

policy they can't afford, and when they don't do it, then taxes them with the individual mandate. We repealed that entirely, which will also ensure more take-home pay for America's families.

For America's job creators, this lowers taxes from 35 percent to a much more nationally competitive rate. What that means is, rather than hiring people overseas and keeping that money overseas earned from their labor, they will be now incentivized to bring it back to the United States to build and to hire in America. Right now, we have the highest tax rate in the industrialized world, 35 percent, when the international average for the industrialized world is roughly about 22 percent. We are getting a little below that at 20 percent, and together, with all the other advantages of doing business in America, we believe there will be a flood of money that is repatriated to the United States that is currently parked overseas, along with the jobs and investment that will go along with that.

Now that the bill has passed the Senate, we will soon begin to discuss the bill in a conference committee. This is how we reconcile the differences between the House version and the Senate version. I know there are a few items of concern and that the two versions of the bill differ to some extent, but I feel confident that with the help of Speaker RYAN and the chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, KEVIN BRADY, we can reach an agreement quickly. It is important that we do so, that we reconcile those differences as quickly as we can, because we want to get this bill on the President's desk before Christmas so the people we are targeting relief for—starting from lower income Americans to the middle class, to America's job creators—can begin to enjoy the benefits of the tax cuts and tax reform right out of the gates in 2018.

It is true that our shared goals between the House and Senate are much more important than the small differences in our approaches, and these goals, as we have always agreed on, are increasing the paychecks of American workers and getting the economy working again because, unfortunately, it has become flat and stagnant.

The President has called tax reform rocket fuel, and I think that is right. Our economy has already begun to take off. It is amazing what the American economy will do when it is unleashed from overtaxation and overregulation. We have already seen the consumer confidence at a 16-year high; the stock market is hitting historic highs; people are anticipating the results of the rollback of excessive regulation during the Obama administration and the reduction in taxes, creating a much more competitive environment. It is exciting to see it beginning to happen.

As I said, the GDP grew 3 percent this last quarter, but over the last year it has been about 1.9 percent—so low

that it is really not creating new jobs and certainly not creating new investment here in the United States. This tax reform and tax cut bill will change that. It will keep the American motor running fast and smoothly.

Now, it is my sincere hope that those in the driver's seat, the families and companies great and small, will reach destinations that before maybe they only dreamed of because this is really what this legislation is about. It is not about dollars and cents. It is not just about taxes. It is not just about the government's relationship with its own people, the people who are the heart and soul of this great country. This is about America's standing in the world. Will we continue to be the economic leader and the envy of the rest of the world? Will we continue to be able to have the strongest military and the ability to lead and keep the world safe, as opposed to creating vacuums when we retreat? Those vacuums are then filled by the bullies, tyrants, and dictators who certainly don't share our values.

I am excited about what we were able to accomplish last week, but we are not done yet. We need to get this bill reconciled with the House and put it on the President's desk so all Americans can enjoy the benefits of this tax reform, whether it is a direct tax reduction from their tax burden or being relieved from the onerous tax on poverty in the individual mandate or enjoying the benefit of America's increased competitiveness in the world and incentivizing businesses to invest, hire, and improve wages right here in America. I am excited and optimistic about what the future will hold once we get this on the President's desk later this month.

DACA

Madam President, the next topic I would like to address is something we refer to as DACA. This is the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals. Of course, this is a program that President Obama instituted because he decided to take an end-run around the Congress and tried to unilaterally provide relief to these young adults who came here as children with their parents illegally.

Being a recovering lawyer and judge myself, I can tell you we don't ordinarily hold children responsible for the actions of their parents. So I believe the President's compassion was appropriately placed, but his fidelity to the Constitution and to Congress's role in coming up with a solution was misplaced. So it is now our chance to put the program where it belongs, which is back into the hands of Congress, working with the administration.

As a result of what President Trump decided to do, which is to give this responsibility for a solution back to Congress, some of our Democratic friends are threatening to shut down the government this month, without an agreement on DACA. That is simply a hysterical and cynical ploy, putting

their party and their agenda ahead of the Nation. How can you claim to care about the 800,000 undocumented immigrants this program protects through work permits and deportation relief, but then turn your back on the 322 million people who need to know that their government is still able to function? That is holding 322 million Americans hostage for their political desire to get a solution on their timetable—not on our timetable—and one that if we are successful and able to accomplish in January or February, will be done well in advance of the deadline in March of next year.

