care system less frequently, that is a huge win for those individuals, for our State, for our region, and for our country.

I come to the floor today just to share some good news about an aspect of the Affordable Care Act that is absolutely working, and it is making a huge difference in the lives of thousands, tens of thousands, of Maine people. Better health coverage, better health at a lower cost—what is not to like about that formula?

I am very proud of what these entrepreneurial individuals in Maine have undertaken and the success they have enjoyed so far. I look forward to working with them as they continue the project that has meant so much to my people.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. AYOTTE). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

OUR SOUTHERN BORDER AND IMMIGRATION REFORM

Mr. CARPER. Madam President, last weekend—this past weekend—I was privileged to visit our Nation's border with Mexico. Not my first visit but maybe the most productive, most informative visit I have had. I had the opportunity, as a member of the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, on which the Presiding Officer serves, to visit our Nation's border with Mexico from—really from California, from the Pacific all of the way across the southern part of our country, almost to the Gulf of Mexico.

I did not cover every square inch of it or every mile of that border, but we had a chance to look up close and personal, if you will, to see what we are doing and what we have been doing in California, in parts of Arizona, in parts of Texas. As we all know, those are some big States. But we have been there enough, talked to enough smart people, went with our colleagues, this time with the chairman of our committee now, RON JOHNSON from Wisconsin, and with BEN SASSE, the new Member from Nebraska. I am grateful to them for including a former chairman of the committee and my staff. I thought it was very productive. I learned a lot. I thought I already knew a lot going down there, but I came back even better informed. I hope they felt that way as well.

We had some discussions going and coming about the President's Executive orders with respect to the status of some of the undocumented folks in our country. I know there is a fair amount of heartburn on the part of our Republican colleagues that the President may have acted inappropriately. We understand that unhappiness. My hope is that we will not take that unhappiness out on the Department of Homeland Security whose employees are working hard to try to do their jobs, to protect us from all kinds of dangers, not just on the borders of our country with Mexico or Canada but all kinds of threats around the world.

My hope is that at the end of the day we will use this dustup, if you will, this disagreement with the President's actions to provide a sense of urgency to take up and debate again comprehensive immigration reform—not next year but this year, not this fall, not this summer but the beginning of this year, now or very close to now.

One of the things we have learned in terms of our own work on the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs is immigration reform done well—and I do not know how the Presiding Officer voted. I voted for it. I was not crazy about it. My guess is she probably voted for it as well. But was it perfect? No, not by any stretch of the imagination. Was it better than nothing? It sure was. Are there some things I would like to change? You bet there are.

My hope is that we do immigration reform again, hopefully soon, and that we will have the opportunity to keep what is good and valuable in that legislation and change the things that are not. But among the things on the positive side that came out of that legislation is, one, the bill, supported by two-thirds of the Senate a year and a half ago, does a couple of things.

How does it affect gross domestic product? How does it affect our economy? It grows it by about 5 percent over the next 20 years. That is a pretty good little stimulus to help make sure the economic recovery continues. So that is something to have us keep in mind.

The other immigration reform question a lot of people back home in Delaware asked me was, Immigration reform, isn't that going to cost us a lot? Isn't it going to make the budget deficit bigger?

The Congressional Budget Office, which is neither Democratic nor Republican, has actually studied that, drilled down on that, and here is what they have concluded. The immigration reform, imperfect though it was, that we passed a year and a half ago with strong bipartisan support, would actually reduce our budget deficit over the next 10 years by $200 billion and further reduce our budget deficit over the next 10 years after that by $700 billion. Add those together, it is $900 billion in deficit reduction.

We are at a time when, as our Presiding Officer knows, we still have all the deficits down by two-thirds from where it was 5 or 6 years ago. It is still higher than we want it to be. There are actually a number of things we can do to continue to drive it down closer to zero, where we would like it to be. I know I would like that. I know the Presiding Officer feels that way too.

One of the things we had in the immigration reform bill, as I recall, was some provisions dealing with guest worker programs. What I have heard in my visits to Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador, my visit to the border, a lot of the people—it is primarily those three countries from which the greatest numbers of people are coming across the border in South Texas—that is where they are coming from. Are there still Mexicans who come into the United States? Yes. Legally and illegally? Yes.

