

again for review, and they must stand up for a long-term recovery of an amazing, devastating flood like Hurricane Harvey that had 51.22 inches, 21 trillion gallons of water, and Houston underwater for a period of days.

We must help the American people and Texans.

HONORING THE LIFE OF THOMAS DAY, JR.

(Mr. KIHUEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. KIHUEN. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to remember the life of Thomas Day, Jr.

Thomas loved spending time with his four kids, Whitney, Candice, Kelsey, and Nolan, and his two grandkids. He loved boating with his family, cheering for the Pittsburgh Steelers, and coaching Little League baseball.

He worked as an estimator for Portrait Construction for more than 20 years and was very personable and friendly with everyone he met. His children's friends called him "Daddy Day".

Thomas will be remembered by all those who knew him as a fun-loving and amazing family man.

I would like to extend my condolences to Thomas Day's family and friends, and please note that the city of Las Vegas, the State of Nevada, and the whole country grieve with you.

BRINGING JUSTICE TO DREAMERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. AL GREEN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, once again I am honored to stand in the well of the House of Representatives.

I have been blessed and fortunate enough to stand here and to have the opportunity to vote on some of the great issues of our time. I am proud to say that I was here to vote on the Affordable Care Act, and I am proud to say that I still stand behind the Affordable Care Act.

I was here to vote on the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay legislation. I still stand behind what we did on that great occasion.

I was here to vote on a good many pieces of legislation, but I must tell you, Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to have been here today to see the Honorable NANCY PELOSI as she took a stand for those who cannot be here to stand for themselves. She took a stand for the DREAMers, and not only did she speak for them and stand up for them, she also literally took a stand on her feet for more than 8 hours in heels.

Mr. Speaker, that is a part of history that I will forever remember, and I am proud to have been here, not in the room for the entirety of the time, I

must tell you. A good many of us were afforded the opportunity to go in and out, but she stood there for the entirety of the 8 hours and spoke eloquently about the needs of the DREAMers, spoke eloquently about the things that they have done to make our country a better place, spoke eloquently about how America the Beautiful is a more beautiful America because they are here.

I would like to associate myself with her comments. I believe that she is a part of that *avant garde* that will ultimately bring justice to those young people who came here, not of their own volition, but who came here with someone, some parent, some significant other, some person who had care, custody, and control, and who have done all of the right things, save having been born here, and deserve an opportunity to remain in this country.

So, Ms. PELOSI, wherever you are, I want you to know that I have great admiration for you and I adore you for what you have done tonight.

Mr. Speaker, I am here to also speak on behalf of a constituent, Mr. Jose Escobar. Mr. Speaker, he is my constituent. He lived in my congressional district. I do regret that he has been deported to El Salvador, but notwithstanding the distance between us, he is still my constituent, just as I had a constituent who was detained in China.

Notwithstanding the distance, this was still my constituent, and we fought with her husband and her friends and other Members of Congress to get her back to the United States of America, and she has been returned. The entirety of that time while she was away, she still remained my constituent, just as I have a constituent who is currently in Syria being detained.

We are going to fight to bring that constituent back. That constituent will be my constituent as long as I am in the Congress of the United States of America and that constituent is detained in Syria. My hope is that we will get our constituent back sooner rather than later, but it doesn't matter about the time. What matters is that I am committed to stay with that constituent and make sure that his mother and father believe that we are working with them to bring him home.

So it is, Mr. Speaker, with Mr. Escobar. He is my constituent. He has been deported to San Salvador in El Salvador. Notwithstanding the fact that he has been deported, he is still someone that I am going to work to bring back to this country.

Mr. Escobar came to this country at the age of 15. He was brought here. He came here right around the time the earthquakes took place in January of 2001. While he was here, there was another earthquake that took place on February 13, 2001. These earthquakes devastated El Salvador. There were people who died. Hundreds of people died.

As we do in this country, we offered TPS, temporary protected status, to

those persons who came here from El Salvador who were here in this country. We didn't want to send them back to devastation. We didn't want to put them in harm's way. We are a caring Nation. We showed how much we care by giving them the opportunity to have temporary protected status.

His mother sought temporary protected status for herself and her son. His mother believed that she and her son had temporary protected status. However, Mr. Speaker, later on when Mr. Escobar sought to get his renewal of the temporary protected status, he discovered that a mistake had been made. It is difficult to know what happened, but it wasn't done with any kind of malice aforethought. There was a mistake that was made that could have been corrected, I believe, but it wasn't.

