

has 4,000 people and 40 bridges. That is a lot of bridges for 4,000 people to try to be responsible for. It is our smallest county, and that is maybe a different debate, but they have 40 bridges. We have many bridges in our State.

The county road-county bridge system has about 50 percent of all the bridges we have in Missouri. The bridge system and the highway system are critical to us if we want to compete. As the middle of the country grows things and makes things, it is a great opportunity for us to get things—not just onto the river system and onto the railway system—all over the country and all other the world. Transportation really matters.

The FAST Act—and I have a hard time saying the FAST Act without thinking how slow the FAST Act really was in getting passed—creates two freight-based programs that allows States to compete for funding for major projects. In a world where we want to compete, we need to figure out how we can compete more effectively. How do you get things to places where they are made into products? How do you get things that are grown and need to be shipped to places? How do you get them to places in a better way? In the life of this bill, the State of Missouri should receive about \$150 million to look at those freight projects because those projects and the effective use of how you get things to places create jobs.

The Missouri Department of Transportation has already developed a State freight plan to encourage strategies. Now this bill makes that plan more of a reality.

The FAST Act also includes some help for our Nation's rail systems. I had a bill, the Track, Railroad, and Infrastructure Network Act, that when you are improving a railroad system, it allows you to have the same kind of streamlining that we were recently able to provide for highway construction. You don't get caught up on something that has to be needlessly litigated for long periods of time when, in fact, what you really need to be doing is getting that highway finished in the highway part of this bill or have the expedited ability for these issues to go to the top of the list and to get resolved so that people can get the things they make where they want to get them. They can get the things they buy quicker than they would get them otherwise. They can get to work, they can get to school, and they can get to the hospital when somebody is sick.

I mentioned that, particularly because we just had floods in our State in the last few days. For a while, Interstate 70, Interstate 44, and Interstate 55—all three—were closed. There was a time when two of those were closed at the same time. They were closed for 24 to 36 hours, and it makes a difference in how people are able to live their lives.

The Federal Permitting Improvement Act that I cosponsored was also

included in the bill. This is a piece of legislation that Senator PORTMAN and Senator McCASKILL introduced. It will now allow better coordination between the deadline setting for permitting decisions—the same kind of thing for highways that we are also doing for railroads—to make this important transportation system work.

Looking at the United States, Winston Churchill once said we were the best located country in the world—an ocean on either side and neighbors that we could deal with north and south. And the ability to get anywhere would be another addition to that location advantage we have.

The FAST Act includes two important provisions to give relief to electricity providers. One is a law that creates emergency route working groups for electricity and other things. If you have a vehicle that needs to get from Oklahoma to Joplin, MO, after the tornado, you don't have to get it especially permitted and authorized to come across that State line in what has been declared an emergency.

The same thing would have happened in recent days in several places in our State close to a border, close to the equipment they need. The flood means there is an emergency. Now those vehicles can cross the State line without having to have the special permission that needed to be received in the past.

Secondly, the Grid Reliability Act that I introduced with my Missouri colleague Senator McCASKILL simply improves reliability. If you have two conflicting Federal agencies—one saying you can only use that plant so much of the time and another saying we have an electric emergency—you have to use every facility you have to provide the electricity that is needed, and that can now be done.

There are many committees of jurisdiction here. The commerce committee that I am a member of is certainly the committee that is focused on infrastructure, focused on ports and other things that I haven't mentioned a lot but that are very important.

I have mentioned at other times on the floor of the Senate that this is one of the great accomplishments of the first year of this Congress that may easily go overlooked, but I can tell you that county officials all over America and State legislative bodies all over America are looking at this bill and figuring out how do we use this as a way to move our transportation system into the 21st century, how do we use this to help provide opportunity, and how do we use this to help provide the kinds of jobs that provide the kind of pay that families need to live on and to live the kinds of lives they would like to live.

