. All I can say is I hope they will find, as we did in Newtown, CT, that an internal strength over time comes from unlikely spots; that friends arrive from far-off places; that there is a community that is much bigger than one church or one city that is going to wrap its arms around families and friends of the victims during this terrible time.

KING V. BURWELL DECISION

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I was so glad to see Senator STABENOW down on the floor a week ago talking about a pretty simple issue, which is the tax increase that is going to occur to 6.4 million Americans if the Supreme Court rules this week, next week, for the plaintiffs in the case of King v. Burwell. We wanted to come down to the floor and accentuate this message so people all around this country know what is at stake.

What is at stake is 6.5 million people losing their health insurance. That maybe gets the headlines. But the way in which people get affordable health insurance under the Affordable Care Act is by tax credits. So the immediate effect of a reversal of subsidies for Federal exchange States is that 6.5 million Americans are going to have their taxes dramatically increased by thousands of dollars if this body refuses to act in the face of a Supreme Court finding for the plaintiffs.

So we wanted to come down to the floor just to talk a little bit about what the stakes are for people's tax bills and how this is going to be a gut punch for millions of American families if the Supreme Court rules the way we hope they don't.

I think it is, first of all, important to say at the outset that most of us who have followed the Affordable Care Act and its legal interpretation think this is a sham of a case. This is a political attack on the Affordable Care Act masked as a legal case.

There is absolutely no question that the Affordable Care Act is built in a way to deliver subsidies to both State exchanges and Federal exchanges. I will not go into all the details as to why that is the clear case. But though we are talking about what might happen if King v. Burwell comes down for the plaintiffs, many of us think that would be an absolutely ludicrous legal result, one that would be a stunning act of judicial overreach, essentially a political substitution of the Court for the legislature. But I want to talk about a couple case studies and then turn the floor over to my colleagues.

I have come down and talked about people from Connecticut. I talked about Christina, a small business owner from Stratford; Susie, a two-time breast cancer survivor from North Canaan, CT; and Sean and Emilie, two freelancers from Weston. All of these people have gotten tax credits through the Affordable Care Act, and it has allowed them to have a lower tax bill but also get insurance. Many of them, it was the first time in their lives or in recent history that they have been able to afford insurance. But there are stories all over the country that are parallel to the stories from Connecticut I have been telling on the floor of the Senate over the course of the last year.

For instance, there are 832,000 Texans who are receiving an average tax credit of \$247 a month. If the Supreme Court strips away these tax credits, those 800,000 people in Texas are going to see a tax increase of around \$3,000. People like Aurora, a 26-year-old from Houston, got health insurance coverage through Texas's Federal marketplace. She works at a small nonprofit where she helps her LGBT peers get the coverage they need. She is saving \$1,500 a year getting insurance she would have never been able to afford. She says, quite simply:

I wouldn't be able to afford my policy otherwise. It has really helped me be able to get my well person exam and other preventions screenings that I'd not had in years.

She is one of 832,000 people in Texas who are going to have their taxes increased, their insurance stolen away.

I am a big New York Giants fan, so I get to watch a lot of games in which the Giants are playing in this stadium, which is, as Cowboy fans know it, AT&T Stadium. You could fill AT&T Stadium 10 different times. This is a huge stadium. People see the giant jumbotron on the roof of this stadium.