Mr. Escobar did not run and hide. He presented himself. Mr. Escobar went to the authorities. He tried his best to correct this mistake, and in the process of doing this, he maintained a life, and in maintaining his life, he did what ordinary people do, what people do who are young: he married. He married Rose Escobar.

While they were married, they had two beautiful children. He now has a daughter who is 4 years of age. He has a son who is 8 years of age.

□ 1945

His son and his daughter are here in the United States of America, but I regret to inform you, Mr. Speaker, that Mr. Escobar is no longer in the United States of America because on March 7, 2006, he was married, but on March 7, 2006, he was removed from this country. And it was done in such a way as to create great sorrow, great pain, within his family.

At the time of his removal, he was working. At the time of his removal, he was doing all of the things that we expect a man with a family to do. He was taking care of his children. He was a father to his children. He was taking care of his wife, and she was taking care of him. He was a good husband to his wife. He was, by all counts, by all standards, by any acid test, a good American, saving the fact that he was not born in the United States.

But he went in for what he thought would be another visit because he had a work permit, and when he went in to visit the government by and through his agents and immigration, these authorities decided and did what I believe they were ordered to do. I hold no grudge against them. I think they were doing what was required of them. They were doing what they perceived to be their jobs.

And in so doing, they detained him. And in detaining him, his wife left with their baby in her arms. She came believing they would all return home together, but she was separated from her husband, children separated from their father, and she went home and she cried.

But she is strong. She did more than simply cry. She decided that she was

going to fight and she was going to get her husband returned home lawfully. It was a sad day, however, in her life to know that her children would not see their father for some time and did not have the opportunity to say good-bye.

Her son wanted to know: Where is my father? And she had to give an explanation to her son, an explanation that did not meet with the circumstance, but he was young and she did not choose to tell him that agents of the government had taken their father away from them, the son and the daughter.

So she told him that he was away. She allowed him to have the hope that he would return. She was hurt. He was sad. The father was taken away with \$20 in his pocket and the clothes on his back, taken to a country that he had not been in for some 16 years. He had lived longer in this country than he lived in El Salvador. Dropped off at the airport in El Salvador with \$20 in his pocket and the clothes on his back in a country where the gangs are, by definition, terrorists. Legal definition, they are classified as terrorists, where they extort, where they do harm, such harm and such extortion that many people leave the country to save their children and prevent them from becoming a part of the terrorist gangs that roam the streets.

He knew that he had to leave that airport before it was dark; hence, he decided to collaborate with others who were similarly situated. They put their money together and they acquired the services of a taxi to get them out of the heart of the city, to get them out into an area where they thought that they might have some degree of security.

It cost him the entire \$20, but there was someone that he was able to call who met him and took him to a place of safety. Even to this day he does not traverse certain areas. To this day, he does not have the sense of security that you and I have, Mr. Speaker.

So he is still my constituent. He went to El Salvador, not by choice, dropped off at an airport, \$20 in his pocket and the clothes on his back.

His wife came to our office and has asked for our help, and we are going to help, and we are helping. Just this last weekend, I went to El Salvador to see my constituent. I was there to assure him that we are still with him, that we are still working to bring him back to this country lawfully.

He was married, had children. His wife is an American citizen. His children are American citizens. He came here, thought he had TPS—temporary protected status—did not, but did not run, did not hide.

He thought that the President was sincere when he said he was going to go after the bad guys; he was going to go after the criminals. He did not believe that when the President said “criminals,” it meant Jose Escobar who only had a speeding ticket. He didn’t think that that would apply to him, the notion that the President would go after

criminals, those who had committed serious offenses, a traffic offense never thought to be the kind of offense that would get him deported, extradited, evicted from this country after having been here longer than he had lived in El Salvador.

Yes, he came without inspection is the proper terminology, as I understand it. But he came without proper documents, he did. While here, he behaved, complied, thought that he was going to go in for an indication that he was still going to have his job and stay with his family. This is what he thought.

So I went to see him, and his wife was with me. We met with him for approximately 3 hours. We found out that he is still living in a state of insecurity. We found out that he is not able to have the kind of employment that he needs so that he can send money back to take care of his family. We found out that he still has hope, that he still has dreams, that he still believes that he should be united with his family. He believes that this country will still live up to the ideals that we have expressed and extolled. He still believes that those who say that they believe in family values will value the family that he has and will want to see him reunited with his family.

The law says it can be done. We are going to pursue it. We are going to file legislation to ask that my colleagues here in Congress join us in not only helping this Escobar, but all of the Jose Escobars who are similarly situated, torn apart from their families.

