

When Asael says “my country,” he means the United States of America—the only country he has ever known.

In his senior year in high school, this young man turned his life around because of DACA. He improved his grades, he was active in his community, he was head of his school’s fund raising committee, he volunteered in a mentoring program, and he worked full time to support himself and his family. You see, young people like him—undocumented—don’t qualify for any Federal assistance to go to college. If you want to go to college, you have to pay for it. For most of them, it means working pretty hard to come up with the money to do it.

Today Asael is in his sophomore year in the Honors College—the Honors College—at the University of Illinois at Chicago. He is a double major in psychology and political science, and he has a perfect 4.0 grade point average. Talk about a turnaround. He is involved with student government, leads a recreational bike club called College of Cycling. Every week he delivers food from the college dining halls on bike to a local homeless shelter. This effort has inspired other student groups to start similar initiatives. He mentors middle school students, and he is the youngest board member of the Erie Neighborhood House—a place I have visited many times—a social service agency that provides assistance to low-income families in the city of Chicago. In addition to all this, he works part time as a security guard at local events like Cubs baseball games and Bears football games.

Asael dreams of working in Chicago’s city government someday. He says: “I have a passion for my city, and I feel an obligation to do whatever I can to make it great by serving its communities.” This is one story—one story out of 744,000.

Will America be better if Asael Reyes is given his chance to stay here to make this a better nation? Of course, it will. At an early age, this young man was able to do a turnaround just on the hope that someday he might be able to live in this country legally.

There are so many stories just like his. In that same city of Chicago, at Loyola University School of Medicine, there are 28 students who are undocumented. The school opened up competition, and some of the brightest kids around America for the first time saw a chance for an undocumented student to be a doctor.

They have to sign up, incidentally—borrowing the money from the State of Illinois for their education—to serve a year of their lives as doctors in underserved areas of Illinois, in rural areas, and in the inner city, for each year they go to medical school. They willingly do it. They are prepared to give back. Asael is prepared to give back. The question is, Will we give them a chance?

I am not an expert in the area of social media, but yesterday we tweeted a

short message about this DACA challenge and what is going to happen to these 744,000 young people across America. The hashtag “save DACA” went out. My staff reports to me—and they are expert on this, I am not—in the span of 2 hours, we were trending across the United States of America. Six million people saw this hashtag over 10 million times. Think of that, 6 million people in 2 hours. It touched them what can happen to this young man and so many others.

So will Congress rise to this challenge? Will Democrats and Republicans come to the rescue of these young people who are asking for just a chance—brought to this country not by their decision but the decision of their parents—asking for a chance now to have a life? I hope we will. It will be good for them. It will sure be good for America.

TRIBUTE TO MARK KIRK

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, on January 3, there will be a new Senate sworn in. Members come down this aisle, to be sworn in over here by the Vice President of the United States, to become Members of the U.S. Senate. It will be the passing of the Senate seat in our State from Senator MARK KIRK to Senator-elect TAMMY DUCKWORTH. I would like to say a few words about my colleague MARK KIRK.

For the last 6 years, MARK and I have had a very positive professional relationship. The night he won the election, I was standing with his opponent Alexi Giannoulias when Alexi made the call to MARK KIRK to congratulate him. MARK asked that I take the phone, and I did.

He said: I want to work with you. I know we just competed against one another in the election, but we now have a responsibility together to represent the State of Illinois, and we started a positive working relationship—a relationship based on mutual respect. One of the things we did was to continue a tradition.

Since 1985, my mentor and colleague in the House, and my predecessor in the Senate, Paul Simon of Illinois, started a Thursday morning breakfast, inviting people from Illinois who were in Washington and those who wish they were from Illinois, to come in for free coffee and donuts at no taxpayer expense. It was an hour-long public meeting so we could talk about what was happening in the Senate and then answer any questions and pose for pictures if they wanted them. I asked MARK KIRK to continue this, even though we were of opposite political faith, and we did, for a long time. We worked together to make sure the people of Illinois felt welcomed. We often took differing views on issues—that is understandable—but we did it in a civil way. People said they thought it was one of the highlights of their trip to see two Senators from two different parties working together. We did—and not just on those Thursday mornings. We found reasons to do it on the floor.