Let's all remember the recent course of events. President Trump announced his decision to rescind DACA on September 5 but delayed the decision to take effect for 6 months, giving us a little time to approach this problem thoughtfully and carefully. The chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee then convened a working group to study potential DACA fixes. Finally, last week, Republicans on the Senate Judiciary Committee offered an initial proposal which our Democratic colleagues rejected out of hand, refusing to even make a counterproposal.

The proposal we made included border security, interior enforcement, improvements in the E-Verify system, and a path to legal status for DACA recipients and limits on certain types of chain migration. Members of the Republican caucus, including myself, indicated a willingness to continue to negotiate, saying this was our starting point, but we insisted that any proposed solution must include border security and interior enforcement measures.

Now, as a result of our Democratic colleagues simply rejecting out of hand our initial offer and refusing to negotiate with us, it is fair to say those negotiations are currently at an impasse. By threatening to shut down the government, they are jeopardizing the future fate of those DACA recipients.

We have heard the senior Senator from Illinois, the junior Senator from California, the junior Senator from Vermont all threaten to shut down the government unless they can get their way when they want to get their way sometime this month. Perhaps they are unaware of how dire this ongoing uncertainty is. I come from a State where there are some 124,000 DACA beneficiaries, so I understand what is at stake, and I am committed to doing everything I can to helping provide them some relief, but it is not just my way or the highway. We are going to have to come up with a negotiated outcome that demonstrates our compassion for these young adults who came here as children through no fault of their own and now find themselves trapped.

We need to make sure that, No. 1, we stop or limit as much as we can illegal immigration into the United States, that we enforce our laws, and make sure people do it the right way.

We are the most generous nation in the world when it comes to legal immigration. Our country naturalizes almost 1 million people a year. We are a nation of immigrants, but we are also a nation of laws. That is what our colleagues across the aisle seem to have forgotten about. We will no longer be the great Nation we are if we fail to be a nation of laws.

We need to address the root problems as well. We can't just every few years come negotiate a temporary patch to what is a larger problem. Among them are holes in our porous border. My own State has 1,200 miles of common border with Mexico. We know that our Border Patrol and Customs officials are overwhelmed. There is outdated surveillance and detection technology and a lack heretofore of serious interior enforcement of our immigration laws. We know that our immigration courts are stacked up and badly in need of additional resources.

By playing games and threatening to shut down the government unless our Democratic colleagues get what they want when they want and engaging in stunts to shut down the government, they are only hurting their own cause and the very individuals they claim to be protecting. They are engaging in destructive identity politics and turning their backs on the rest of the Nation.

I hope that those young adults—the Dreamers, they are frequently called—whom I described earlier aren't fooled by the theatrics of those who claim to help them. We all want a legislative solution, and we can find one as long as we quit the game-playing and the stunts and we sit down and negotiate seriously to try to come up with an avenue of relief, one borne by typical American compassion for these young people who find themselves at a dead end and those who believe that we need to get to the underlying causes that caused them to be in this situation in the first place; that is, a lack of appropriate border security and enforcement of our immigration laws. We can do this if we quit grandstanding and quit engaging in these sorts of stunts, and I hope we will.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, we had a press conference in Chicago this afternoon, and several young people were there. One is named Zarna Patel. Zarna is a student at the Loyola University Stritch School of Medicine. She is from a family that came to the United States from India. They brought her here when she was 3 years old.

When she was growing up, she didn't realize that she was undocumented. She thought she was just like everybody else in her classroom, standing up, pledging allegiance to that flag, and singing the national anthem. It was the only national anthem she knew. But then came high school, and she came to realize that she was different. She wasn't documented. She wasn't "legally in America."

Well, she soldiered on with her life and did quite well. She graduated from college with a degree in science. She prayed and hoped the day would come when she could go to medical school. Loyola University in Chicago offered her—and others like her, who were protected by President Obama's Executive order known as DACA—an opportunity to apply for medical school. They didn't get quotas. It wasn't any kind of affirmative action program. It just said you can compete with all the other students. The word got out around America to those who were protected by President Obama's order that there was a medical school that would accept you if you were protected. The net result of that was over 30 were admitted. They are so extraordinary, some of the best. They were admitted to medical school, and she is one of them. It is a great story, really.

She is realizing her dream to become a doctor, but there is a problem. The problem is that on September 5, President Trump decided to abolish DACA, the program that protects Zarna Patel, and in abolishing it—announcing that he would on March 5 of next year—it meant that she would then lose the protection she had under the previous Executive order.

