

These Dreamers are Americans in their hearts. They ought to become Americans in the law books as well, and we Democrats will not rest until that happens.

Thank you, and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, some 800,000 people in this country woke up this morning with great uncertainty about their future because of President Trump's reckless, hateful agenda. Young men and women in this country are now unsure if they will be able to finish their college degree in the United States. They are unsure if they can keep their job at the hospital or as a firefighter or serve in our military to fight for our freedom. They are unsure if they can keep their homes or remain with loved ones, and they are scared that this country might break its promise and use against them the very information that they submitted to enroll in DACA in order to find them and deport them. That is appalling, and it marks a very sad time for this United States of America.

President Trump has caused a lot of divisive and disheartening moments since the start of the year, but rescinding DACA is an unusually cruel and heartless move even for this administration, and it flies in the face of so much of what and who made this country what it is. So I am here today, with my colleagues, to urge all of us in the Senate to use this moment of uncertainty and division to do what is right—to come together to defend DACA.

Use your voices for the Dreamers in your States and the many others who are calling and writing and marching in our streets, urging all of us to act for our neighbors and our coworkers, our students, our doctors, our engineers, our friends, and our first responders, who are stepping up at this very moment to protect people from the hurricanes that are wreaking havoc in Texas and Florida to the wildfires that are blazing in the West.

Let's stand behind our colleagues, Senator DURBIN and Senator GRAHAM, who have already paved a bipartisan path forward on this issue and who, just hours after the President's announcement, reiterated that they are ready to get this done. I am too.

There are more than 17,000 young men and women in my home State of Washington who are deeply connected to their communities. They were brought to this country as children. Some of them were so young when they arrived that they did not even know they were not born here until years or, maybe, even a decade later when they went to apply for college or to get a job.

Just yesterday, I heard about a young man in my home State who is very distraught. He was brought to the United States as a toddler. He did not know that he was not a citizen until he turned 16 and went to get his driver's

license. As a result, he signed up for DACA. He got his license and he got a job, and he is now in his second year in a science program at a community college, getting straight A's and hoping to transfer to the University of Washington. Now he is frightened that he is going to lose all of that and be forced to go to a country that he has never known. He says that he does not know anyone in Mexico nor has he been there to visit.

That is just one story.

I sat down with a number of Dreamers in my State. They are ambitious, they work hard, they play by the rules, and they do the right thing. They know one home—America. To penalize them for forces beyond their control is simply not what this country is about.

While President Trump may see ending DACA as a political move to pander to his extreme, hard-line base, I know that the majority of people across this country will stand up and fight back. They will not let President Trump strip away protections or use Dreamers as a bargaining chip for his hateful crackdown on immigrants in our communities or on wasteful border wall spending.

As a voice in Congress for my State, I stand ready to work with my colleagues on either side of the aisle to find a solution so as to honor the 800,000 Dreamers who call America home and to honor the very foundation of our immigrant Nation.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I understand that Senator VAN HOLLEN was going to speak, but since he is not here, I ask unanimous consent to make what remarks I need to in morning business and will yield to him when I am through.

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

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, it is interesting to hear the DACA talk. I think one should take a step back and look and ask: Is it really unreasonable to merely say that so long as we will obey the law, we are going to be all right? I think this President did the right thing when he said: All right, Congress. You take a few months and see if you can come up with some answers. That is a good answer. If that is the case, then that is, maybe, what we should do.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, what I am really concerned about right now is that we are getting ready to do the National Defense Authorization Act. This is something that we will pass. We have passed it now for 55 consecutive years, and it is going to be passed this time. It is important because one of the primary constitutional responsibilities we have is to provide for the common defense of our great Nation, and

recent worldwide events highlight the urgency of this need.

I have spoken numerous times about the grave threat that is posed by North Korea and warned that it would not be long before North Korea could demonstrate the capability of firing an intercontinental ballistic missile that would be capable of reaching the United States. It is not just my saying it; others are saying it. We have a lot of very courageous individuals who have come forth from the military. I am not used to this. I have been here for 23 years; yet I have not seen them come forth and just be clear about the threat that is facing this country.

