

these testing kits to be available—not only for the expectant mothers or potentially pregnant but also for men because, as we know, the Zika virus can also be transmitted sexually, as it was in the transmission that occurred in Polk County, FL.

Beyond it, I hope that in this funding request we don't wait until the end of the year. The summer months are coming, and these are the months where the spread of these mosquitoes—the two strains of the two types of species of mosquitoes that carry the virus—are going to be prevalent in many parts of the country. It is the time of year when many people find themselves outdoors exposed to these mosquitoes.

I hope the funding request can be in place and that we don't wait until the end of the year to deal with this. It shouldn't take this long. Look, I believe in limited government, but I do believe one of the obligations of a limited Federal Government is to protect our people from dangers, whether they be foreign enemies or the risk of disease outbreak.

I hope we will move forward on this endeavor because it is important. It is a proper function of government. We shouldn't be sitting here 6 months from now regretting that we didn't act sooner. I hope we will move promptly and quickly both in the House and then in the Senate to address this issue.

I also wish to say that I don't want to forget about Puerto Rico. Oftentimes people forget that Puerto Rico is the United States. The people who live there are U.S. citizens.

There is already a severe outbreak when it comes to Puerto Rico. They are already facing this crisis. So it is important. If this were one of the 50 States, they would have a Senator on the floor right now, maybe two, arguing on behalf of them. Obviously, Puerto Rico doesn't have a Senator elected from the island.

I stand here today on their behalf to argue that this is an important issue that needs to be addressed for the sake of our country, but most immediately for the sake of the territory of Puerto Rico. I hope we will move quickly to confront this issue and to solve it.

I close by saying one more thing. While government has an important role to play, ultimately we have a responsibility. If you are traveling to parts of this world where you might be exposed to the virus, you have an obligation to get tested to ensure that you are not going to be transmitting this to your partner.

As I argued last week at my press conference, if you are going to be outdoors, you have an obligation to use mosquito repellent to protect yourself and your family from being exposed to this, just the same way you would wear sunscreen. It is important for us more this summer than any other.

It is not only Zika that mosquitoes transmit. They transmit all kinds of other very serious illnesses. There is a level of personal responsibility here.

We talked about people not allowing bodies of water, whether it is undrained pools or puddles of water in your backyard. These mosquitoes can grow in water containers as small as the cap of a bottle of water. They don't need a lot of water in order to reproduce and grow. So there are things we need to do in our own lives to take personal responsibility for dealing with the Zika virus.

But there is a proper role for government, and I hope we will play it. We have an obligation to hold the government responsible to ensure that the money that is appropriated is just being spent on Zika and is being spent appropriately on things that work. We should be working with our local and State partners to ensure that we are funding the programs that work and need to be funded. But I think we need to get it done. I hope we can get it done here rather quickly because the summer is upon us. I don't think we want to be halfway through the summer and wake up to the news that hundreds and hundreds of Americans in multiple States have been infected and we did nothing. We will have to explain that to our constituents, and I am not sure we are going to have a good explanation if we don't have it.

With that, I yield the floor.

Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

REFORMING THE H-1B VISA PROGRAM

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I rise to speak about H-1B visas, often called the high-skilled immigration visa. Every year, the U.S. Government issues 85,000 new H-1B visas, including 20,000 for workers with advanced degrees. This is in addition to hundreds of thousands of foreign workers already in the United States on H-1B visas.

Beginning on April 1, employers can submit petitions for new H-1B visas. Every year, within a few days, the government announces that it has received many more petitions for visas than the number of visas available.

The government then conducts a random lottery to decide which employers will receive the visas. Every year this leads to a hue and cry from our business community about the need to increase the annual cap for H-1B visas.

Like clockwork, this process played out last week, just as it does every year. Let's take a look at what happened.

When most people think of H-1B visas, they think of big tech companies like Microsoft, Google, and Apple hiring top-notch computer engineers, pay-

ing them top dollar to come in from overseas.

But here is the reality. In fact, the top recipients of H-1B visas are foreign companies that use loopholes in the law to displace qualified American workers and send American jobs offshore.

