

years. That is more money to save for a home purchase or a college fund. It is more to save for retirement or to spend on a family vacation. U.S. consumer confidence is higher today than it has been since the year 2000, and, last week, news broke that U.S. manufacturing is expanding at its fastest pace since 2004.

Look, it is not complicated. The bill passed by the Republicans in Congress last year was designed with a very simple philosophy in mind: that when we put more of Americans' hard-earned money back in their own pockets, they will know what best to do with it, that when we level the playing field and take weight off the shoulders of small businesses, they will help their communities thrive, and that when we welcome investment from entrepreneurs and job creators, instead of discouraging it, the economy will respond in kind.

The idea was simple enough, but as we are already seeing, because the Republicans in Congress and the President were able to overcome lockstep partisan opposition on the other side and get tax reform across the finish line, that simple idea is having an extraordinary impact.

#### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

#### CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

#### EXECUTIVE SESSION

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Karen Gren Scholer, of Texas, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of Texas.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The assistant Democratic leader.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

#### DACA

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, today is the day—March 5—the deadline imposed by President Trump on those who are being protected and allowed to stay in the United States under the DACA Program.

It was last September 5 when President Trump's Attorney General held a press conference and said: That is it. The protection that is currently given

to 780,000 young people in America to allow them to stay in this country and pursue their dreams will end on March 5 of 2018—today—780,000 who were brought to the United States as infants, toddlers, children, and teenagers, who have lived their lives in this country, who have gone to school, who have never had a serious run-in with the law, who have gone through criminal background checks, come up with \$500 filing fees, and who were given permission under an Executive order by President Obama to legally stay in this country for 2 years at a time. During that period, they would not be deported, and they would be allowed to work.

Who are these young people? They are known as the Dreamers, although President Trump hates that term. They are known as the Dreamers because they represent young people who went to school in America, stood up in their classroom every day and pledged allegiance to that flag. This is the only country they have ever known. This was to be the country of their future, but at some point in their lives, a member of their family sat down and said: We have to have a serious conversation. You see, we never filed the papers when we brought you to this country as an infant, and right now you are undocumented in the United States of America.

What that means is that any minute, there could be a knock on the door and you and perhaps your entire family would be asked to leave. I introduced a bill called the DREAM Act 17 years ago. Senator HATCH was my cosponsor when I introduced it. The purpose of the DREAM Act was to say to these young people: We will give you a chance. Though you are illegal in the eyes of the law in the United States—undocumented—we will give you a chance to earn your way to legal status, give you a chance someday to be a citizen of the United States. It will not be easy. There is no helping hand for you. If you want to go to college, there will be no Federal assistance for you. You are going to have to make it on your own. You will have to work and work harder than perhaps the person sitting next to you at their desk in high school. See if you can do it. If you can, we will give you your chance.

That is what the DREAM Act said. It passed with a majority vote in the Senate many times, but it never quite made it to 60 votes, which it needs to become the law of the land.

President Obama, when he was a Senator in this Chamber, was my colleague from Illinois. He cosponsored the DREAM Act with me. So the time came when he was elected President, and I wrote him a letter. Dick Lugar, Republican of Indiana, joined me in that letter. He supported the DREAM Act when he served in the Senate. We wrote to President Obama and said: Can you do anything to give these young people a chance, to spare them from deportation? He worked on it for

1 year. Then President Obama came up with something called DACA, a program by Executive order that gave these young people their chance—780,000 of them went through the background check, paid their filing fee, and proved they were eligible.

They were spared for 2 years at a time and allowed to stay in this country. During the course of the campaign, President Trump said many strong words about immigration. We remember them well—it is hard to forget—the words about the wall, words about Mexican rapists, on and on, but he seemed to have a soft spot in his heart for these kids. Many times he would say: We have to give them a chance. They are different.

The very first time I met President Donald Trump was minutes after he had been sworn in. It was at a luncheon here in the Capitol.

I went up to him and said: Congratulations. I want to thank you for the kind words you said about the Dreamers and those protected by DACA.

He said: DICK, don't worry about those kids. We are going to take care of those kids.

That is what President Trump said on January 20, 2017. I brought it up to him several times too. It is an issue that is important to me, but, more importantly, it is an issue that is critical to the future of these young people.

Then, what happened on September 5 of last year, just 9 months after the President was sworn in? His Attorney General held a press conference and said: That is the end of the protection for these young people. As of March 5, 2018, no protection.