In April, ADM Harry Harris, the Pacific Command commander testified in front of the Senate Armed Services Committee that it is clearly a matter of when and not if that Korea would develop the capability to strike the United States of America. This has never happened before. In May, Lt. Gen. Vincent Stewart, who is the Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, testified. Actually, he testified before the subcommittee that I chair. He said:

Let me be clear on this point. If left on its current trajectory, the regime will ultimately succeed in fielding a nuclear-armed missile capable of threatening the United States homeland.

We have talked about this being the most threatened position that we have been in in the history of this country. I have often referred to the good old days of the Cold War when we had two superpowers. We knew what they had, and they knew what we had. It was predictable, but it is not predictable anymore. You have countries like Yemen, countries like Iran, countries like North Korea that are developing these capabilities that they now have. It is within reach.

Since then, unfortunately, I have been proven to be correct as the North Korea regime continues to demonstrate its dire threat facing us. On July 4, North Korea successfully launched its first ICBM. It was the first time that they had done it. If fired on a standard trajectory, the missile could have ranged Alaska. Some experts say that it could have gone even deeper into the continental United States.

In light of that test, the Defense Intelligence Agency updated its assessment of the timeline by which North Korea will be able to reliably range U.S. cities—we are talking about Washington, DC—with nuclear missiles as early as the end of next year or even earlier. This past Sunday, September 3, North Korea tested what is believed to be a hydrogen bomb, its most powerful nuclear weapon to date—almost seven times as powerful as the bomb that was detonated over Hiroshima. North Korean media immediately stated that the nuclear test was to determine the “accuracy and credibility” of its “hydrogen bomb to be placed at the payload of an ICBM.”

It does not get any more direct than that. Even if delivered by a relatively

inaccurate ICBM—because they are relatively inaccurate—a nuclear device as powerful as the one that was tested Sunday could devastate its target. Just think about that—7 to 10 times stronger than the one that wiped out Hiroshima. It is important to remember that all of this power is being wielded by an erratic despot, Kim Jong Un.

North Korea's official newspaper relayed the threat of a preemptive strike in April. This is a quote from their newspaper: “[It would] completely and immediately wipe out not only U.S. imperialists’ invasion forces in South Korea and its surrounding areas but the U.S. mainland and reduce them to ashes.” This is a newspaper that is behind this leader over there, and it has made this threat to the United States. We have never experienced anything like this in this country before. Now that we are getting into the NDAA this year, we have to keep this grave threat foremost in our minds, and we are doing it.

I have had numerous conversations with the chairman of our committee, and we are going to make these commitments. We have serious readiness deficits that are going to have to be addressed right away. Over the last 90 days, a spike in accidents across the military services has occurred. I had the CNO of the Navy and the Secretary of the Navy in my office a few minutes ago, and we talked about how they are addressing this thing. It is hard to correlate these accidents with a readiness decline as a result of numerous continuing resolutions and sequestration. It is just another surprise that we have not had before.

Our forces are now smaller than the days of the hollow force. Some of us remember that was back after the Carter administration. It was when our own forces declared that it was a hollow force of the seventies. Yet we had a hearing just the other day, and we had some of the top people in. In fact, it was the vice chiefs of all of the services, and they agreed that our situation right now is worse than it was in the days of the hollow force.

Our Air Force is short 1,500 pilots, and 1,300 of those are fighter pilots. I believe 50 percent of our Air Force squadrons are trained and ready to conduct all of their assigned missions.

The Navy is the smallest and least ready it has been in years. Currently, it can only meet about 40 percent of the demand from regional combatant commanders. More than half of the Navy's aircraft are grounded because they are awaiting maintenance or lack the necessary spare parts.

The Marine Corps is struggling to keep their aging F/A-18 Hornets airworthy. I think the last I heard is that 62 percent of them were not able to address that readiness.