In 2013, outsourcing firms received more than 50 percent of the annual H-1B visa cap. Think about that. Over half of these H-1B visas, designed to bring skilled foreign workers into the United States, are being given to foreign outsourcing companies.

It sounds wrong; doesn't it?

In 2014, 15 of the top 20 H-1B employers used the H-1B visa primarily to offshore American jobs; that is, to take Americans, put them out of work, and have foreign workers take their jobs. These 15 firms gobbled up over 190,000 new H-1B visas over 10 years.

This is how it works. Foreign outsourcing companies import thousands of foreign guest workers using H-1B visas. These companies then cut deals with American companies to outsource American jobs and to move them offshore. The United States keeps them in the United States but with these foreign workers. The U.S. company gives their American workers notice that they will be fired. But before the American workers are laid off—listen to this—the American workers are forced to train the foreign guest workers who are going to take over their jobs.

After they are trained, the outsourcing company returns the foreign workers to their home country where—guess what—they compete with the United States.

Most of these foreign outsourcing companies are from India: Infosys, Tata, and Wipro. You may not recognize those names, but they are making billions of dollars using the H-1B visa to outsource American jobs and displace American workers.

A high-ranking Indian Government official even called the H-1B visa “the outsourcing visa.” The International Herald Tribune investigated these Indian companies, and this is what they concluded: “Rather than building a thriving community of experts and innovators in the United States, the Indian firms seek to funnel work—and expertise—away from the country.”

Congress intended the H-1B program to allow an employer to hire a skilled foreign worker in a specialized occupation when the American employer couldn't find an American worker with those skills and abilities.

We didn't create this program for foreign outsourcing firms to exploit the program and to bring foreign workers to our country to be trained by talented American workers in order to see their jobs shipped away.

So let's take an example. In the last year alone, media reports have documented the replacement of hundreds of American workers by these foreign outsourcing companies. Let me give an example close to home. Abbott Labs of

Illinois, headquartered near Chicago, signed a contract for information technology services with Wipro, one of the largest foreign outsourcing companies based in India and one of the top users of the H-1B visa program.

Here is how it worked: Approximately 150 U.S. employees at Abbott Labs in Illinois are going to lose their jobs. The workers being laid off have stellar experience—many of them have been at Abbott for years. They have the credentials, the performance reviews, and some have amazing work records spanning decades at Abbott Labs. I know from recent conversations with Abbott Labs employees that this layoff is taking its toll on the morale of their remaining workforce.

When I heard about these plans, I wrote to Miles White, the CEO of Abbott Labs. I urged him to reconsider this plan and to keep his American workers who have worked so hard for Abbott Labs for years. Well, I am sorry to report he responded to my letter and confirmed his company's plans to terminate these American workers.

I am very concerned about Abbott Labs because they have required the employees who are losing their jobs and being laid off to sign away their right to sue or even disparage the company if they want to receive any severance pay. As a result of this agreement, Congress and the American people are unable to hear directly from the employees who are affected by this decision at Abbott Labs—employees who are losing their jobs to Wipro, an Indian company that specializes in outsourcing American jobs. Abbott employees have told my staff they were concerned that even if they spoke with our office about what was happening at Abbott Labs, they could be placed in jeopardy.

Other companies that have signed contracts with foreign outsourcing companies to replace American workers have also forced their employees to sign these nondisparagement agreements. So we are in the dark about the human impact of these outsourcing arrangements on the Americans losing their jobs. What we do know is this: 150 skilled and experienced American workers will lose their jobs and have had to sign an agreement that they will not say anything negative about their current employer. If they do not comply with that, they do not get their severance pay.

I sent a followup letter to Mr. White today about the gag order he has forced on his employees. We should be able to hear firsthand from workers who are losing their jobs because of outsourcing as to just exactly what is happening to them.

Senator CHUCK GRASSLEY and I first introduced bipartisan legislation to reform the H-1B visa program in 2007—almost a decade ago. Our bill would end these abuses and protect American and foreign workers from exploitation. The outsourcing companies are worried about our legislation. For a long time,

CHUCK GRASSLEY and DICK DURBIN were on the front page of a lot of Indian newspapers. Listen to the corporate jargon Wipro uses to talk about our bill:

With the growth of offshore outsourcing receiving increasing political and media attention, there have been concerted efforts to enact new legislation to restrict offshore outsourcing. This may adversely impact our ability to do business in these jurisdictions and could adversely affect our revenues and operating profitability.

