

the belief that most Americans ought to be able to file a tax return without the need of professional help, that we ought to be able to make decisions that are in the best interests of ourselves, our families, and our businesses without always going to the Tax Code to see what the consequences of those decisions were. I looked at a variety of proposals that were being considered at the time and continue to be considered today and ultimately reached the conclusion that the Fair Tax is the best option for significant reform. I wish to speak for just a minute about why I think that is the case.

As I said, Senator PERDUE and I introduced S. 25, the Fair Tax Act of 2015. I have been a cosponsor of that legislation. It was originally introduced in the Senate by the former Senator from Georgia, Mr. Saxby Chambliss, and I am pleased to now succeed him in his efforts to see that not only is this topic discussed in Congress but ultimately that the Fair Tax Act becomes law. It is a significant step in the direction of individual freedom.

I would highlight for my colleagues—and I have said this on the Senate floor before—I think the greatest responsibility we have as American citizens is to pass on to the next generation of Americans the freedoms and liberties guaranteed by our Constitution and the opportunity for every American to live the American dream. The Fair Tax, in my view, brings both of those goals front and center. Greater freedom and protection of individual liberties is certainly a component of the Fair Tax, and the opportunity for every American to pursue the American dream is a result that comes from the Fair Tax. It is that Fair Tax direction and individual freedom that caught my attention. It is the concept our Founding Fathers knew so well.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. MORAN. I ask unanimous consent for additional time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, the Fair Tax repeals all Federal, corporate, and individual taxes, payroll taxes, capital gains taxes, and estate and gift taxes and replaces them with a revenue-neutral personal consumption tax. The Fair Tax allows Americans to keep the entirety of their income, putting individuals in charge of their own finances, not the government—or, more specifically, not the Internal Revenue Service.

All Americans should be able to trust the IRS, which exercises great authority over the lives of Americans in this country, but we know from past experiences that expectation is no longer founded. So getting rid of the Internal Revenue Service is a significant benefit that comes from the passage of the Fair Tax.

I recognize that consumption taxes can be regressive, meaning they are

harmful to those at lower income levels. So the Fair Tax takes that into account by providing a pre-rebate for those who fall below certain poverty income levels so that the basics—the things we by necessity need to by in our individual daily lives—are not covered by a tax, therefore creating greater progressivity to what otherwise would be a more regressive tax and something that I think is still important in this country to make certain we don't overtax those at the lowest income levels in the United States.

Certainly, our current Tax Code has significant complexities with all the paperwork. By some estimates, U.S. companies are currently holding over \$20 trillion overseas. With the passage of the Fair Tax, foreign investments would no longer continue to sit on the sidelines when they could be brought back to America to drive economic growth and create jobs. For international businesses looking to relocate to the United States, the Fair Tax would be a welcomed sign. But the Fair Tax also benefits the consumer. It also benefits the everyday citizen, as I said, because of the pre-rebate.

With my time being short, I look forward to having a dialogue on the Senate floor and in the committees over the next few months, and I ask my colleagues to seriously take a look at S. 25 and to join the Senator from Georgia, Mr. PERDUE, and me and others in promotion of a program that reduces the complexity of the Tax Code in our lives, rids us of the Internal Revenue Service, protects the progressivity of the tax circumstance we find today, and most importantly, allows us to continue to pursue the American dream and promotes our individual freedoms and liberties.

The Fair Tax is worthy of people's consideration. It ought to be more than just a talking point. It deserves a debate, a discussion, a vote, and consideration by the Senate.

Mr. President, I yield back the remainder of my time, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY FUNDING

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I am very pleased to be here today to speak to my colleagues about funding for the Department of Homeland Security and to be followed by one of my most valued colleagues, Senator MENENDEZ, whose leadership on this issue has been extraordinarily important. I am also pleased to work with him on a letter he sent yesterday to the President concerning Iran sanc-

tions, where his statesmanship-like path to a reasonable solution on this very complex and crucial issue will be enormously important to the future.

The Department of Homeland Security is one of the most significant departments in the U.S. Government. It has a mandate that is as complex and crucial as any in keeping American citizens and communities and capabilities safe and secure in a dangerous, complex, and threatening world.

In my family, when I was growing up, we had a saying: Don't cut off your nose to spite your face. Unfortunately, that path is exactly what some of my colleagues are choosing to follow in threatening to stop funding for the Department of Homeland Security.