The Army has said that only about one-third of its brigade combat teams, one-fourth of their combat aviation brigades, and one-half of their division headquarters are currently ready. That

is a sobering assessment, and we are again in the most threatened position we have been in as a nation.

The bill that we have presented out of the Armed Services Committee goes a long way toward closing these readiness gaps. Our bill increases end strength and boosts funding for equipment, operations, maintenance, military construction, and it includes a 2.1-percent pay increase for our troops. It also addresses many requirements for the services and combatant commander's unfunded priority lists.

I am also pleased that the Senate Armed Services Committee's NDAA prohibits a Base Realignment and Closure round this year. It is called a BRAC round, which is when they go through and make an evaluation as to what our capabilities are, what changes should be made, and what bases should be closed—decisions like that. The problem with that is if you do this when we have gone through a period of disarmament, as some have called it—and we are in a position right now when we need every nickel that we can have for the military. One thing that is always a certainty is that when you go through a BRAC round, it always costs money for the first few years, and we cannot afford to do it right now.

Our NDAA also fully funds Missile Defense Agency unfunded priorities, which is important considering that, since 2006, the Missile Defense Agency's budget has fallen more than 23 percent. Every amendment that we consider in our NDAA this year should be equally focused on increasing readiness across the Services.

I will wrap up with a quote from General Milley, the Chief of Staff of the Army. This quote is one that we should keep in mind throughout the NDAA process. By the way, I admire our uniforms for coming forth and talking about the dilemma that we are in because it is very difficult for them to do that.

General Milley said it best when it comes to funding our military:

The only thing more expensive than deterrence is actually fighting a war, and the only thing more expensive than fighting a war is fighting one and losing one. . . . We're expensive. We recognize that. But the bottom line is, it's an investment that is worth every nickel.

It is.

I apologize to my friend.

I suggest that this is probably the most significant bill coming up this year, and I think Senator McCAIN said that we are going to be starting on it next week. It has been the most important bill of the year for the last 55 years, and it will continue to be this year.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, at the outset, I say to the Senator from Oklahoma that I agree with his statements with respect to the threat posed

by North Korea, its nuclear weapons program, both the development of nuclear bombs and the most recent explosion, which was a larger yield than ever before, plus their missile program, including their ICBMs. I think it is important that this Congress do its part and act quickly by further economically squeezing North Korea.

I know that the Presiding Officer and Senator MARKEY have a piece of legislation. I, together with Senator TOOMEY, have a piece of legislation in the Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Committee that would further tighten the economic pressure on North Korea. So I hope that the Congress will move forward quickly.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I thank the Senator. I would say only that this is the one thing that we agree on. We disagree on a lot of things in this Chamber, but this is one that we have to agree on and do what is necessary to do our job.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Yes, indeed. I think that that is exactly right. We have 28,000 American soldiers in South Korea and about 50,000 in Japan.

DACA

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, I came here to the floor to talk about the Dreamers, and I do think that it is important to start by making the point that many of those Dreamers are serving in our Armed Forces today. They have put their lives at risk for the only country that they know, which is the United States of America.

It was just shortly after the November election, when then-President-Elect Trump told Time Magazine, when he was talking about Dreamers:

We're going to work something out that's going to make people happy and proud.

He was referring to the Dreamers. He continues:

They got brought here at a very young age, they've worked here, they've gone to school here. Some were good students. Some have wonderful jobs. And they're in never-never land because they don't know what's going to happen.

That is what President Trump said right after the election.

Yesterday, he delivered the cruel news about what would happen 6 months from now if this Congress doesn't act, which is that those Dreamers will be at risk of being thrown out of our country. They will be at risk of being deported from the United States of America.

So the very President who said he was going to do something to make people “happy and proud” did something that was sad and shameful in our country. A majority of Americans agree that it is wrong to deport the Dreamers. Not just majorities of Democrats or Independents but also majorities of Republicans recognize that it is the wrong thing to do.

As President Trump has acknowledged, these Dreamers were brought to the United States as young children.