Last year I am told almost as many Mexicans were going back into Mexico from the United States as are coming into the United States from Mexico. The origin of the illegal immigration is Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador. People say: Why would anybody allow their 7-, 8-, 9-, 10-year-old daughter or son to literally leave in the arms of a coyote on a train—not on a passenger train but on the top of a train—and try to travel 1,500 miles with all kinds of threats to their life and limb? Why would anybody do that?

Having been in those countries—Honduras is the murder capital of the world, and I have seen in that country and in Guatemala and El Salvador police who do not police, prosecutors who do not prosecute, judges who do not administer justice, correctional systems that do not try to correct the behavior.

The school system in Honduras is a great example. Kids in Honduras go from—I know the Presiding Officer has young children. Our boys are through school out into the world. But in schools in Honduras, public schools, they go from grade 1 to grade 6. About half the kids actually make it to grade 6. Of the ones who make it to grade 6, only about half of them can read at grade 6 level. As to the ones who actually make it through grade 6, only 5 percent of them can do sixth grade math. That is a problem.

Several years ago when Hurricane Richard came through Honduras, it wiped out half of their secondary roads. In that country, they have electricity costs which are two or three times what they are in the countries to the south of them and to the north of them. Most of the electricity is created by petroleum. It is expensive. What they need to do is use natural gas, bring it down from Mexico, be able to convert that into electricity and build a grid that helps distribute that electricity.

The other thing they need in that part of the world—as a former attorney general, our Presiding Officer knows well how important this is—is to restore the rule of law. In visiting the three countries—Honduras, I will use again as an example. Until last year, I think their murder rate was about 95 per 100,000 people. That was their murder rate. It was the murder capital of the world.

A number of businesses were shut down by extortion because small business people in Honduras got tired of

being extorted basically from gangs who said: Give me money. If not, I will kill you. Small business owners gave up—15,000 of them. Fifteen thousand small businesses that were there 3, 4, 5 years ago closed.

The conscription of gang members—the Presiding Officer I think has heard me tell this story. But we heard this from one of the folks in Catholic Charities in Southern Delaware, in Sussex County, Georgetown, where we have some Guatemalan population from way back—they worked in the poultry industry, some of them—and some of the unaccompanied minors who have come to Southern Delaware, not thousands of them but maybe 100 or more.

One of the stories was told to us by the folks who are trying to provide some help for those young kids. There is a story. It is from Honduras. A 15-year-old boy was conscripted to join a gang. He was told by the gangs: We want you to join the gang.

He said: I don't want to join the gang.

A week or two later they came back and said: We want you to join our gang.

He said: I'm not interested in joining the gang.

A little bit later they came back and said: If you don't join this gang, our gang, we're going to kill somebody in your family.

He joined the gang, and later on he found out about his initiation and what he would have to do as part of his initiation into the gang that he did not want to join.

Part of the initiation was—he had a 13-year-old sister—he had to rape his 13-year-old sister. Within a week or two that 15-year-old boy and 13-year-old sister were on their way north with a coyote to get out of that country and ultimately ended up in the southern part of our State.

People say to me: Well, why would all those people risk their lives? Can you imagine letting your kids go or my kids go? I cannot imagine that, what has happened, again and again and again. Part of what was reiterated to me on this trip is it is all well and good that we continue to strengthen our borders. We spent a fortune, one-quarter of a trillion dollars in the last 10 years to strengthen our borders with Mexico. Are they stronger? You bet they are. Are they totally impervious? No, they are not. Are there things we could do to make them stronger, more stalwart? Of course there are.

One of the great things about the codel that I was privileged to join Chairman JOHNSON and Senator SASSE on is we basically learned—had reinforced to us those things that were working. Let's find out what is working, do more of that, and find out what is not working and do less of that.

One of the things we have to do is not just continue to address the symptoms of the problem—people trying to come across the border. God knows we need to do that. We can. We can do it more smartly, more cost-effectively. The other thing we need to do is to get at the underlying root causes. The reason people are coming up, risking life and limb to get through Mexico to get to the United States, is because of the lack of hope, lack of economic opportunity, the corruption they faced in their lives for a number of years.

