

Our Democratic friends say they are proud of a record in which urban centers like New York and San Francisco thrived, but most other areas slipped behind. I wouldn't be proud of that record. Republicans wouldn't settle for that kind of outcome. That is why, as soon as this President and this Congress took office, we began implementing an inclusive, pro-growth agenda to reignite prosperity in every corner of our Nation. We cut taxes for middle-class families and small businesses. We repealed one burdensome job-killing regulation after another. We are grabbing every tool we can find to make life easier for middle-class families who were neglected by the previous administration's policies.

One prime example is our colleague Senator SCOTT's provision in last year's historic tax reform. His legislation lets economically depressed communities across the country be designated as "opportunity zones," earning special tax treatment to make investment and job creation more attractive. In effect, this piece of tax reform will help struggling American communities set up big neon signs saying "We are open for business."

Just yesterday, in my State of Kentucky, Governor Bevin announced the certification of 144 opportunity zones. My friends and colleagues on the State and local level are excited and optimistic again. This creative policy, along with the rest of tax reform, has the Kentuckians I serve looking forward to a brighter future. More States are following suit.

From the West End in Louisville and distressed areas in Eastern Kentucky to Stockton, CA, and everywhere in between, this Congress will have helped deliver new opportunities and new hope to many of the most vulnerable communities all across our country. All this progress—all because Republicans overcame lockstep partisan opposition and passed this historic tax reform law.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The assistant Democratic leader is recognized.

REMEMBERING DANIEL AKAKA

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, last Friday, America lost a good and gracious person, a statesman, and many of us in the Senate lost a personal friend.

Senator Daniel Akaka was as kind and decent a man as you would ever meet in life. For 3½ decades, Danny Akaka served the people of Hawaii in the U.S. Congress with dignity, humility, and deep caring.

The Hawaiian concept of "aloha" isn't a quality that many think of when they think of politicians. "Aloha" means mutual regard and affection. It means extending warmth and caring with no obligation in return, no strings attached. Danny Inouye, that giant of Hawaii and its history, once called Danny Akaka "a true ambassador of aloha."

When Danny Akaka announced in 2011 that he would not run for reelection to the Senate, then-Hawaii Governor Neil Abercrombie said:

The words aloha and Akaka are interchangeable. Daniel Akaka is Hawaii.

Now, at age 93, Senator Akaka is gone. I first met him in 1983. I was a newly elected Member of the U.S. House of Representatives. Then we sat together on the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, the two of us next to one another down at the far end of the table. Danny had 6 years' seniority on me. We served together, worked together, laughed together, traveled together, and came to be friends.

Here was a man, a great politician, who didn't have a personal ego. Politics was always about someone else, about helping other people. In fact, he went out of his way to avoid the spotlight. But don't think for a minute that he was weak. I have memories seared in my mind—certainly October 11, 2002, when 22 Members of the Democratic caucus in the Senate voted against the resolution authorizing President Bush to invade Iraq—the Iraq war resolution Danny Akaka opposed. I can recall that it was nearly 1 in the morning when that rollcall ended and he left the floor after that historic vote. Soft-spoken, yes. Capable of making hard, meaningful, courageous decisions, certainly. That was a lonely road. I believe history has judged it to be the right vote.

Danny Akaka's vote, like so many, was deeply influenced by his own experience in the U.S. military. At 17 years of age, he witnessed the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. Two years later, after serving as a welder and diesel mechanic with the Army Corps of Engineers, he entered Active Duty with the Army and served in several areas across the Pacific.

After the war, he used his GI benefits to go to college, and only later did he realize he was still carrying a wound from that war—post-traumatic stress disorder. He said that earning a bachelor's and master's degree in education and working as a public school teacher and principal—his first profession—helped him to cope with PTSD.

In politics, his second career, he used his influence to help other members of the military, veterans and their families.

In 2008, as chairman of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, Senator Danny Akaka cosponsored the post-9/11 GI bill of rights. That new GI bill of rights included a provision that I asked Danny to include to improve care for veterans wounded by another of the often-invisible wounds of war—traumatic brain injury. Senator Akaka's leadership helped to pass that important new law.