We are reminded of the importance of this Department not only as terrorism raises its ugly head repeatedly abroad but also as perhaps more benign threats exist at home—the most recent of them, the snowstorm that hit the Northeast within the past couple of days. The Department of Homeland Security is not only engaged in a fight against terrorism, not only engaged in keeping America safe from threats abroad but is engaged in a wide variety of other tasks that have to do with the Nation's security. That is the key word in its title—"security."

Americans fear more deeply than ever before that their security is threatened—economic security by stagnating incomes, foreign security as the world becomes more volatile and unpredictable and more threatening, and domestic security as threats abroad metastasize within our own borders.

Many people equate the concept of security at home or homeland security with protection against extreme violence from abroad, violent extremism spawning from abroad and in fact stopping those threats. Finding the wrongdoers and stopping them is one of the major tasks the Department of Homeland Security has, but it has a myriad of additional responsibilities that include aiding the victims of natural disasters and extreme weather, citizenship and immigration, routinely handling matters that involve legitimate applications for visas for entry into the United States, and it fights the scourge of human trafficking. I am privileged to have a Caucus on Human Trafficking with my colleague Senator ROB PORTMAN. So I know it forms a diverse collection of responsibilities that are crucial to security.

In fact, the Department of Homeland Security's responsibilities are comprehensive—so much so that it is simply unacceptable to play politics with its crucial mission. It is irresponsible to hold its funding hostage in a dangerous game of fiscal chicken and threaten daily activities that are vital to America's present and future security.

That is why we are here, because some of my friends across the aisle believe stopping the President from exercising discretion on certain immigration issues affecting specific individuals in this country is worth hamstringing and undercutting the entire Department of Homeland Security and forcing an enormous amount of its vital work to grind to a halt. That is the game of chicken we have. The President is expected to relent if the Department of Homeland Security is stopped from functioning, but it is a game that has no place in this Chamber or in this government.

We can agree or disagree with the President, and I disagree with the Department of Homeland Security on certain of its policies; for example, on detaining children which it has done routinely on a grandiose scale. I have included an amendment in the measure for immigration reform that passed the Senate. It would stop it from detaining children—a practice I consider shameful and unacceptable—and I have a long list of other changes I would like to see made in DHS policies. But the way to effectuate those changes in my view is not to withhold funding to stop DHS in its tracks of providing security for the American people, it is to amend the laws to persuade our colleagues to undertake the legislative process and to appeal ultimately to the court of public opinion which can render a verdict far more powerful than the tactics involved here. Chipping away at the President's authority by not only undercutting him but stopping one of his departments is reprehensible. So I urge my colleagues to cease this tactic.

The President needs discretion. In fact, I know as a prosecutor, as a former attorney general, and as a one-time U.S. attorney for Connecticut that discretion is essential. There is no way any authority can prosecute every crime. So prosecutors need to select cases based on severity of offense and most important the danger to the public because ultimately protecting the public is what security requires. That is true as well for the Department of Homeland Security.

The President has exercised his discretion in a way I find laudable. The exigencies of the present immigration system require the exercise of discretion. The President has done it in a way that is responsible and upholds his duties as Commander in Chief. But even if I disagree with the President on that exercise of discretion with respect to immigration, I would never use this tactic of withholding funding for an entire department, affecting all of its activities and implicating and undercutting security in so dangerous a way.

My hope is we will debate immigration policy, that we will approve an immigration reform bill, that it will be on a bipartisan basis just as it was during the last session, that there will be a lot of good-faith disagreement on the floor of this Chamber about those policies and about the President's actions but

that we will keep the lights on at the Department of Homeland Security, that we will shine the light on threats to our security that need to be exposed and pursued, that we will further the security of this Nation and protect the public by making sure the DHS funding as a clean bill is approved right away and that we move forward to make sure DHS continues its vital service to the American people.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, as we approach the near end—I think—of the votes and legislation on the Keystone Pipeline—I know we are having a series of votes later today—I know what is likely to be next up is the question of Department of Homeland Security funding. I hope we can come collectively together to fund the Department of Homeland Security, the Department that keeps us safe in an unsafe world, the Department we created after September 11 to bring together disparate government agencies, all charged with keeping our cities, our ports, our airports, our railways, highways, bridges, and neighborhoods safe from the threat of global terrorism. I particularly understand that as a Member of this body who represents, according to the FBI, the most dangerous 2 miles in America, the chemical coastway, airports, seaports along the Hudson waterfront. This is the Department that funds emergency management in our communities. It protects the President. It is engaged in all domestic counterterrorism efforts.