What are some of the things we learned that are working? The Department of Homeland Security folks with whom we met at the border, folks working at the border, Border Patrol, people in aircrafts, helicopters, Homeland Security folks on watercraft, and the people who are running the centers for minors, people who have been detained and are being held—and some will be returned; most of the adults will be returned; for folks with criminal records, almost all of them will be returned to their native countries—but I saw some remarkable work. We saw remarkable work being done by employees at the Department of Homeland Security. Coast Guard people are doing it. All kinds of folks are involved in it—ICE, Border Patrol, folks who are working at these very busy land crossings where we have billions of dollars' worth of commerce going through these borders from the United States into Mexico. We have a bunch of them across the southern part of our Nation. Mexico is a huge trading partner with us and we with them. One of my takeaways is, How do we continue to move that commerce, move that commerce to benefit us, create jobs here and frankly in Mexico as well? How do we do that in a way that makes sure we are doing a good job stopping the human trafficking from coming across our borders, and at the same time make sure the illegal drugs, not just marijuana but especially the cocaine and the heroin that folks are trying to get across our borders by water, by air, by land gets stopped.

There is a real tension here, and I thought we came back with great ideas of how to do a better job of meeting both responsibilities—the stuff we want to keep out of our country, including people out of the country who are illegal. We can do that. We need to do a better job—I think we are doing a better job—and also at the same time make sure the flow of commerce continues unimpeded.

The legislation that was passed about 18 months or so ago with strong bipartisan support sought to double, I believe, as I recall, the number of people who work in the Border Patrol doing some of the border security work. We already have about 20,000 people there. I think we have another maybe 20,000 or so who are working the ports of entry to try to make sure we are stopping bad people, bad things, including diseases, insects, and all kinds of things that hurt our agriculture economy to try to stop that from getting through.

The bill we had said we ought to basically double the number of people who are working on the border for security. Do we need some more people? Yes, we especially need them at the ports of entry.

What we truly need though is some technology. I call them force multipliers. I am a big believer in drones. I spent a lot of time in my life in Navy P–3 aircraft. One of the joys of the weekend for me was to be on a Navy P–3 aircraft—the kinds of airplanes I flew on as a mission commander, a naval flight officer on Active Duty, and later as a reservist. I retired as a Navy captain, I think in 1991, but to actually be on a P–3 aircraft again and to take an aircraft that is much older than you and not as old as I, to see that aircraft reconfigured—actually the wings and insides are new as well, the avionics up front—and to see the changes in the equipment that we have, there is better radar, and there is an ability to put that aircraft out over water and to pick up the bad guys whether they are in cigarette boats or a submersible with a periscope poking out of the water.

There are also helicopters to see what we can do as we patrol the Rio Grande River—very low altitudes, twisting and turning and actually finding some people trying to get across.

To look at the drugs and try to understand what our capabilities are with the drones, I think they are terrific. Are we getting full bang for our bucks? No, we are not. The inspector general from the Department of Homeland Security has issued—not that long ago—a finding that was very critical of the effectiveness of the drones.

I am convinced there is a great potential there. I am determined. I am sure working with Democrats and Republicans and our committee in the Senate and hopefully the House and certainly with the administration. We need to make sure we are getting full value for everything we are putting into the drone technology, in the deployment of drones.

If we are going to spend more money on drones, I want to make sure we get our entire money's worth. I am sure the taxpayers feel that way as well.

One of my thoughts, aside from the technology, I wish to work with the Presiding Officer, with the Republicans, and I want to work with the Democrats on comprehensive immigration reform. I want us to finish the work we started, and I want us to do it sooner than later. I hope the money we have to spend in that bill to strengthen our borders, we spend it in a smart way.

I have mentioned a couple of those ways too. One of those is the drones, to make sure we take into account the investigation by the inspector general and his folks and make sure they are being honest and straightforward with us. I am sure they wouldn't deliberately mislead us, but I want to make sure we are getting our value.

I want to mention a couple of other things. I spent a little bit of my life in an airplane, some of my time in the

Navy in a P–3. During the Vietnam war, we flew a lot of missions off the coast of Vietnam and Cambodia. Our job was to pick up little infiltrator trawlers trying to resupply the Viet Cong and turn them over when we found them, track them to the coast, and turn them over to swift boats and the Coast Guard. That was our job.