Two years later, then chairman of the Veterans' Committee, I appealed to Danny Akaka again for another provision. It was an idea actually authored originally by Senator Hillary Clinton of New York. It was called the Caregivers Program. The idea was to allow family members of disabled veterans to care for them at home, to provide nec-

essary medical care and support in a home setting that they all wanted to be in. It was the right thing for our veterans, the right thing for our budget, and the right thing for America. Danny Akaka embraced it and became a leader on the Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of 2010, providing those family members with training and modest stipends. The stipends amount to only a fraction of what would have been spent on these veterans had they been in a different setting sponsored by the government.

Well, Danny Akaka is gone, but his legacy of service lives on in millions of veterans and military families whose lives are better because of his quiet but fierce commitment.

In 1996, Senator Akaka spearheaded an effort to require reevaluation of the service records of Asian Americans who had fought in the 442nd Regimental Combat Team and the 100th Division during the war.

As a result of Danny Akaka's perseverance, almost two dozen Medals of Honor were bestowed posthumously on Asian-American veterans, many of them Japanese Americans. The most prominent recipient was his colleague, Senator Danny Inouye, who had lost an arm during World War II fighting for the United States in Italy. It was a long overdue justice for heroes whose courage had been largely ignored for decades because of racism, and Danny Akaka helped to make it happen.

In 1993, Danny Akaka helped to bend the arc of the moral universe another time when he and Senator Inouye successfully pushed through a resolution in which the Federal Government apologized for its role in overthrowing the Hawaiian monarchy a century earlier.

As a child, Danny Akaka listened to his parents speak their Native Hawaiian language in whispers. They didn't want Danny and his seven brothers and sisters to hear them because of the Territorial law allowing children to be punished if they spoke their Native Hawaiian language in school. That little boy, little Danny Akaka, grew up to be the first Native Hawaiian ever elected to the U.S. Senate. Danny Akaka was a champion of Native Hawaiians and Native Americans, a champion of good government and the men and women who do that work in government.

He was a deeply spiritual and religious man, who once considered following his brother into the ministry but instead decided to help others in his own way as a teacher and a public servant. His was a life well lived.

Last night, I had a telephone conversation with Danny's wife, Millie Akaka—what a team, 69 years of marriage. They were just a few weeks away from celebrating their 70th anniversary. They were inseparable. He was the Senator, but she was the driving force in his public career. She managed every one of his campaigns. She knew everyone in every direction. She never forgot a name, and she was always

there to finish his sentences. We talked for a long time last night about the times when we were able to get together—my wife Loretta, Millie, and Danny—and the good times we had and the great people we met in the process. I also talked about the time when Danny came before the Senate Democratic caucus luncheon. We used to have a great tradition, where every few weeks Senators would get up and just tell a little bit about their personal lives—things that don't make the headlines.

I still remember Danny Akaka's presentation. He talked about growing up in a very modest family but having a mother with a very caring heart. His mother just couldn't stand to see someone who was struggling to find a home or a meal. She was always inviting someone in. Even though they didn't have a lot themselves, they were always sharing with people. She would say: Bring them over to dinner, Danny. Let's meet them.

Then, after they met them, they would offer them a room. Danny told a story of people who came and lived in his home with him—perfect strangers who became part of their family and lived with them for months and even years. Some of those people whom they befriended went on to greatness. One was a medical doctor who became famous and never forgot the kindnesses extended by the Akaka family.

His mother's lesson was learned by Danny Akaka. It was shared with us in the Senate. It was an indication of truly a caring heart and a person who was really prepared to serve every day of his life.

I join my colleagues in expressing our condolences to Danny's wife Millie, to their five children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. May your love and memories be a comfort in this time of loss.

To my friend, Senator Danny Akaka: Aloha and mahalo. Farewell and thank you.

DACA

Mr. President, I have come to this floor over 110 different times to introduce to the Senate and to the people who follow our proceedings remarkable people who live in the shadows of America. These are Dreamers—children who were brought to this country by their parents, some at the age of 2 or 3. They were brought into this country perhaps on a visitor's visa and stayed. They grew up in America. Then, when they were 10 or 12, in some cases, their mother and father sat down and said: We need to tell you the truth about who you are and where you are.

These children are undocumented. Their parents didn't file the necessary legal papers. They live lives without a country. They have grown up here. They always believed they were Americans. They went to our schools and stood every day in class and pledged allegiance to that flag. They really believed they were part of America, but legally, no, they were Dreamers.