What difference does it make? Well, it means that she is then subject to deportation, but equally important in her life, she loses the right to legally work in America. You say that she is a student and maybe she doesn't need to work. Well, as a student, she doesn't qualify for any Federal assistance because she is undocumented, and as a student in a medical school, to further your education, you need a residency. We know a residency means an awful lot of hours of working in a hospital that is teaching you how to be a doctor and develop your specialty. So you can't have a residency if you can't legally work in America. That means that, after all of these years of work, it is over; she can't apply for a residency.

The senior Senator from Texas came to the floor and said: Let's not have a hurry-up approach to this issue. Let's slow it down a little bit. The President announced on September 5 that he was going to abolish protection for Zarna Patel and for 780,000 others just like her. Here we are, 3 months later, having done nothing.

Many of us feel a sense of urgency because these young people have their lives on hold. They are living with the anxiety and stress of not knowing whether they will be deported tomorrow or can work. It is a simple thing to

many of us as we read about it. It is life and death in the future for these young people.

So when we say to the Senator from Texas that we need to get this done, it isn't like the Senate is overwhelmed with work. I didn't have to come down here and beg for an opportunity to speak on the floor. You can see it is empty, and it has been empty most of the year. We have done precious little this year. I can point to three or four things the Senate has accomplished. We had plenty of time to address this and still do, but it takes a will on the part of the majority to get this done.

I want to thank several Republican Senators who have stepped up to try to help me get this done, especially LINDSEY GRAHAM, a Republican of South Carolina and my cosponsor of the Dream Act, and other Senators who are sponsoring it and trying to move this forward. Senator JEFF FLAKE, last week, announced that his vote on the tax plan was contingent on a conversation he had with the White House about this issue of DACA and the Dream Act.

The senior Senator from Texas comes to the floor and says I haven't really reached out to him or spoken to him about this. He must have forgotten that I handed him this sheet of paper last week. This was our proposal on border security in the hopes that, by being serious about border security, we could get Republican Senators to join us when it came to protecting those who qualified for DACA in the Dream Act. I gave this to Senator CORNYN. He knows it. I like him. He is my friend. But we have to reach the point where we realize that there is a sense of urgency here. I hear the Senator from Texas say: Well, maybe next year we will get around to it. As of March 5, this program ends, and as of March 5, 1,000 young people will lose their protection every single day for 2 years.

What it means for Zarna Patel and others is the end of a dream, the end of an opportunity to pursue an education. She is not the only one. She is 1 of 30 or 32 at the Loyola Stritch School of Medicine. There are 900 of these young people who currently have volunteered to serve in the U.S. military under the MAVNI Program. If we don't renew this program, they are gone. Think of that. They are technically undocumented and illegal in this country. They volunteered to risk their lives for America in service to our country. Now the Senator from Texas says: Well, we are in no hurry to tell them whether they can continue to serve in our military.

As we look across America, we have 20,000 teachers. I met one of those last Friday in Chicago. She is 24 years old, teaching in an inner-city school, and protected by DACA. The minute DACA ends on March 5 of next year, she can no longer legally work in the Chicago Public Schools system. She is finished. Pack up, clean out your desk, and go home.

Is that what we want to see happen across America? We know what these young people are doing. They are going to school. They are working while going to school. They are teachers. They are nurses. They are involved as first responders and law enforcement. They are in medical school.

The Senator from Texas questions why I am in such a hurry to get this done? I am in a hurry to get this done, and he should join me in understanding that there is a sense of urgency here. There are a lot of rumors flying around here. I am not going to honor any of them as to what might occur, other than to say, when we get Senators who are willing to sit down and accept the principle of the Dream Act, that the principle is that those who were brought here as children, who have grown up in the United States, who have no serious criminal charges in their records, and who have completed school have a chance to become legal and become citizens—that is the fundamental of the Dream Act.

It is a bill I introduced 16 years ago. I am still trying to pass it. There are bills that are not identical but are very similar that accept that premise and have been offered twice by Republicans as well.

So if the Senator from Texas will start with the Dream Act, we can then engage in additional conversations about border security. He can take the draft I gave him last week, which includes, incidentally, 12 provisions from his own bill. The Senator from Texas had a bill drafted on border security. We read it. We picked up 12 of the major provisions and included them in our offer to try to get this done in an expedited way.

I will just tell you this. If any Senators want to come to the floor and say it is not that important, it isn't timely, we need not hurry about this, we can get around to it later, I would like them to come home with me. Maybe they should even go home to their own States and meet with these young people and realize that their lives are on hold because we have put this issue on hold.