But what are we doing instead? We are being asked, as one of the new Republican majority's first acts of this Congress, to shut down the Department of Homeland Security. Why? Because some of our friends on the other side are willing to take a gamble and put politics ahead of national security, a thinly veiled political stunt in response to the lawful actions of the President of the United States to do something to fix our broken immigration system. Their message is pretty simple: repeal the President's lawful Executive actions on immigration or shut down the Department of Homeland Security. Make no mistake, that is the textbook definition of pure politics: not caring what its impact might be, not caring whom it might hurt, not caring about the families whom it will tear apart, and the fact that it will put our Nation's security at risk.

I have been in this Chamber and in the other Chamber for over 20 years, and I don't think I have ever seen such a cavalier political recklessness played with our national security. Why? To

prevent the President from taking lawful action to help DREAMers and immigrant families to come out of the shadows after they pass a criminal background check, register with the government, and get right with the law in exchange for being allowed to temporarily stay in the country and obtain a work permit.

The bottom line is clear: Republicans are doing all of this just to prevent a clean Department of Homeland Security funding bill from being sent to the President, a critical funding bill that the President has rightfully promised to veto should it include their anti-immigration amendments, a veto which Congress will not override. It is a fool's political errand that is neither good policy nor particularly humane.

Our friends on the other side have accepted these anti-immigrant poison pill amendments, knowing full well they will sink the Department of Homeland Security funding bill because they have allowed extremists, such as STEVE KING, to dictate the party's strategy on immigration.

Let's not continuously go down this dark path of partisanship instead of funding national security programs to keep our families and our communities safe. In my view it is shamefully and woefully irresponsible for Republicans to hold up funding for operations that protect every American against terrorism in the wake of what happened in France and against cyber attacks at a time when North Korea just carried out a dramatic attack against a major American corporation.

This is not a time to hold up funding to help the Department of Homeland Security investigate cyber crime that could cripple America's electronic infrastructure or when the world is a tinderbox of jihadists and would-be homegrown terrorists willing to die for a perceived version of Islam.

If Republican colleagues want to seriously consider this ill-conceived approach, they will be forcing a shutdown of the Department of Homeland Security—a shutdown of our national security infrastructure to pursue their agenda of mass deportations that will tear families apart, an agenda that embraces a system that doesn't distinguish between deporting a working mother with U.S. citizen children and a convicted felon.

Instead, I urge my friends on the other side to join us and pass a balanced and comprehensive bill. Let's talk. Let's sit down again and find common ground, as we did in the last Congress where this Senate came together on a bipartisan basis with over 67 votes to send a bill to the House of Representatives that dealt with our broken immigration system, provided for our national security, promoted our national economy, and at the same time made sure our legacy and history as a nation of immigrants was preserved. The answer is not holding up national security funding at a critical time, not turning our backs on the

hard-working men and women at the Department of Homeland Security in law enforcement who are protecting our borders, our airports, and our coastlines. It is not about trying to score political points by conflating national security and immigration reform, which will only make it harder to address security issues at home and almost impossible to move forward on comprehensive immigration reform.

Let's look at what my Republican colleagues are so opposed to. They are opposed to new DHS directives that include a rigorous application process that will ironically help eliminate national security threats. They seem to be opposed to the fact that applicants will have to come forward and register with the government. They will have to pass criminal background checks before they can receive a temporary reprieve from deportation and a work permit. No violent criminals, gang members, or terrorists will be able to take advantage of the program. They seem to be opposed to allowing immigrants who are not a public safety or national security threat to come forward and request deferred action, meaning there will be fewer people living in the shadows, beyond the reach of law enforcement.

These directives identify moms and dads who have a U.S. citizen or a legal permanent resident son or daughter and take them out of the deportation queue. They also take DREAMers out of the deportation queue.

The House amendment to the Department of Homeland Security funding bill would effectively end the new Deferred Action for Parental Accountability Program and the expanded DACA Program for DREAMers. They would also defund every other aspect of the President's November 20 Executive action that would promote border security, public safety, military service, legal immigration, citizenship, immigration integration, entrepreneurship, civil immigration enforcement priorities, including the prioritization of individuals with convicted felonies and gang activity and terrorist ties for deportation.