Then he challenged Congress. He said: Pass a law. Do what you are supposed to do here in the House and Senate. Pass a law that will protect these young people.

A number of us took up the President's challenge. We had a bipartisan effort, six of us—three Democrats and three Republicans—and we worked through some really hard issues on immigration and on these young people. I want to salute my colleagues who were part of that: LINDSEY GRAHAM, Republican of South Carolina; JEFF FLAKE, a Republican of Arizona; CORY GARDNER, a Republican of Colorado; joined with myself and MICHAEL BENNET, a Democrat of Colorado; BOB MENENDEZ, a Democrat of New Jersey, and we put together an approach that gave these young people protection and a fighting chance to prove they deserve to stay in America.

We felt pretty good about it. The President called a meeting in the White House on January 9—I remember these dates. I will always remember them—with about 25 Members of Congress, Democrats and Republicans, House and Senate. He held an open press conference for an hour, which is unusual and rarely done in the White House.

We talked about DACA and we talked about Dreamers and we talked about

what was going to happen next, since the President had given us a deadline of today, March 5, to do something.

The President outlined what he wanted to see, and then he said in front of the television cameras: Send me the bill, and I will sign it. I will take the heat on this one. That was January 9. So a number of us, the six I mentioned earlier, came together immediately that same day and said: Let's finish this bill, and let's get it in his hands as quickly as possible.

By January 11, 2 days later, we were ready. We reached a compromise, and it truly was a compromise. Parts of it I didn't care for at all, but that is what we do around here if Democrats and Republicans are going to produce something that might become a law. We called the President. We met the President—Senator GRAHAM and I and a number of others, and he totally rejected what we had done. In fact, the President went on to reject five other bipartisan proposals to try to solve this problem.

This is the same President who said on January 9 of this year, "Send me a bill, and I will sign it," who turned down bipartisan option after bipartisan option. He just said no.

We had a vote on the floor of the Senate. It has been about 3 weeks ago now. It was a vote on four different proposals to deal with this challenge. Not one of those proposals received 60 votes.

The one I had hoped for, a bill with a version of the Dream Act, was put together by Senator COONS and Senator MCCAIN and brought to the floor. I remember it had 52 votes. It needed 60 votes. It fell short. The bipartisan compromise led by Senator ROUNDS and Senator KING with the President's opposition ended up with 54 votes—6 votes short of what it needed to pass. Then the President's own immigration proposal came up here on the floor of the Senate. Now, there are 49 Democrats and 51 Republicans in the Senate. The President's proposal came up and got 39 votes—60 votes in opposition. It was a rejection by his own party and the Democrats in the Senate.

So here we are on March 5. The deadline is here. No bill has passed the Senate. The House will not even consider the measure—will not take up any version of the measure. What is at stake? There are 780,000 young people protected by DACA, which officially, by President Trump's order, ends today.

They have one ray of hope, perhaps two. Two courts have said they are going to suspend this abolition of DACA until we hear the arguments of the President's authority in the Constitution. So there is a temporary—and I underline temporary—injunction in place while these cases are pending, but I can tell you as a Member of the Senate and as a lawyer, no one—no one—can predict how long that protection will last. Is it a matter of days or weeks or months, at best?

That is what these young people live with, this uncertainty.

This humanitarian crisis in this country—and I call it that—was created by President Trump on September 5. He has failed to agree to six different bipartisan proposals to solve the problem he created, and now these lives hang in the balance.

Well, who are they? Who are these young people?

I was with one of them earlier today. Her name is Ana Flores. Ana grew up in Aurora, IL, and went to the public schools there. She is a very bright young woman who was brought to the United States at the age of 5 from Mexico by her parents. She is undocumented in America and lives under the protection of DACA.

What did she do with her life?

She went to the Illinois Institute of Technology, one of the best in the Nation, and she won a civil engineering degree there. Clark Dietz is an engineering firm in Illinois that stepped up and said: We want that bright young woman on our staff as an engineer, and they hired her.

I met her for the first time today. She is a wonderful person. She struggled against the odds all of her life. She is protected by DACA, a program that officially, under President Trump's edict, ends today.

Will Illinois be a better State, Chicago be a better city, the United States be a better nation with this young lady and her engineering talents at work for us? Of course, there is no question about it. Why in the world would we ever want to deport someone who has gone through our educational system and excelled like this young lady?