We are a country of family values. We have at least one party, and I believe both, but one party that prides itself on family values. How can we allow this kind of atrocity to continue and persist if we are the party that believes in family values? We must do what we can to make it clear to those who don’t understand that we will change this circumstance.

There are some who will say that you can’t get this kind of thing done. I differ. But let’s assume for a moment that it can’t be. I don’t believe this. I believe that we can get Mr. Escobar reunited with his family, but let’s assume for a moment that we can’t.

Then when you can’t, and you know it is a righteous cause, you have got a duty to do all that you can. We must do all that we can to prevent families from being torn apart. This is why I went to El Salvador, to assure Mr. Escobar. This is why I am on the floor of the House tonight, because I want my colleagues to know that we will file legislation to aid, assist, and protect the Escobars of the world.

We are living in some very difficult times. We are living in times now such that people will negotiate with the lives of people, negotiate with the lives of the Jose Escobars. You give me a wall, and I will give you freedom for Mr. Escobar or the Escobars of the world, the DREAMers of the world.

Let’s negotiate. Let’s put their freedom, their liberty, their sense of dig-

nity on the line. You want their dignity? You want them to have a sense of security? Give me a wall. I will trade you a wall for their security and their dignity. These are difficult times.

Voltaire, the great French philosopher, has an adage that reminds us that those who can make you believe absurdities can cause you to commit atrocities.

It is absurd to conclude that we are doing a righteous thing when we separate a father from his wife and children under the circumstances that Mr. Escobar suffers under, circumstances that he, quite frankly, didn’t create himself. He came here as a child—circumstances that we ought to acknowledge and we ought to want to do something about, circumstances that ought to say to us we ought not negotiate with the lives of human beings.

This is a difficult time for our country. This is an absurdity. And remember, people who can convince you that an absurdity is the right thing can convince you to do things that are going to be harmful to good, decent people, harmful to the Jose Escobars of the world.

So I am here tonight on behalf of Mr. Escobar and the many Escobars of the world because I don’t want an absurdity to become an atrocity, a greater atrocity than it is. And I would hope that my colleagues would reconsider this notion of negotiating with the lives of people.

When history looks back upon this, when those who look back upon us through the vista of time, through the window of the years, they are going to see that at this time, in 2018, there were people negotiating with the lives of people and they thought that it was a legitimate thing to do.

I am not going to fight about a wall that really is a false fence of security. I am not going to fight you about that. I am going to believe that when there were other people who were suffering and needed help, there were people who were willing to come forward and make sacrifices for them.

□ 2000

So, with that thought in mind, I want you to know, I may have to make concessions for the lives of people, but I don’t want to negotiate. If there is something that I will vote on, then I will vote, but I don’t want to negotiate when it comes to the lives of people.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that this is a great moment for us, a great moment for us to do something that is more than right, a great moment to do something that is righteous, a great moment for us to demonstrate that we will stand for something so as to cause the world to know that we won’t fall for anything.

We are not going to fall for the notion that you can just play with the lives of people. We are not going to fall for the notion that lives are going to be measured in walls. Lives are going to be measured in how we will impact

family reunification. Lives are going to be measured in how we are going to deal with diversity in the visa program. We are not going to measure lives that way.

I don't think it is a good deal. I think it is a terrible deal. I think it is an atrocity when you offer me the lives of people, but in exchange, I have got to give you \$25 billion, and I have got to change family reunification such that it is not as we know it today, and I have got to guarantee you that you are not going to have to worry about diversity as it relates to persons coming into the country.

I don't think it is a good deal. Someone today said that the President offered a good deal and we ought to accept it. It is not a good deal for me, not a good deal for the people that I represent. I don't like it. I wouldn't negotiate it.

The fact of the matter is, it is not a negotiation. They are asking for a capitulation: either take it or leave it. That is not negotiation. But I still say that we ought not negotiate with the lives of people.

Mr. Speaker, I close with this.

We, who have been charged with the awesome responsibility of representing the many in our society, have got to remember that the greatness of our country is not going to be measured by how we treat those who live in the suites of life, how we treat those who have millions, how we treat those who can buy their way into the country, how we treat those who have done well. It is not going to be measured by how we treat the well-off, the well-heeled, and the well-to-do.

The greatness of our votes and what we do will be measured by how we treat those that Speaker PELOSI—currently minority leader, Speaker PELOSI—spoke of in the Book of Matthew, how we treat the least among us—the least, the last, and the lost. That is really how the greatness of a country is going to be measured. The greatness of America will be measured this way.