We also did an area of surveillance of shipping traffic going into Haiphong Harbor. The capital of North Vietnam, Hanoi, was there. We were trying to make sure we knew what was going in and out of that country.

When we were doing those kinds of missions, largely what we did was we did ocean surveillance, subsurface ocean surveillance. We tracked a lot of Soviet nuclear submarines, diesel submarines, to make sure we knew where they were and what they were up to.

The other thing we did from time to time, we would be called on for our Navy P–3 assets to do a search and rescue. As we have seen from the Malaysian aircraft that disappeared a number of months ago and the Indonesian aircraft that disappeared a number of months ago, we put the P–3 airplane up there to help search for them. We put them out across the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean with, in many cases, binoculars, but radar was running as well and we were trying to listen to see if there were any radio signals coming out.

We also came out with binoculars. I am going to tell you, looking for people in a boat, looking for wreckage with binoculars from an aircraft out of the ocean at 1,000 feet, 5,000 feet or 10,000 feet, that is very hard to do and not very fruitful.

We have these fixed-wing aircraft that the Homeland Security owns. They are called Cessna 206. They are a single engine and they fly for maybe 5 or 6 hours. They are actually a pretty good platform, but we essentially use them—if we use them at all—with binoculars, looking for people coming to our border from Mexico or trying to get across our border.

That isn't very smart. There is a system called VADER and the VADER system is a highly advanced, sophisticated system that enables us to see from 5,000, 10,000, 20,000 feet, day or night, what is coming through our borders, in some cases even in inclement weather.

For us to fly aircraft, whether they are drones, fixed-wing aircraft, whatever, and not use that technology is not very smart. If we have something that is that good—as I have seen with my own eyes, even on this trip—what an advantage that gives us for being able to detect people coming to our border, across our border or over our border. That is hugely helpful information. We can deploy our forces by helicopter, by vehicle or by foot or by horse.

The Presiding Officer has been to Afghanistan a time or two. I have been there a couple of times myself. I had a chance to see the tethered dirigibles—lighter than air—that were used in Afghanistan, Kabul and other places, to enable us to surveil through cameras and other assistive devices, surveil what is going on in Afghanistan and in Kabul, for example. They are very helpful.

It seemed to me the first time I was there—the first couple of times I was at the border—the first thing I asked was why do we use that technology? Why don't we use that technology, tethered lighter-than-air dirigibles that can go up to 1,000 feet, 2,500 feet, 5,000, 10,000—why don't we use them along the borders, particularly as we are bringing that equipment technology back from Afghanistan?

Well, we are starting to do that. One of the things we did, we actually were at the tethered dirigible site on the border by the Rio Grande River, and we had the opportunity, with the tethered dirigible up and operating, to actually be in the shack, if you will—there is actually a modern shack right at the base of the dirigible—and see people coming through Mexico—about a half dozen or so—approaching our border and waiting for sundown or dusk to be able to come across the Rio Grande River.

It gave us the opportunity to know they were coming, to marshal our forces, and to have them positioned appropriately, if these folks came across, to take them into custody. If they were folks who were not coming here lawfully or for asylum or just looking for an opportunity for a better life or a better economic life or if they were bringing bad stuff—drugs, and a bunch of them do—then we were in a position to deal with that.

But the technology, the tethered dirigible, the technology we can put on those—cameras, radar, great stuff—we ought to be doing more of that. Again, I like to find out what works and do more of that. But that is a great force multiplier and not the only one.

We also have towers. These are towers that are not tethered dirigibles. These are towers that are maybe 100, 200 feet in the air. They don't allow someone, as the dirigible does, to look over the horizon, but they can certainly give a good idea of what is going on for several miles, either way, maybe 2 or 3 miles in radius. The dirigibles go up 10, 15 miles in radius to see what is going on and inform us—in all kinds of weather. But the towers that are on the ground are fine.

