

harbors, including Mobile Harbor in Alabama, Savannah Harbor in Georgia, Long Beach Harbor in California, and many others across the country.

We hear a lot of talk about infrastructure and the need to do something about it. Well, this bill does something about it for 5 straight years. We are spending all the money we have collected—and, in fact, we raised the revenues a couple of years ago—for the last few years at record levels to improve our inland waterways and deepen our ports.

A key pillar of our national defense is a strong nuclear deterrent. That has been in the news these last few weeks because of the President's discussions with the leader of North Korea. The bill includes a total of \$14 billion for the National Nuclear Security Administration, including \$1.9 billion for six life extension programs, which fix or replace components and weapons systems to make sure they are safe and reliable. Congress must maintain a safe and effective nuclear weapons stockpile and keep big construction projects on time and on budget. This bill achieves those goals. Nuclear power is our best source of inexpensive, carbon-free baseload power. It is important for our national security competitiveness. Nuclear power provides 20 percent of our Nation's electricity, more than half of our carbon-free electricity.

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission, which oversees our 99 nuclear power reactors, is also funded in this bill. We included funding to ensure that the Nuclear Regulatory Commission is prepared to review applications for new reactors, particularly small modular reactors and advanced reactors, and to extend the licenses of our existing reactors if it is safe to do so.

The bill also provides \$47 million for research and development at the Department of Energy to support existing nuclear reactors, \$30 million for the Consortium for Advanced Simulation of Light Water Reactors, and \$30 million for the transformational challenge reactor.

The legislation again includes a pilot program to allow consolidated nuclear waste storage that I have worked on with Senator FEINSTEIN for the last 6 years. This has been a special priority of the Senator from California, as it is of mine. Funding is also included for the Department of Energy to take the first steps toward being able to store nuclear waste at private facilities.

Tomorrow, Senator SHELBY and Senator LEAHY will formally begin the process of the appropriations of the Senate for the year that begins October 1. As I said at the beginning, this is our opportunity to do it right—something we haven't done in a long time.

We have done our work in committee. We have gotten our bills through. We had our hearings. We considered everybody's ideas. But that is just 31 of us. What about the other 69 Senators? They might like to have more of a say when the bill reaches the floor.

What we are asking tonight is that Senators and staff read the bills. We don't have 2, 3, 4, or 5 days to sit around and read the bills. Senator MCCONNELL would like for us to be through with this bill this week.

We have 12 appropriations bills to consider. We ought to be able to do that in 2 or 3 days. If we read the bills and decide which amendments haven't already been considered and file the amendments tonight, tomorrow we can ask consent for a time agreement of, say, 20 minutes and give each side 10 minutes to speak, and then we can actually vote on the amendments. That is what we are supposed to do.

Sometimes the U.S. Senate has been like joining the Grand Ole Opry and not being allowed to sing. It is rare that we have an amendment. The appropriations process is a chance to do that. I hope we will have a chance to do that.

I wish to make one other plea to my fellow Senators. The Senate has enormous power. Each Senator is equal. As a result, when the majority leader gets up and says we are going to start tomorrow with a prayer and this bill, and then we are going to move to something else, he says, if you listen carefully: I ask unanimous consent that we open tomorrow at 9:30. I ask unanimous consent that we move to this bill.

He gets that. He gets that because Senators recognize that although any one of us could have stopped that by objecting, we demonstrate some restraint. Just because you have the freedom to do something doesn't mean you should always try to do it. We learned that in kindergarten. We are well past that level now; we are in U.S. Senate.

I am hopeful that we can begin tomorrow with our speeches from at least eight of our Senators who have been working on this bill, including our leaders. I am hopeful that we will have a couple of amendments to vote on before lunch—bipartisan amendments—maybe a couple more after lunch, and maybe two or three more in the late afternoon. That is up to the Democratic leader and the Republican leader to finally decide, but I think the chances are good.

I will ask all Senators and staffs who are paying attention tonight, please read these three bills. If you have amendments that need to be considered that are relevant to the bill, please file them tonight or first thing in the morning. Talk with our staff, and let's see if we can accept them, modify them, and, if necessary, vote on them. Let's try to get that done this week and show ourselves and the world that the U.S. Senate is still capable of a complete appropriations process. After all, that is our most basic responsibility.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that for the purpose of rule XVI in relation to the substitute amendment No. 2910, division A of H.R. 5895 serve as the basis for defense of germaneness for division A of the amendment, division

B of H.R. 5895 serve as the basis for defense of germaneness for division B of the amendment, and that division C of H.R. 5895 serve as the basis for defense of germaneness for division C of the amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SULLIVAN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. ALEXANDER. I see the Senator from Hawaii. I don't know whether he has any remarks to make.