I look forward to seeing this bill implemented. I think all of us need to watch carefully to be sure that we are making the most of one of the responsibilities of government. Defending the country and having a transportation system that works are both things that

individuals and families can't do for themselves. I believe the FAST Act gives us a better chance than we have had since 2009 to look at the future with a greater degree of certainty and to work in an area that is critically important for the country but even more important for Missouri and others who live in the middle of these transportation networks, where they come together.

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

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

AMERICAN SAFE ACT

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, tomorrow the Senate will vote on a motion to proceed to H.R. 4038, also known as the American Security Against Foreign Enemies Act. This bill would prohibit the admission into the United States of refugees from Iraq or Syria or any other refugee who has been present in those countries in the last 5 years unless that person receives a thorough background investigation.

The bill would require the Director of the FBI to certify to the Secretary of Homeland Security and also to the Director of National Intelligence that each of those persons has received a background investigation that is sufficient to determine whether he or she is a threat to the security of the United States. Then, as a second provision, the Secretary of Homeland Security, with the unanimous concurrence of the Director of the FBI and the Director of National Intelligence, would have to certify to Congress that each refugee is not a security threat; and finally, it requires the Homeland Security inspector general to conduct a risk-based review of all certifications for the admission of Iraqi and Syrian refugees made by the Department of Homeland Security, the FBI, and the Director of National Intelligence each year and provide an annual report to the Congress.

This bill passed the House overwhelmingly and in a bipartisan manner in November. I intend to vote on the motion to proceed tomorrow. This is a conversation we need to have in the Senate. This is not an issue we can take lightly, despite the plea from President Obama in his State of the Union Address. We cannot allow America's welcome mat to become a doormat for radicalized Islamic extremists who are hardwired to kill innocent people and destroy our way of life.

Unless and until the United States can figure out a foolproof screening process to prevent terrorists from masquerading as refugees to infiltrate our neighborhoods and our communities, President Obama needs to listen

to the concerns voiced by more than half of the Nation's Governors, lawmakers on both sides of the aisle on both sides of Capitol Hill, and the American people from across the entire country.

After the September 11 attacks, we paused our refugee admission program to reassess its security vetting procedures, so there is precedent for suspending the refugee program, and this bill does not suspend the refugee program—only in regard to the single instance that I know; that is, we have been threatened that people were going to be snuck into the country under the umbrella of refugee, and of course that is from Iraq and Syria.

We need to move cautiously in accepting refugees from Iraq and Syria given the attacks in Paris and San Bernardino, CA, and even elsewhere around the world. We need to fully understand the risks and the schemes that these terrorists are using before we open our doors to 10,000 more Syrians. Other countries face the same challenge.

Just last week, the French Interior Minister warned his colleagues about the intent of the Islamic State to use authentic-looking Syrian and Iraqi passports to smuggle its operatives into Europe. There is no doubt that the group has obtained thousands of blank passports and intends to facilitate travel by counterfeiting those documents, but more importantly, we must consider a pause in accepting these refugees until we can be sure our background checks and investigations are the best they can be. However, today there is little doubt, even from our leading intelligence officials that we may not be able to stop a Paris-like attack because we cannot tell who among the thousands of Syrian refugees that the administration wishes to resettle here are terrorists.

The Director of the FBI, James Comey, said: "My concern is that there are certain gaps . . . in the data available to us" in screening Syrian refugees. This data, such as fingerprints, background or biographic information, is crucial for adequate screening of potential refugees entering the United States. Director Comey also said: "There is risk associated with bringing anybody in from the outside, but especially from a conflict zone like that."

The United States has been successful in fighting off many large-scale terrorist attacks on our soil, but of course it only takes one mistake. Just last month, the FBI arrested two individuals who reside in the United States and entered the country as refugees, one of whom was arrested for attempting to knowingly and willfully provide material support and resources to the Islamic State of Iraq and Levant.

A Federal agent testified last week that one of the men charged planned to set off bombs at two Houston malls. I asked for the immigration and criminal histories of these individuals to investigate further and satisfy myself,

and I am still waiting for their response. The concerns are real. The threats are real. We cannot jeopardize our national security simply by rolling out our welcome mat to these terrorists.