Airboats, one of the exciting things we did was add boats, fast boats. We have gone up and down the Rio Grande River—gosh, maybe a mile away. The fellow who was running our boat—I might be getting confused with our helicopter—but in any event, as we were doing helicopter runs up and down the river and airboats up and down the river—I think the pilot actually saw something in our helicopter about a mile up going around the bend. He actually picked up visually at least one or two people who were approaching the banks of the river on the Mexican side. Sure enough, we ran in on them, and they had a raft there and several people who were apparently trying to come across the river.

But we have some parts of the Rio Grande River—the kind of watercraft we were in works just fine, but there were other parts of the river where we needed airboats because the water was very shallow, and the boats we were in would run aground. So one of the other takeaways in terms of force multiplier is to make sure we have boats, technology that is appropriate, also making sure we have the communications equipment we need but also making sure we are using things such as airboats when we need them.

The other thing I was saying—I hadn't thought about this until right now—but one of the things that is very important for us to better secure our borders is for Mexico to better secure their borders. For Mexico, when folks are trying to get across from these three Central American countries and they are coming toward the southern border of Mexico, Mexico needs to realize they have a dog in this fight. If we stop them at our border, that means all these immigrants are going to be in Mexico. It will provide challenges, some problems, if you will, for the Mexican people in some cases.

Just as a refugee needs a place, needs work or needs food or shelter, it is all of those challenges with movement of population such as this. In some cases they are criminals. In most cases they are not, but in some cases they are criminals. Does the Mexican Government want all of those problems? No, they don't. They are finally awakening to that and they are doing a much better job, particularly with their multilayer approach on their southern border to slow and stop—to some extent—the flow of illegal immigrants coming from the three Central American countries I have mentioned.

The other thing that Mexico can be very helpful with is shutting down train service. I say that with tongue in cheek. There is a train called ''The Beast''—in fact, several of them. They emanate from southern Mexico. They run the full length of the country, about 1,500 miles. People are able to climb—until at least recently—on top of these freight trains and hold on for dear life or maybe get into the rail car and hunker down, travel the length of the country, and get off as the trains approach the border with the United States.

It is sort of like riding the Amtrak train from Delaware to New Orleans or from Delaware to Chicago and basically not having a ticket, just traveling along, a free rider.

I have said to the Mexican Government: Why do you do this? Why do you allow them to do this? We would never let people ride our free trains like this and come down to your country. Why do you allow this?

God bless them. They finally said: Well, we are going to stop that. Instead of having maybe a couple thousand people on ''The Beast,'' this train—this freight train with people on top of the freight cars holding on for dear life—now we have a handful—maybe a handful—of people allowed to do this, which is helpful.

The other thing Mexico can be helpful in—and they are doing I think a better job—is sharing information with us, the sharing of information. They have an idea of who is coming through their country, who is bringing them, and we need that information. We actually need some more information from Honduras and Guatemala.

We are getting reasonably good information, intelligence from the Mexicans and the other countries, and we need it to be better. To the extent that we get that better information, it enables us to be better positioned to respond with human assets and with some of these force multipliers that I have been talking about.

I wish to mention—if I could again go back to the border crossings. When we think of a border crossing, we think of a road maybe or something, maybe it is a bridge. These are unbelievable. Some of them are huge and unbelievable infrastructures that have been constructed with multiple lanes of traffic going each way. Traffic is backed up in some cases for hours trying to get from the United States into Mexico. Maybe they are taking parts down for auto assembly and then coming back with finished products.

But there is a huge flow of trade which benefits Mexico and frankly benefits us as well. There is an old saying: Time is money. To the extent that folks in a just-in-time economy are trying to move products, trying to move goods, to have to wait for those lengths of time is not good.

We can do a better job. We need to do a better job in terms of the people whom we have working there at the border for us and in terms of the kind of technology we are using.

I wish to use as an example one piece of technology that I saw, something just a little bit bigger than my handheld device here. A woman who is working the border at the crossing for all the trucks trying to come and go—she showed me her handheld device. She said: These are the next six or so trucks lined up to come through from northern Mexico.

I said: Really? Do you know anything about any of them?

She clicked on one of the trucks. It had the history of the truck coming across our border this year—maybe even before this year—and the driver information, about who is the driver, how often has he or she been coming across our border. It is very good stuff.