I see the Senator from Oklahoma.

#### MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

The Senator from Oklahoma.

#### IMMIGRATION

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, earlier this year, this Chamber was full of conversation about immigration. We had four bipartisan proposals that all came to this floor. All four of them had votes. All four of them had some engagement from different Members. All four of them failed. While we didn't succeed in getting something passed and resolved on immigration, I will note that over 70 Senators voted for at least 1 of the 4 options that included wall funding, increased border security, and naturalization for those students who are in DACA or DACA-eligible. At least 70-plus Senators voted for those three options. They were written in different ways in each bill, but they all had the same basis. I was one of those.

Like many of my friends on both sides of the aisle, during the debate, I said that Americans don't hold children accountable for the actions of their parents. It has been a basic principle we have held for a long time. We believe in the protection of children and the unity of families. That is what we have been about. We have some debate about that because some of this body believes a child is not a child until you can see them, and some believe a child is a child even when they are in the womb. But we do have unity about those individuals—that when we can see them and know them as a child, that we keep them as a family. Although you could strongly put me on the side of saying I think a child is a child even when they are in the womb.

It is right for us to focus on families. Quite frankly, it is also right for us focus on immigration law and to believe that we are a nation of laws.

We have a great dilemma at this point happening around our border. Let me set some context for this that I think is important, and I want to make sure people understand.

We are a very open nation for immigration. We have been before, and we are now.

Last Friday, I had the wonderful opportunity to speak at a naturalization ceremony in Oklahoma City and watch people from all over the world take the oath, set aside their old country and become citizens of the United States. I dare anyone to go to one of those events and try to keep a dry eye. It is incredibly moving to watch people have this event happen in their life that they will never forget—they become an American. They didn't just come to America; they are Americans. They have the exact same rights as anyone else in this Chamber and live under the same law.

Now, 1.1 million people a year become naturalized citizens of the United States. Each day, 500,000 people legally cross the border from Mexico into the United States. We still have a debate on what happens with those other individuals who aren't the 1.1 million who legally go through the process to become U.S. citizens or the half a million people a day who legally cross into the United States. What do we do with those individuals who choose not to do it legally? It is a much smaller number, but it is exceptionally contentious for us because we are a compassionate nation, but we are also a nation that believes in following the law—rightfully so. In fact, many people are fleeing from countries where the law is ignored to come to a country like ours.

How did we get here? When a family is detained for illegally crossing the border, the Department of Homeland Security has a longstanding policy. It is not just for this administration; it is longstanding policy not to separate children from their parents unless there is one of three things that occur: DHS can't establish that the adult traveling with the child is actually the guardian of the child or the parent of the child. The second one is that they believe the child is in danger—for instance, if there is a belief that the child has been trafficked or abused. The third one is that the individual who is traveling with the child—parent or guardian assumed—is being prosecuted for a crime. Those are the three instances in which you separate children from their families.

Throughout the last administration to this one, those individuals were prosecuted, but the difference is, this administration has now determined that they are going to prosecute more individuals when they cross the border. The previous administrations would look the other way. They would see individuals crossing the border, and they would say: If they haven't committed some other crime besides crossing the border—they would look the other way and allow them to come in, or they would say: Here is what is called a notice to appear, and you can go into the interior of the country and live in the United States, but show up for a court hearing a year or two from now in someplace that you want to go to.

The problem is, as the Trump Administration has noted, that the vast ma-

jority of those individuals who were given a notice to appear at a future court date never show up for that court date and they live illegally in the United States.

Again, they are not one of the half a million people who each day cross legally into the country; they are the small group of individuals who chose to illegally cross into the country. They are given the notice to appear and then don't appear.

The Trump administration is struggling with this right now and trying to figure out what to do in that situation. Well, their decision was to say: Zero tolerance. We are going to prosecute those individuals who come. Rather than just give them a ticket to, in the future, come to a court date, let's do the date right now.

The problem with that is, as soon as you press charges on that individual, you get one of those three criteria that kicks in immediately. As soon as charges are filed on the adult—not on the child but on the adult—the adult is taken to have charges filed on them and start going through the legal process. There is a requirement to separate the children then, and the children go to what is called the least restrictive environment. Usually that is with a family member somewhere in the country, but it is usually 2 months or so before we can get that child to someone else in order to help them go with a family member.

That is a mess. It is something that occurred based on the decision of the adult who brought the child and the decision of the adult to illegally cross the border, but it is still a mess. We as compassionate Americans absolutely detest watching families being pulled apart.