President Obama's lack of strategy in Syria has exacerbated this human catastrophe. Similarly, this administration has no inclination or strategy to create conditions where refugees can one day return home safely to their own homes. By housing these refugees, the United States is only aiding in a short-term treatment of this whole massive refugee problem and the problems of warfare in the Middle East while at the same time risking the safety of the American people. We must instead focus on defeating ISIS and alleviating the current humanitarian misery, all while creating a future for Syrian refugees in their homeland.

The No. 1 responsibility of the U.S. Federal Government is to protect the homeland and to secure the country against all threats. Moving this bill on our vote tomorrow is one step we can take to advance this principle and to show our concern that the No. 1 responsibility of the Federal Government is the defense of the American people.

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.

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

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

ADOPTEE CITIZENSHIP ACT

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about the Adoptee Citizenship Act, legislation that will secure citizenship for adopted children. I wish to thank Senator COATS for co-sponsoring the bill with me, along with Senator MERKLEY, and Senator GILLIBRAND is also a cosponsor.

The Child Citizenship Act of 2000 guaranteed citizenship to most international adoptees. This was very important because sometimes children have been adopted, they come over to live in this country for years, and, in fact, for some reason—the paperwork wasn't filed—they do not actually have their citizenship. The problem with that law back in 2000 was that it did not apply to adoptees who were over 18 at the time the bill was passed. I am sure there were some reasons for that, but it really makes no sense because a kid who was 17 at the time and had been legally adopted was no different from a child who was 19 at the time who had been legally adopted.

What our bill does is very limited. It fixes that. The loophole denies some adult adoptees the right to citizenship even though they were legally adopted

by U.S. citizens and raised in the United States. They are over 18, so they have for the most part lived in the United States for a very long period of time. In fact, they were over 18 back in the year 2000.

The bipartisan Adoptee Citizenship Act would fix this problem by giving citizenship to international adoptees—people who were legally adopted, who were 18 in the year 2000 or older—regardless of how old they were when the Child Citizenship Act passed. These adoptees grew up in American families, they went to American schools, they lead American lives, yet adopted children who are not covered by the Child Citizenship Act are not guaranteed citizenship. Because of their lack of citizenship, adoptees have been refused admission to college and turned down for jobs. This constant threat to the life they know is unjust, and this bill would simply ensure that international adoptees are recognized as the Americans they truly are.

The bill is especially important in my home State of Minnesota. Many people don't know this, but Minnesota actually has one of the highest rates of international adoption in the country. Minnesota families have opened their homes and their hearts to children from all over the world—from Vietnam, to Guatemala, to Nepal, to Haiti.

As cochair of the Congressional Coalition on Adoption, I have worked with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support adoptive families and children. Our children—all kids—deserve so much more than a roof over their heads and a bed to sleep in. Each and every child deserves a loving home, a nurturing family, and a brighter future. That is what this bill is all about. It fixes something. It closes a loophole. It has bipartisan support. I ask my colleagues to consider voting for it. There is obviously a lot of interest from adoptees all across the country who have been living with this, through no fault of their own, for years and years and years.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

MAJOR ADRIANNA VORDERBRUGGEN

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I rise today to honor U.S. Air Force Maj. Adrianna Vorderbruggen, who was tragically killed in the line of duty 4 days before Christmas when a Taliban suicide bomber rammed his motorcycle carrying explosives into a joint NATO-Afghan patrol near Bagram Air Force Base in Afghanistan. She was the highest ranking military officer there who was killed. There were several others who tragically lost their lives as well.

Today I had the honor of attending the major's funeral service at the Fort Myer Memorial Chapel. Senator FRANKEN was also there. She was laid to rest with full military honors at the Arlington National Cemetery. She is survived by her wife Heather, her son Jacob, her father Joseph, and her brothers, Dan, John, and Chris. I will