Let me be clear. My first obligation as a U.S. Senator is to protect American workers. If that adversely affects the profits of a foreign company that specializes in outsourcing American jobs, so be it.

In 2013 I joined the Gang of 8—Democrats and Republicans—and we put together a comprehensive immigration reform bill. Corporate interests fought hard to protect these H-1B visas, but we successfully included several important changes to the program in the bill. Let me give an example. Under current law, employers are permitted to pay H-1B visa holders substandard wages, which creates an incentive to fire Americans and hire foreign workers.

The vice president of Tata, out of India, one of the leading foreign outsourcing firms, candidly acknowledged they use H-1B visas to undercut American workers. Here is what he said:

Our wage per employee is 20-25 percent lesser than U.S. wage for a similar employee. . . . The issue is that of getting workers in the U.S. on wages far lower than local wage.

He was pretty candid about it. The object is to put Americans out of work and to charge less than what the Americans are being paid. So I wrote a provision in the 2013 comprehensive immigration reform bill that discouraged employers from hiring foreign workers as a source of cheap labor by doubling the minimum wage of H-1B employees, and employers of large numbers of H-1B visa holders would be required to pay, at a minimum, the average wage paid to an American. That is why the chief executive of Tata in India said our bill would have been “very tough” on outsourcing companies. So be it.

The Senate passed that bill on this floor 68 to 32. Unfortunately, the Republican leadership in the House of Representatives refused to even call the bill. They wouldn't debate it or call it for a vote.

Now, the two leading Republican Presidential candidates, Donald Trump and the junior Senator from Texas, have jumped on the bandwagon. They want to reform the H-1B program. Unfortunately, their track records call into question their real commitment. Mr. Trump owns companies that have sought to import at least 1,000 temporary guest workers while turning away hundreds of American workers. In 2013, when the Judiciary Committee considered the comprehensive immigration reform bill, Senator CRUZ of Texas offered an amendment to in-

crease—increase—the annual cap for H-1B visas to 325,000 per year—almost four times the current number.

Nonetheless, if they have changed their mind out on the campaign trail, we welcome that change of heart and welcome them to this debate. We must reform the H-1B visa program and fix other parts of our broken immigration system to protect American and immigrant workers. The solution is still comprehensive immigration reform. The time for action is now. Congress has avoided its responsibility for far too long.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

WORKING WITH OUR ALLIES

Mr. SULLIVAN. Madam President, I wish to spend a few minutes talking about our allies across the globe, and I am doing so because they are important to our national security. That seems to be an obvious statement, but our allies seem to be getting a bit of a bipartisan short shrift of late. I come to the floor of the Senate to talk about how important they are to our Nation, to our citizens. It is bipartisan, as I mentioned.

As many of us have read, on the campaign trail Presidential candidate Donald Trump has been critical of NATO, has been critical of our Asia-Pacific allies. Meanwhile—and in many ways it hasn't gotten the news it deserves because it is a sitting President—in a recent article in *The Atlantic* by Jeffrey Goldberg entitled “The Obama Doctrine,” President Obama himself is dismissive of many U.S. allies around the world.

I thought it was important to talk a little bit about our allies and how important they are to U.S. security and to expanding American influence globally.

Let's start with Mr. Trump. He has called NATO—which, by the way, happens to be one of the most successful alliances in the history of the world—an alliance that is “obsolete” and “too expensive.” About the members of the 28-nation alliance, he said: “Either they pay up, including for past deficiencies, or they have to get out. And if it breaks up NATO, it breaks up NATO.” Oh, well. So much for the world's most successful alliance.

However, contrary to public perception, the United States does not pay for a majority of NATO's spending. We pay about 22 percent of NATO's common-funded budgets and programs for all of NATO—about 22 percent.

The Secretary General of NATO, Jens Stoltenberg, was here last week, and he