And we can play all the games that we want, but in the final analysis, when we have to give that final judgment and receive that judgment, it won't be about how well we treated millionaires and how many tax breaks we gave them. It is going to be: What did you do for those who are not in a position to do for themselves?

Mr. Speaker, I pray that we will live up to the expectations that we pledge allegiance to in the flag: liberty and justice for all.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

LEGAL IMMIGRATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FASO). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. RICE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. RICE of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I would also like to thank the

minority leader, Ms. PELOSI, for her plea on behalf of the DACA recipients. She certainly showed great passion and stamina.

I do wonder, however, why she is so concerned now. This is not a new problem. All of these people who qualify for DACA today had to be here by the year 2007. They were here illegally in the United States during those 2 years when Ms. PELOSI served as Speaker of the House and Harry Reid was the leader of a supermajority of Democrats in the Senate and Barack Obama was President, yet she took no action then.

They could have passed a law, rather than having President Obama sign an illegal executive order, and given the DACA kids a pathway to citizenship, but I guess it wasn't a priority then.

Last month, my home county, Horry County, South Carolina, settled a claim brought by the United States Department of Justice. It seems the Department determined that Horry County wasn't doing enough to accommodate students who couldn't speak English.

One would think that wouldn't be much of a problem in South Carolina. We are a long way from our southern border. But as it turns out, according to the Horry County independent newspapers, 5,511 out of the 44,700 students in Horry County Schools spoke English as a second language only. That is 13 percent of the student body in Horry County, South Carolina.

So the school system agreed to pay a claim by paying \$600,000 to accommodate those students who couldn't speak English. My constituents back home certainly have sympathy for all children—including the DACA children—but before they resolve this DACA issue, they have one condition. They want the flow of illegal immigrants stopped first, and so do I.

Thirty years ago, we gave amnesty to millions of illegal aliens on the promise that we would stop the flow of illegal immigration. Yet here we sit again. Well, fool me once, shame on you; fool me twice, shame on me.

I am willing to try to find a solution for the DACA folks, but first we have to stop the flow. President Trump has made an offer to resolve the DACA issue. I think it is quite reasonable. He has laid out a good framework: number one, secure the border; number two, end chain migration; number three, end the visa lottery.

Personally, I want to add to that list a legal obligation on employers to check the immigration status of the people they hire. This system called E-Verify is already required in many States, including South Carolina. If E-Verify is required and enforced, it will end the practice of coming here illegally for a job.

In return, under the President's proposal, 1.8 million DACA recipients—which is almost three times what President Obama had proposed—would be granted legal status, but no special pathway to citizenship. They would go

to the back of the line like everyone else. DACA recipients are illegal immigrants. Presumably, they were brought here as children by their family members who, presumably, were also here illegally.

But I would like to focus here for a few minutes on legal immigration. You have to differentiate, and people confuse the two. You see, our legal immigration system is quite complex, and most Americans are unaware of the details. But, Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out a few things that are really important for the American public to understand about our legal immigration system.

We accept 1.1 million legal immigrants per year. I would like to refer to this chart for a minute, which I know is hard to see on TV, but as recent as the year 1970, we were accepting 200,000 legal immigrants per year. That number passed 400,000 in about 1980. You can see this big spike. That is when President Reagan promised us that, if we would make the people who were here illegally legal, we would secure this border and we wouldn't have a problem again.

But you see what has happened now, this is legal immigration. It has gone up and up and up to the point now where we are accepting almost 1.2 million legal immigrants per year. If you add on top of that the hundreds of thousands of illegal immigrants coming in that number is much higher than this. This is only legal immigration.

Mr. Speaker, at 1.1 million legal immigrants, there are people who stand up here and say that we are hard-hearted if we don't accept every illegal immigrant who gets across our border. But the numbers say otherwise. The numbers don't lie.

We are very open to immigration. We still go by the motto on the Statue of Liberty. We accept people from all over the world, 1.2 legal immigrants a year. And look at this slide, Mr. Speaker. This is a representation of the top 10 countries in the world that accept legal immigrants.

You will notice on the far side, here is the United States. This is as of the year 2015. We accepted 1.051 million legal immigrants. The next closest was Germany at 686,000. We are almost twice as much as the next one. And if you add the next five together, we are still more than they are.

So anybody who tells you that our immigration system is hard-hearted is simply ignoring the facts. It is baloney. We have the most open system of legal immigration in the world, by far.

Most countries base their immigration system on merit. Ours, on the other hand, two-thirds of our legal immigrants come in based on chain migration. The criteria is extended family, so we end up importing a lot of people that have low education and low skill sets.

Most countries say, look, we want to use our immigration system to become