We have the ability to detect radiation, the ability to detect shipments of guns, and the ability to detect people who are in vehicles. That is all well and good, but we need to continue to update and modernize that technology at the border and frankly put more money into the infrastructure so that flow of commerce is not impeded to the extent it is today.

I think that is it, pretty much. I always think, when I go through a long ramble such as this, I should come back at the end and try to point out a couple of points and repeat what I really want to convey.

I am really glad we went to the border. I have learned a lot each time I have gone. I certainly learned a lot this weekend. One of the things that gives me special joy is that it helped me identify and reinforce items such as the tethered dirigible—the kind of technology we can hang on to and deploy across the border in all kinds of locations. How important that technology is.

The other item that came home to me was that we spend a huge amount of money on these measures—one-quarter of a trillion dollars in the last 10 years on securing our borders. We spent less than 1 percent of that trying to help—along with Mexico, Colombia, and the Inter-American Development Bank—the countries of El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala to become less places of desolation and fear. We want to help them. It is not for us to do this by ourselves. It is not our job. What do they say at Home Depot? You can do it; we can help. In this case it would be like Colombia. In Colombia, 20-some years ago, what happened was a bunch of gunmen rounded up their supreme court justices, took them into a room and shot them to death—11 justices of their supreme court. Colombia was oppressed on the one hand by leftist guerillas and on the other hand by narco drug lords. A lot of people said they were going down. But they made it, in part with our help and Plan Colombia.

The folks who—the presidents of Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador have come up, with our encouragement, with their own Plan Colombia to focus on, among other things, restoring the rule of law, going after corruption, making sure police police, prosecutors prosecute, judges administer justice, and correctional systems prisons actually correct behavior.

They are looking at the schools. Kids are finishing up after grade 6 and, frankly, without the skills they need to do much of anything. So they are looking to make sure those schools are producing students better equipped and prepared to be gainfully employed.

Also, as I said, half of the secondary roads in Honduras were wiped out after Hurricane Mitch. Half of them were wiped out, and there is a need for them, with maybe some help from a bunch of us—Mexico, Colombia, NGOs, and nonprofits—to work on that.

The other thing is the energy piece. If they are going to have jobs down there, they need to have affordable energy, and it is not going to be from the continued use of electricity through the use of petroleum but through low-priced natural gas and by strengthening their grid—really, to build and rebuild their electric grid.

So those are some of my take-aways. I wanted to share some of those with my colleagues.

I hope we don't shut down the Department of Homeland Security. They do important work for us, and we need them to be on the job. Frankly, we don't need a continuing resolution because that just hampers their ability to move assets around to meet one challenge that is greater than another. Hopefully, we will not have the kind of flood events we had last summer. Hopefully, we won't.

We are doing some smart messaging campaigns down in those three Central American countries, and with the cooperation of the governments, we are saying: Look, this is really what you are going to find when you try to come through Mexico and this Texas border. This is what the real truth is, and this is what you are going to run into when you get into the United States. It is the kind of truth campaign we are delivering with the help of those governments to try to reduce the attraction for coming.

But I came away more hopeful than maybe I was when I went down. There is reason for hope, but there is plenty to do—plenty to do.

If we can somehow put our political differences aside, I hope we will continue to fund the Department of Homeland Security so they can do their jobs. There are a lot of good people working for us around the world, and we don't need to hamper them further.

Finally, let's work on immigration. Let's roll up our sleeves and do this year a better job than what we tried to do 2 years ago—a better job. The American people sent us here to do that.

With that, I conclude my remarks. I thank you for your patience and attention.

I saw one of my colleagues walk on the floor. He is a Senator from another small but mighty State, the State of Rhode Island, and I am happy to yield for Senator WHITEHOUSE to make whatever remarks he wishes to make.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Madam President, I might point out that not only are Delaware and Rhode Island both small and mighty, but they are small, mighty, and coastal, which is relative to the topic of my remarks this afternoon. I am now here for the 89th consecutive week that Congress has been in session to urge the Senate to wake up to the risks of climate change and to address the carbon pollution that is causing climate change.

We have a particular context for this conversation this week. The Founding Fathers in article I, section 8 of the Constitution granted to Congress a sacred duty, as the Constitution says, to