As I have said, the Department of Homeland Security—our default every time should be to keep families together unless there is absolutely no way to do it. Families should stay together. These are individuals who are fleeing from whatever country or are coming for economic benefit. They should face the consequences of illegally crossing the border rather than doing it the right way—legally—as hundreds of thousands of people do every single day, doing it the right way. But we should try to keep families together if at all possible.

The question becomes, Now what? Since the policy change of May 5, there are about 2,200 families who have crossed the border since May 5 who have been picked up. About 2,200 adults have been taken one way, and their children taken the other way. It is very difficult for our Nation to watch. As a father, I absolutely believe in every fiber of my being that children should be safe and kept with their own families in a loving and healthy environment. Yet now we are in a tough spot so let me try to review and make some recommendations of what we can do about this.

In 1997, there was an agreement called the Flores settlement. The Flo-

res settlement was an agreement between the Department of Justice and a group of immigrant minors. It stated the Federal Government must release to their parents or guardians, without unnecessary delay, migrant children who are being held in Federal custody. In this case, the parent or guardian is under criminal prosecution, so the Federal Government can't do that. The next thing they have to do is to find the least restrictive environment in which to release this child, which is based on this 1997 agreement.

This is not a new issue. Every administration since 1997 has tried to figure out what to do with it. The previous administration, as I mentioned, just released people—adults and children—into the interior of the country because it didn't know what to do with this agreement. There is a way to resolve this and help keep families together no matter what their statuses are as they are working through this process.

In fact, I believe in it enough that in one of the proposals I brought to this body to vote on in February, when we were dealing with immigration as a whole, there was an agreement to resolve Flores. We have voted on this already. I had folks as recently as today say to bring a piece of legislation to fix this. I smiled at them and said I did 4 months ago and that we voted on it as a body. This is not a new issue. It has not just popped up since May 5, as the Trump administration has focused on prosecution. This has been an issue for a couple of decades.

Solving the Flores loophole is exceptionally important to us in our immigration conversation because there are no simple answers to it until we resolve this issue. When the Court requires us to separate children from families while they are under prosecution and to find the least restrictive environment to ship children, it makes for this convoluted, bureaucratic, painful separation of families. I don't think that was the Court's intention, but it has clearly been the result of that since 1997, and now it is happening more. It has happened before in the past, and it will continue to happen until we solve this. In February, we brought up the need to continue to debate and get this done. We have tried this before. Let's keep focusing on solving this.

In the meantime, it is my recommendation to this administration that before there is prosecution, it offer to families the opportunity to do volunteer returns. Currently, if you are from Mexico or if you are from Canada and you illegally cross the border, you have the opportunity to have what is called a voluntary return, meaning that you don't go through all of the prosecution. You know you are in the country illegally, but you are not quite at the point of having charges filed against you. You have that opportunity, and you take that opportunity.

I think, before it files charges, the administration should offer to every

family who comes across the border the opportunity to keep its family together instead of going through this painful separation from any kind of prosecution that would happen regardless of that prosecution occurring. Give families the opportunity to stay together, make a decision on what they are going to do together, and get this done. That is something the administration can do.

Short of that, I absolutely believe Kirstjen Nielsen, who is our Secretary of Homeland Security, is exactly correct when she says this is Congress's fault. Congress has had the opportunity for a couple of decades now to fix this, and Congress, for a couple of decades, has said that it is not a problem, it is not a problem, it is not a problem.

I and several other Senators and quite a few House Members have continued to weigh this issue and say it is a problem no matter how it is used. Whether it has been used with heavy prosecution or light prosecution in previous administrations, it has always been a problem. Congress has had the ability to fix it, but Congress has been unwilling to do it. It is time for Congress to step up and do the job it is supposed to do—take the votes it is supposed to take.

I am very aware these issues are difficult and technical and emotional, but these are real lives that are mixed into this—individuals who were created in the image of God. They have value and worth. Families are affected by this. Congress needs to step up, take the votes, and actually do the task that needs to be done. The administration is right in that this is Congress's problem and that it is Congress's responsibility to fix it. We shouldn't leave the administration hanging out there.

I also say to the administration: You have other options and other tools, in the meantime, to keep families together. Use them. For the sake of all of those kids and all of those families, use them. In the meantime, in the middle of this intolerable position, let's step up, and let's take the votes.

We all know we need border security. In this body, border security was an overwhelming bipartisan-supported measure in 2006, when the Secure Fence Act was passed. We believe there needs to be border security. Let's vote for it. Let's get it done. Let's not just talk about doing it someday. Let's actually do it. Let's add more immigration judges. Our backlog of a year and a half before one can get to an immigration court is absurd. Catch and release is absurd. No one would do that or should do that. We have ways to fix that.