In the vast majority of cases, when it came to filling Federal judicial vacancies, MARK KIRK and I worked together to agree. Rarely did we disagree on those who needed to be chosen. As a result, we have had a pretty good record of filling vacancies in the State of Illinois.

Then, of course, it was in 2012 that a disaster struck and MARK KIRK suffered a stroke. It was almost a life-ending experience. He is lucky—lucky—to be alive today. He knows it, and we all know it too. I primarily kept in touch with his staff, and with him, during the course of his rehabilitation after that stroke. It was a calendar year he had to give to rehabilitation, to learn how to walk again and speak again and do the basic things we take for granted. It was an extraordinary show of courage and determination on his part.

Finally, before he could return to the Senate, I visited with him and saw him some 10 months after the stroke and realized the devastation he weathered and how much he had managed to recover because of his sheer determination. The one thing he told me, though, was that he was determined to come back to the United States Senate and walk up those steps right into the Senate Chamber. He was working every single day on treadmills and with rehab experts to reach that day when he could get out of a car and walk up those steps. He asked me if I would ask other Senators to join him—especially his close friend JOE MANCHIN, a Democratic Senator from West Virginia, and we did. That day came and it was an amazing day. He started at the bottom of those steps and worked his way up, all the way into the Senate Chamber, to the applause of his colleagues—Democrats and Republicans—all the way up those steps. We realized what an amazing recovery he had made.

Our colleague Tim Johnson of the State of South Dakota had gone through a similar devastating experience. MARK KIRK said many times, when he was about to give up, he thought, Tim Johnson got back to the Senate. I can get back there if I work hard enough. He did just that.

He was an exceptional colleague of mine in the Senate. There were a lot of things we agreed on. One of them was Lake Michigan. As a Congressman from the 10th Congressional District, which is on the shores of Lake Michigan, he was always committed to that lake.

After the election, when the results didn’t come out as he wished, I sat down with him and said: MARK, what do you want me to do in memory of your commitment to public service?

He said: Do everything you can to protect Lake Michigan. And I am going to. I asked his successor TAMMY DUCKWORTH to join me in that effort, and we will in his name and in his memory.

I thank him for the service he has given to our State, the service he has given our Nation as an officer in the

Navy Reserve, and for the years he put in as a staff member to Congressman John Porter, for the work he did in the House of Representatives representing the 10th Congressional District, and for his term in the United States Senate. It has been a pleasure and an honor to serve with him. Despite our political differences, I count him as a friend, as an ally, and as a true champion for the State of Illinois.

I wish my colleague MARK KIRK the very best in his future endeavors.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative 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.

IRAN SANCTIONS EXTENSION BILL

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I rise to voice my support of the extension of the Iran Sanctions Act, which I believe we must treat as just one step in our continued efforts to counter Iran's destabilizing and nefarious actions throughout the world. This bill merely extends the basis of our extensive sanctions network against Iran aimed at crippling the Ayatollah's deadly pursuit of a nuclear weapon for 10 years.

The Iran Sanctions Act, which is part of the extensive network of sanctions that I helped author for the United States and our allies to levy against the Iranian regime, serves as the basis of the economic leverage that brought Iran to the negotiating table in the first place. Throughout my tenure in Congress, I have authored and championed the foundation of our network of sanctions that crippled Iran's economy and kept its nuclear pursuits at bay. It has been my consistent position that the United States must address these nefarious activities apart from the nuclear portfolio. We need to send a signal to Iran that the United States, while meeting its obligations under the JCPOA, will continue to respond to other threatening and dangerous activities the Iranian regime has taken.

Throughout debate over the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, its proponents made a number of repeated claims. Among these were that it was crippling sanctions that brought Iran to the negotiating table and that in the event of a breach of the agreement, the United States and our implementing partners would have every authority to "snap back"—the term that was coined—the sanctions that have been lifted. If the sanctions architecture has expired, then we have no sanctions which we can snap back. These sanctions were in place when the JCPOA was authored and signed, and it follows that they should remain in place.