For goodness' sake, let us face our responsibilities as Senators. Let's do what we are supposed to do—legislate solutions to problems. The President challenged us. He said: I am going to abolish this program; now Congress, you pass a law to create it. He challenged us. Let us accept the challenge and do it in a bipartisan professional way. That is all I have ever asked for and all I continue to ask for.

Yes, I want it done this calendar year. I don't want excuses about maybe next January or maybe next February, because we know that on March 5, when the deadline hits, it will be a disaster for 1,000 of these young people every single day. Yes, there is a sense of urgency. Yes, there is a need for us to work together. I am going to continue to meet with Republican Senators and Democrats to find a solution,

to find a way through this, and to get it done this month in December. How can we, in good conscience, pass a spending bill giving authority and resources to this administration to go out and arrest and deport these young people and not address the underlying issue of their legality and their future in the United States? That, to me, is obvious.

I hope my colleagues, those of good will and good faith, will join me in making sure that we don't go home for the holidays until we get this job done.

BEARS EARS NATIONAL MONUMENT

Madam President, very briefly, the President of the United States went to Utah to announce that he has done something that is going to be challenged in court—and should be—but is virtually unprecedented in the history of the United States. Presidents have the authority, going back to President Theodore Roosevelt, to establish monuments around this country—special land that is set aside because we believe it is important for future generations to have special access to it.

President Obama, before he left office, created the Bears Ears National Monument. It is in San Juan County in Utah. I know a little bit about it. Twenty years ago, I visited this area when it was characterized as the Red Rocks Wilderness, and I introduced a bill to protect it.

Over 20 years, little or nothing happened until President Obama designated a monument. Now comes President Trump, who has made a decision to dramatically eviscerate this monument, to basically eliminate 80 or 90 percent of the land that has been set aside.

It is a beautiful part of America. It is an extraordinary part of America. It is something that most of us know little about, but if you go to the southeastern corner of Utah, you will find tourists from all over the world who come to see the beauty of this region—the Bears Ears region, the Red Rock Wilderness region.

You ask local people: If you didn't set this aside for future generations, if you didn't protect it, what would you do with this land? The people of Utah are the first to tell me: Well, there is not much you can do with it. We don't think there is oil and gas there to be drilled. The uranium efforts have petered out; there is very little of that that is left. There is not much that can be done with it. But if it is preserved, clearly people want to come visit it and be part of this unique American experience.

When I was there just a few weeks ago, there was a group in Moab, UT, in a gift shop. I kind of drew near the group—there were about a dozen of them—and they were all speaking French. These were French tourists who came to this part of Utah not only to spend their money but to see something special.

President Obama said: Let's protect it. Let's make sure that future generations can indeed enjoy it and value it.

President Trump said: No. For 80 or 90 percent of it, let's make it go away.

This is a terrible decision. It is terrible for this section of Utah, it is terrible for our country, and it is terrible for our future. If we do not protect our natural heritage for our kids, grandkids, and their kids and grandkids, then we have walked away from a fundamental responsibility, and I believe we have.

We have a wonderful system across America protecting national parks. If you read the history of some of these national parks, you will know that it was a battle to stop someone who wanted to create a commercial interest there and didn't want it to be protected by the government. In this case, there doesn't appear to be any other economic interest that can really lay claim to this, but there is an effort by the Trump administration to remove the protection anyway. I think that is a serious mistake.

America is not America without its great outdoor spaces—its national parks, its historic monuments—that Congress and Presidents in both political parties have preserved for the benefit of future generations. To diminish our commitment to protecting the natural landscapes and historic places in this country from ruin by exploitation or environmental degradation would constitute a breach of our responsibility both to those who founded this Nation and to those who will inherit it. That is why we are deeply troubled by President Trump's announcement today, which would undermine the preservation of some of the country's most important national monuments and would remove protections for more than 2 million acres of public land—the largest elimination of protected land in the history of the United States of America.

Utah's most cherished national monuments—Bears Ears, which I mentioned, and the Grand Staircase-Escalante—will now be under threat from this new Trump order. Many of these are sacred lands to Native Americans, and they will now be put at risk for desecration and looting. Is that what we want to leave future generations? Is that the honor we are going to give to the lands that were part of the heritage of Native Americans? I think it is a serious mistake.

I hope that some will stand up and speak up about preserving this heritage for future generations.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF ALVIS

Mr. PORTMAN. Madam President, today I am proud to stand here for the