She is not the only one, by any means. This is a photo of Elizabeth Vilchis. She is the 109th Dreamer whom I have spoken about on the floor of the U.S. Senate. She was brought to the United States at the age of 7. She grew up in Yonkers, NY. As a child, she heard about STEM subjects—science, technology, engineering, and math. She decided to make that her life's work. She excelled in math and science and decided she would be part of the future of this country and took on these important subjects. She said: "From that point forward I made pursuing a career in STEM my responsibility, as an American."

During high school, Elizabeth was a member of the Honor Society, the Key Club, the Architecture, Construction and Engineering Program. She was editor of the yearbook and also played on the volleyball team. She graduated high school with an Advanced Regents diploma.

She was then accepted into the Honors College at City University, New York City College.

Remember, these Dreamers—these undocumented students—don't qualify for Federal assistance to go to school as most kids do. They have to find another way to work and save their money or take private loans.

She received a Community Service Award from the School of Engineering 4 years in a row for her work organizing engineering education programs for low-income students. She received a Student Leader Award for her work with an engineering student association. She was named Volunteer of the Year 4 years in a row for managing the Manhattan robotics competition.

I have seen those robotics competitions. A lot of young people in high school do some amazing things in these competitions, and it launches a career and a life in the STEM subjects.

Elizabeth graduated with a double major in mechanical engineering and political science. She worked as an engineer for Samsung for 2 years. Then she founded a nonprofit organization focused on creating funding opportunities for early stage technology startups. Today, Elizabeth's nonprofit has over 700 members. To date, they have raised over \$8 million to grow their companies.

She wrote me a letter and Elizabeth said:

To me DACA is my opportunity to give back to the United States and my family the way I dreamed of since I was 10 years old. It's the ability to help solve the STEM talent shortage after 15 years of preparing for it and being told it was impossible. It's the power to say "No" to going back to the shadows and "Yes" to serving as a role model for young girls across the country who aspire to be engineers and entrepreneurs.

People like Elizabeth are the reason why more than 400 business leaders signed a letter to Congress urging us to pass the bipartisan Dream Act.

The letter says:

Dreamers are vital to the future of our companies and our economy. With them, we grow and create jobs. They are part of why we will continue to have global competitive advantage.

It would be a personal tragedy for us to deport Elizabeth Vilchis, but the decision of President Trump to abolish the program that protects her, sadly, makes that a possibility. If this injunction by the court is lifted, at that moment, there could be a knock on her door—or perhaps on the door of the company that hires her or her engineering firm—and she could be told that her time is up. Under President Trump, she has to leave the United States of America.

President Trump created this crisis. Instead of working toward a solution, he has rejected every bipartisan effort that has been sent his way to save the Dreamers.

What will happen next? Do we have to stand by and watch as these families are divided, as talented young people like Elizabeth and Ana are deported? Is that what we are all about? Is that what the President meant when he told me "We'll take care of those kids"? That is what it has come down to.

It is a sad reality that all across America, hundreds of thousands of these young people now live in fear of deportation. They should be living, as Elizabeth said, outside the shadows and

as part of America and its future. What can we do about it? I am at a loss.

Unless and until this President accepts the responsibility to help us solve the problem he created, I am afraid we will never be able to rally the necessary Republican votes to make this a reality. It is up to President Trump.

In the part of the world that I come from in the Middle West, there is a saying that I am going to clean up a little bit, and it goes something like this: Any old mule can kick down a barn door, but it takes a carpenter to build one. This President has kicked down DACA, kicked it down to the dirt, and this is the day—the deadline that he set. The question is, Does he have the will or the heart to rebuild it?

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

#### ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding rule XXII and the order of March 1, the confirmation vote on the Doughty nomination occur following the cloture vote on the motion to proceed to S. 2155, with all other provisions of the previous order in effect.

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

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I enjoyed listening to the minority whip, and I don't believe the President is as heartless as he is indicating, but the President does want the American laws to be observed. There are ways of getting that done, and I think he is doing some of that to see that it is done. I happen to empathize very much with Senator DURBIN from Illinois and have long been a supporter of the Dreamers.

(The remarks of Mr. HATCH pertaining to the introduction of S. 2495 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I yield the floor.

#### RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

#### GUN SAFETY

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, it is nice to hear my colleague's words. I would also want to mention a few things about the same issue.

Mr. President, it has been nearly 3 weeks since the shooting at Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, FL. Still, unfortunately, the majority leader hasn't committed to any floor time for the debate on the issue of gun safety—no time to debate universal background checks, a policy that over 90 percent of Americans support, including the vast majority of gun owners; no time to debate protective orders to allow law enforcement to temporarily disarm individuals who have shown credible signs of being a harm to themselves or others, especially relevant after Parkland; no time to at least have a debate on assault weapons and high-capacity magazines on the floor of the Senate.