Many of the agreement's proponents argued that putting the JCPOA in

place would give the United States and our allies the opportunity to focus on countering Iran's more conventional threats to American security and regional stability. Since the nuclear agreement came into force, Iran has continued its efforts to destabilize the region and increase its power through proxy and terrorist networks.

Since we signed the nuclear agreement with Iran, Iran has been testing the agreement, testing our resolve, and quite literally testing long-range ballistic missiles. We have seen multiple ballistic missile tests in the past year and a half—in October and November of last year and in March and May of this year and one launch not far from U.S. naval vessels. We have seen American sailors humiliated and detained at gunpoint. Just this weekend, a vessel controlled by the IRGC—the Iranian Revolutionary Guard—pointed a weapon at a U.S. military helicopter in the Strait of Hormuz.

Iran continues to support a Houthi insurgency that toppled the legitimate Government of Yemen. It supports Shia militias in Iraq who seek to control the democratically elected Iraqi Government and bring it closer in line with Iran, threatening to return Iraq to civil war or worse. It supports Assad in Syria and continues to send millions of dollars and sophisticated weapons to Hezbollah and Hamas, threatening innocent civilians in Syria and Israel's security. It continues human rights violations and sustains an aging clergy who is losing touch with the hopes and dreams of young Iranians and moderates, an out-of-touch clergy who dominates the power structures and the security apparatus that restricts civil liberties and promotes its hegemonic regional destabilization. It has the largest inventory of ballistic missiles in the Middle East, capable of delivering weapons of mass destruction, chemical weapons, biological weapons, and continues to develop cyber war capabilities.

Iran continues its development of space-launch vehicles that can lead to a longer range missile capability. It has cooperated with North Korea on the transfer of ballistic missile technology. This is in addition to the fact that Iran has, by its own admission, violated the JCPOA itself. The International Atomic Agency reported that Iran has twice violated the terms of the agreement by producing more heavy water than the deal allows for. An excess stockpile of heavy water—a critical component of operating nuclear reactors—reduces Iran's nuclear breakout time. Yet, even with this violation, the United States and our implementing partners have upheld our end of the bargain.

As I have repeatedly said and which I outlined in the bill I authored earlier this year, we must take decisive action in response to Iran's behavior which is in violation, among other things, of the United Nations Security Council resolutions and threatens America's inter-

ests and regional stability. The United States must reserve the right to hold Iran accountable for all of its actions, and that is exactly what my legislation would do by imposing stricter sanctions tied to specific nefarious actions outside the nuclear portfolio.

After months of consultations with my colleagues in the Senate, outside experts, and constituents, I introduced a bipartisan bill, S. 3267, the Countering Iranian Threats Act, on July 14, just before Congress broke for recess. Its acronym, CITA, not only extends the Iran Sanctions Act, which we will do independently today, it also expands sanctions for ballistic missile development, support for terrorism, and other illicit Iranian actions, and it sanctions transfers of conventional weapons to or from Iran—the totality of Iran's dangerous behavior outside of the nuclear portfolio. Specifically, it requires the administration to identify the specific Iranians, persons, or entities that are engaged in these activities and then apply sanctions that freeze their assets and block their international travel and business interests. In this way, the sanctions are surgical and designed to avoid interference with the terms of the Iran nuclear deal.

We must provide leverage to seek necessary change in the conduct of the Iranian regime and hold Iran accountable for meeting its international obligations, including the terms of the JCPOA. We will improve the deplorable human rights situation in Iran and double down on our reassurances to Israel and American allies in the region of our full commitment to regional security.

The fact is, there is much we can do to ensure a bright future undimmed by a nuclear cloud. We must authorize the Iran Sanctions Act that I have authored so that, as flawed as the JCPOA was, in my view, the Iranians will know the consequences of any breach and we will deal with missile proliferation, terrorism, and regional destabilization that is just as dangerous and just as threatening to American security and to our ally, the State of Israel, and our other allies in the region. I hope we will get to that new phase in the next Congress.

With that, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. RUBIO). Without objection, it is so ordered.

OPIOID EPIDEMIC

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I rise today on another topic that is affecting every single State represented here in this Chamber, and that is the opioid epidemic. This is heroin, prescription