I have stated over and over in this body that I think it is absurd we have individuals who are in this country, due to no fault of their own, and have grown up in this country whom we have just ignored and pretended have not been there. Those people who are in DACA or who are DACA-eligible deserve an answer. This Congress should

vote on it rather than just keep them in limbo.

Publically, I believe they should have a shot at naturalization. The reasonable thing is to give us 10 years to get the border security done. At the same time, those individuals in DACA will have a 10-year path headed toward their naturalization. That should not be unreasonable. In the meantime, give those individuals the opportunity to travel and work and go to school and be full participants in our society.

I think the diversity lottery is absurd. Other than salvation in Christ, I think one of the greatest gifts you can possibly have on this Earth is American citizenship. We just put it out there and say: You don't have to have any qualifications. If you want to come, come. I think we should actually extend it to people who are going to engage in the economy and be productive parts of our society, who have gifts and abilities that will help us as a culture. Let's make that the extension. Let's keep the diversity lottery. I am grateful to have people here who are from all over the world. Let's just make sure they are bringing the skills we need. I don't think it is that unreasonable.

There are things we can do that we agree on and that we should move on rather than just say: Someday, let's do. Someday is today. Someday is right now. It is time for Congress to step up and take the lead and stop blaming everybody else. It is time for us to do our job and vote on this for a result.

I yield the floor.

#### TRIBUTE TO CHUCK MRAZ

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, today I would like to take a moment to congratulate the "Voice of the Eagles," Chuck Mraz, who is retiring from his position as the news director at Morehead State Public Radio. Serving communities in eastern Kentucky, southern Ohio, and western West Virginia for more than 30 years, Chuck's reporting has been a staple for countless listeners. As he prepares to sign off, I would like to take a brief look back at his remarkable career.

I have had the privilege of joining Chuck's program many times over the years. While I have enjoyed our conversations about important issues to Kentucky, we found a shared passion that has nothing to do with my role in the Senate: our love of sports.

At the outset of his career, Chuck wanted to be a sportscaster. According to him, sports have "always been a part of my life ever since I realized that I could pick up a bat and hit a ball." He joined MSPR in 1986 as the station's sports director and special events director. Even when he took on a new challenge in 2005 as the news director, Chuck kept his part time role as the play-by-play voice of the MSU football and men's basketball teams.

Throughout his time on the air at MSPR, Chuck has called more than 1,000 Eagles athletic events. According

to the school, that is more than any other announcer in the athletic department's history. He has been a constant presence for coaches, players, and fans and has been an integral part of the Eagles' community. He still says the highlight of his career was MSU's 2011 Men's NCAA basketball tournament win at the buzzer over my alma mater, the University of Louisville Cardinals.

For his impressive career, Chuck has won local, State, and regional acclaim from his peers. Among his many accolades are more than 40 Kentucky Associated Press awards, the Eastern Kentucky Leadership Conference Award for Media and Technology, and the Ohio Valley Conference Media Award.

Even more important to Chuck than his honors are the relationships he built with the next generation of broadcasters. He recognized many inspirational teachers and advisers in his own life, and as a result, Chuck has mentored hundreds of students while at MSU. Many of them have begun their own notable careers around the State. As they continue to prosper in their work, Chuck's impact on the broadcasting community will continue to be felt for years to come.

Looking back on his long and successful career, Chuck said, "I've always believed that hard work can overcome a lack of ability in some areas." His drive has led to many late nights, many 3:30 a.m. alarms, and a lot of time away from his family, but it is that commitment that has also brought Chuck great success in his profession and in the Morehead community.

In retirement, Chuck looks forward to spending more time with his family, especially his wife, Joni, and his daughters, Megan and Elizabeth. Just because he is leaving his role as news director, however, doesn't mean that MSPR listeners won't hear Chuck on the radio. Even in retirement, he plans to call Eagles football and basketball games. At the end of this month, the community will gather to celebrate Chuck's career and to thank him for his contributions to the school, its students, and to the Eagles. I would like to add my voice to the MSU community in wishing him a restful and happy retirement.

#### BUDGETARY REVISIONS

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, section 251 of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, BBEDCA, establishes statutory limits on discretionary spending and allows for various adjustments to those limits. In addition, sections 302 and 314(a) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 allow the Chairman of the Budget Committee to establish and make revisions to allocations, aggregates, and levels consistent with those adjustments.

The Senate is considering S. Amdt. 2910, a "minibus" spending measure