I have tried for 17 years now to pass legislation to give them a chance to earn their way to legal status and citizenship. I have had some luck from time to time, but we have never quite been able to find the necessary votes in both the House and the Senate in the same year.

A number of years ago, I appealed to my former Senate colleague, Barack Obama, and asked President Obama to do what he could to help these Dreamers. He created a program called DACA by Executive order. Under DACA, these young people could come forward, submit themselves to a criminal background check, pay a filing fee, and be protected from deportation for 2 years at a time. They had to renew this. So if there was any problem, they could lose their protection. That DACA Program finally brought 800,000 Americans—people who live in America—out of the shadows under the protection of DACA.

Initially, we thought new President Trump was going to give these young DACA recipients a break. He said a lot of kind things about them, even though his rhetoric about immigration has been very harsh. He said good things about them because he realized, as all of us do, that many of them are victims of unfairness and injustice and they should be given a chance to prove themselves and be part of America's future.

But then, on September 5 of last year, President Trump reversed himself. He announced that he was eliminating DACA, eliminating the protection these young people have. He challenged Congress and said: Come up with a law that protects DACA and Dreamers. I accepted the challenge and so did LINDSEY GRAHAM, the Republican Senator of South Carolina. We put together a team of six Senators—three Democrats and three Republicans—and worked for months to come up with an alternative that would protect the Dreamers, protect those who are under the DACA Program.

I think it was a good proposal. I think it was balanced. Parts of it I didn't like, and parts of it I did. That is the nature of a political compromise. It was bipartisan. We took it to President Trump, but he rejected it. He just rejected it.

There we were, emptyhanded, coming to the floor of the Senate a few weeks ago for four different votes to try to solve the DACA crisis. None of our proposals passed. The one with the most votes was the one Senator GRAHAM and I worked on and brought to the floor with Senator KING and Senator ROUNDS. It even included the President's wall. Some of us think this is a crazy idea, a waste of taxpayers' dollars, but we were prepared to say to the President: If you would give 1.8 million of these Dreamers a path to citizenship, we will at least start building your wall—one that was supposed to be paid for by Mexico. President Trump rejected it. He rejected it. March 5

came and went. The deadline for DACA ended, and protection under DACA started disappearing.

There were court suits that were brought. Two Federal courts stepped in and issued injunctions. They said to the President: Stop the threat of deportation against these DACA-protected young people. Two of those injunctions now stand, and under those our Federal Government—the Department of Homeland Security—is allowing those who were once protected by DACA to renew their status. Of course, those who were newly eligible—for instance, reaching the age of 15, which is the age of eligibility—can't sign up. But if you were in the 800,000 protected, you can renew your DACA protection by these court orders.

So how long are these young people going to be protected? We don't know. That court protection could end next week, next month, or 6 months from now. We just don't know. So they live in absolute uncertainty with the danger that at any minute DACA protection ends and they can be deported.

When I have come to the floor to tell their stories, people understand that these young people are extraordinary. Think about growing up as a teenager and all the uncertainty and challenges and things that come to your life. Imagine doing that with the knowledge that at any minute you could be deported or some misstep by you might deport your entire family. That is what these young people have grown up with. Yet they are determined. They are resilient. Some of them are nothing short of amazing on what they have done with their lives.

I have come to the floor to tell their stories so you could attach a face to them, to the issue. DACA isn't just another government program. It turns out to be something that is significant in their lives.

Today I wish to tell another one of those stories about another one of these Dreamers. This lovely young lady here is Gloria Rinconi. Gloria Rinconi is the 113th Dreamer whom I have had the honor to introduce to the Senate and to those who follow our proceedings.

Gloria was brought to the United States at the age of 1 from Mexico. She grew up in North Carolina and in Texas. Her family had so little money that at one point her parents slept on the floor of a trailer. Gloria slept on a makeshift bed made out of a piece of cardboard and a blanket.

Gloria's parents told her she was undocumented, but "you are loved by many regardless of what you might hear on TV."

Her family was poor, but Gloria was a hard worker and an extraordinarily good student. In high school, she took advanced placement courses and was a member of the National Technical Honor Society. She received the Tyler Independent School District Student Award. She was active in extracurricular activities, worked on the