The kids who survived that horrific shooting are speaking up and speaking out and are demanding that we address this issue head-on. I believe they are moving the conscience of the Nation. I met with them. They are fine young men and women. Instead of just cursing the darkness after what they went through with the losses of friends and colleagues they suffered, they are trying to light a candle, urging us to debate and do something real. Yet, the majority leader is moving to a banking bill today with no promise of time to consider a package of commonsense gun safety measures.

We need to debate them on the floor. We can't just try to do one little bill by UC with no debate or put it into some other big bill. This needs a national debate. This issue is consuming America, and for the Senate to turn its back and do nothing, or to try to just slip some minor measure through, doesn't work.

Last week, America watched President Trump whipsaw on gun safety issues in a matter of days. All of America felt pretty good when the President met with a bipartisan group. He seemed to be open to tackling gun safety in a bipartisan way in a nationally televised meeting. Then, the next day, he met with the NRA behind closed doors and seems to once again have backed off.

It is a show we have seen before, and it is getting old. Too many times we have watched the President say the right things when the cameras are on but refuse to follow through the moment they are switched off—oftentimes doing a 180-degree reversal of his position.

On the issue of gun safety, just like the issue of immigration, we could find a bipartisan consensus. It is very possible, but it requires the President to show some leadership, some follow-through, and some consistency. Otherwise, Congress will do what it has done after every mass shooting for the past decade—nothing.

Those brave, young students will be here in a few weeks, having watched Congress do nothing again. What a black mark that will be—lowering the even low ratings of this body.

#### REPUBLICAN TAX BILL

Mr. President, on to another matter, the Republican tax bill. Over and over, we have heard the Republican mantra that their tax bill was aimed at giving working Americans a boost. Yet every analysis showed that when you looked at the actual policy, the lion's share of the tax cuts are going to corporations and the richest 1 percent. According to one study, 83 percent of the benefits from the Republican tax bill go to the top 1 percent of earners.

Don't worry, our Republican friends say, that money will trickle down to workers, but trickle-down economics has never worked. It has failed time and again. Most of our Republican colleagues are even afraid to admit that the majority of the tax cuts go to the very wealthy. They simply say it is

helping working people, but their mechanism of trickle-down is something they will not utter in public.

Instead of giving workers major wage increases, hiring new workers, or investing in new equipment and research, the most popular use of the savings from the tax bill for corporations is corporate share buybacks. That is from the big corporations. Already, big corporations have announced more than \$200 billion in share buybacks this year. We just started March, and already, corporations are on pace to spend over \$1 trillion this year buying back their own stock.

The problem here is, share buybacks don't really help workers. They don't really help grow the economy. They are a quick way for a big corporation to take more of their stock off the market, raising the value of the shares. Who benefits? Well, corporate executives who own lots of these shares and wealthy shareholders who hold the vast preponderance of the shares.

As one economist told Bloomberg, "You're not going to get the macroeconomic benefit the administration thought it was going to get from its tax cuts. It's going to go to the areas that don't stimulate growth," namely, buybacks, dividends. An analysis by Just Capital, which the New York Times called "one of the most detailed accountings to date" of how companies are spending the windfall from tax reform, finds that "just 6% of capital allocated so far is going to [employees], while 58% is going to shareholders in the form of dividends, share buy-backs, or retained earnings." That is 6 percent for the workers and nearly 60 percent to share buybacks and other corporate benefits.

Today, the Joint Economic Committee, led by our wonderful ranking member, Senator HEINRICH, pointed out that if you distributed the savings that went to just one big company—Berkshire Hathaway, which gained \$29 billion as a result of the tax bill—you could give a \$1,000 bonus to 29 million Americans.

This is amazing. That is the equivalent of every employee in Arizona, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Missouri, Nevada, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia combined from just one company's worth of savings. The public is beginning to realize what is going on here. They see they are putting their children and grandchildren into deep debt, not to benefit themselves, the workers, preponderantly, but to benefit corporate leadership, owners of shares—the vast preponderance of whom are in the top 10 percent of American wealth.

Corporations are not putting the vast preponderance of the money where they should be—raising the salaries of workers or increasing productivity of the company by investing in new machinery and new techniques. No; it is that quick hit, the stock buyback.

It goes to show how beneficial tax reform could have been if it were aimed