I will repeat that. It includes a prioritization. I would think the Senate would want to support a prioritization of individuals who are here illegally and are convicted felons and part of gang activities or who have terrorist ties for deportation and any future similar Executive actions.

The only directive our Republican colleagues found acceptable, which is interesting—in my mind, you say: Well, none of it can happen by Executive action. But it seems that the only thing that did happen by Executive action that our colleagues found acceptable pertains to pay increases for Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers, which I believe they certainly deserve.

These amendments would break apart more families and destroy communities by ensuring that we continue

to deport the parents of U.S. citizen and lawful permanent resident children. One of the most mean-spirited amendments would prohibit the use of Federal funds or resources to consider or adjudicate any new, renewed, or previously denied application for deferred action for childhood arrivals.

Let's call this amendment what it is: It is an amendment to deport DREAMers and targets all of those young people who came forward and signed up in good faith. I will give an example of whom these amendments attack.

I wish to remind my colleagues of who the DREAMers are. DREAMers are young people who came to this country through no choice of their own. The only flag they have ever pledged allegiance to is that of the United States of America. The only national anthem they know is the "Star-Spangled Banner." Their country is this country.

I was fortunate to speak with people like the Morales-Cano family 2 weeks ago in New Jersey. They are a family of six, including 13-year-old, U.S.-born Rebecca Morales. Their lives have drastically improved thanks to the program Republicans are hoping to dismantle. If the Republicans are successful, Rebecca would be left alone in the United States without her parents or sisters—an American citizen left alone, perhaps in foster care, because Republicans don't care about prioritizing the deportation of convicted criminals over her mom, dad, and sisters.

The story of the Morales-Cano family is a clear example of thousands of deep-rooted families who have waited too long in the shadows for immigration reform.

Three years ago, after attending a deferred action for childhood arrivals workshop that my office organized in New Jersey, all three of Rebecca's older sisters—Ingrid, Evelyn, and Lesly—were given an opportunity to begin a new chapter of their lives after qualifying for the President's 2012 Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Program, joining thousands of others who had been granted relief.

Today, look at what this family is doing. Ingrid cares for New Jerseyans' health at her job at the Ocean Medical Center. Evelyn moved to Illinois to attend the West Coast Bible College and Seminary. Lesly was able to enroll in Brookdale Community College to pursue her dream of becoming a nurse. Ingrid, Evelyn, and Lesly represent the hundreds of thousands of young individuals who, because of the deferred action for childhood arrivals, can actively contribute to our economy without fear of losing everything they have worked to gain.

Romeo Morales and Mrs. Magda Cano de Morales did not qualify for deportation deferrals under DACA and have continued to live with the constant fear of having their family abruptly separated. But thanks to the deferred action for parents program, recently announced by President Obama, both parents will likely qualify to come out

of the shadows, register with the government, pass a background check, and join their daughters in their pursuit of the American dream—unless, of course, the Republicans get their way.

We cannot let that happen, and I will do everything to ensure that we will not let that happen. These are the real faces of our broken immigration system. There are many families like the Morales-Cano family who have been and remain an economic resource we cannot afford to waste. They are hard-working families who simply want to be full participants in American life, full contributors to the American family, and they want to remain united as a family. We should want them to remain united.

I have listened to so many speeches here about family values. Well, the core of a family value is a family being able to stay together, integrated and helping each other and driving each other to success and supporting each other. Ripping families apart is not a family value.

We must see through the smoke and mirrors and do what is right for America. Let's stop playing political games. Let's defeat these poison-pill amendments and pass a clean Department of Homeland Security funding bill. Let's not play politics with national security. Let's remember the people behind the policies. Let's remember the Morales-Cano family and the fate of Rebecca if we allow these amendments to pass.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

KEYSTONE XL PIPELINE ACT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 1, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1) to approve the Keystone XL Pipeline.

Pending:

Murkowski amendment No. 2, in the nature of a substitute.

Vitter/Cassidy modified amendment No. 80 (to amendment No. 2), to provide for the distribution of revenues from certain areas of the outer Continental Shelf.

Murkowski (for Sullivan) amendment No. 67 (to amendment No. 2), to restrict the authority of the Environmental Protection Agency to arm agency personnel.

Cardin amendment No. 75 (to amendment No. 2), to provide communities that rely on