

to the commentaries. We would watch the liftoffs. We would watch the splash-downs. Some of my best memories as a kid were literally sitting in front of a TV set with my granddad, watching the heroes I saw, the heroes I wanted to be, and the heroes America wrapped their arms around. At the time, there was nothing—nothing—and maybe to some extent today—more that I wanted to do than to be an astronaut and to go into space. It sounds corny for an old man like me to say that, but it is absolutely true.

Those astronauts, the original Mercury Seven astronauts, were heroes in every sense of the word. I admire their courage, not having a clue when they blasted off from Florida whether they would return safely. And we did lose astronauts along the way.

I did so many things. I read. I studied. I watched. I read papers. A lot of papers in my grammar, junior high, and high schools were all written about the space program.

I am a memorabilia collector, as many of you may know, including of autographed baseballs. I have a few autographed baseballs by some of the astronauts, but the ones I like most are the newspapers. From that time, I could see that everybody could sense something was special. From the time Apollo 11 took off from Cape Kennedy, and the headlines in the Birmingham News read “Man Sets Foot in Heavens,” to the time they splashed down, I collected and saved every one of those newspapers. They are still at home, and they are prized possessions.

We watched every single launch. We knew every single name of every astronaut. We stood there with intense, mesmerizing attention to every moment of those launches.

It was something that captivated this entire country. It was a unifying time. It was a unifying force at a time when America needed it—the 1960s. For Apollo 11 in 1969, it was a time when we needed that sense of collective pride. We needed that sense of unification. We had gone through tough times during the civil rights era. We had gone through and we were still in the midst of the Vietnam war and all that tore this country asunder. We saw all that happened in 1968. We saw the deaths of John Kennedy, Robert Kennedy, and Martin Luther King, but the space program was that one sense of pride.

It didn't take a tragedy to unify America at that time. It took success. It took a build of what we do. It took our determination. It took knowing that we were the most patriotic, and, doggone, we were going to beat those Russians to the Moon. It sounds so corny these days, but it is absolutely the case. We were going to do it. It was going to be the United States of America, and, doggone, we did it.

A lot has changed. Today, we are building on this legacy. We are still building on this legacy in space. We are building it in Huntsville, AL, and elsewhere with NASA, and we are going to

continue to inspire a new generation—and more generations to come—of Alabamans and Americans, people all across this country, to help us reach even loftier heights.

Yes, a lot has changed since 1969—50 years ago—but there is a reason that space flight and exploration of other worlds continue to capture our attention and to capture our imagination. It is because, at the end of the day, we are all dreamers. We always dream of those loftier heights. We always want to achieve. We always want to make this country great—consistently make this country great. We always want to reach for the stars, whether it is in our personal lives or whether it is collectively as a country. That is what we do. We are dreamers.

Today, 50 years after the launch of Apollo—and on Saturday, we will celebrate 50 years of the actual steps on the lunar surface—we celebrate the achievement of a dream five decades ago, but a dream that started long, long before that, long before President Kennedy challenged America to put a man on the Moon.

Looking back, 50 years ago was really just the beginning. It showed us that a true moonshot was possible, and, quite literally, it opened our world to new possibilities.

Today, we are reaching for human spaceflight back to the Moon and to Mars. It is not just us; other countries are doing the same. We are looking for a return flight to the Moon for deeper exploration. We are receiving pictures from the farthest reaches of the galaxy, things we have never seen before. We have seen the surface. We have landed rovers on the Moon surface and have seen the pictures and have done the tests. It is just unbelievable. Who would have ever thought of this some 50, 60 years ago when I was a kid?

Today, we have a greater understanding of the universe around us and how we apply that knowledge to our own lives. We continue to reach for the stars.

Yes, a lot has changed, but a lot hasn't. We still have divisions in this country. We still need that unifying voice. We still need that sense of pride that we can all—everybody—wrap our arms around.

Today, we seem to be divided more than we were during the height of the Vietnam war. We seem to be divided over the very issues that my friend Senator CORNYN was talking about a moment ago with regard to immigration. We are divided over politics—a partisan divide. We are divided over gun violence. You name it; we are divided. So we need that unifying voice. We need something positive that we can all wrap our arms around.

It is not just a holiday—and sometimes now, in today's world, unfortunately, even our holidays get divided. Even on our holidays, people go to their corners for political reasons, on both sides of the aisle. Make no mistake, folks, I am not casting a stone

one way or another. I am casting it across this land. People are divided.

We have to honor the visionaries of long ago, as well as the visionaries of today who think big, dream big, and give our Nation a collective sense of purpose and unity—a collective sense of unity and purpose—not a divisive sense of purpose for their own benefit but a collective sense of unity and purpose.

We can honor those folks by setting aside all of the differences we see. We can honor those folks by not going to our corners every time a hot-button issue is mentioned either here on the floor of the Senate or in a tweet or in a Facebook post or in the national news. We can set that aside. We can set it aside by setting aside our differences.

We honor folks by setting aside our differences today. We can honor those folks by remembering our collective pride and who we are as Americans, by making sure that all men and women are created equal and living up to the creed that we so proudly point to in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. We can do that again. We can honor these visionaries by coming together, reaching across the aisle and also reaching within our aisles to bring people together to talk about those things we can do together and with a sense of pride. We can do it by, once again, being the leader of the world and not trying to do everything alone but bringing our friends and allies to join us in these collective efforts to make us stronger.

Yes, we owe those folks a great debt of gratitude for making America a leader in space, a leader in the world, and giving us all something to dream about. Let us now meet that challenge in a different way.

Let us continue to explore space. Let us continue to reach for the stars, but let us dedicate ourselves to becoming that unified voice so that something we can all dream about is one America—one America—not a house divided but one America for everyone.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

**THE PRESIDING OFFICER.** The Senator from Iowa.

**MR. GRASSLEY.** Mr. President, since it is getting close to shutting-down time, I ask unanimous consent to finish my entire remarks. I promise the Presiding Officer I will not be too long.

**THE PRESIDING OFFICER.** Without objection, it is so ordered.

**EB-5 REGULATIONS**

**MR. GRASSLEY.** Mr. President, I come to talk to my colleagues today about the deeply flawed EB-5 green card program.

Several weeks ago, we learned that the Office of Management and Budget at the White House had completed its review of the new rules to update and reform the EB-5 Program. I have been an advocate for reforming this program for a long, long period of time. Several times I have even talked to the White

House about moving these regulations along.

Now that they have been reviewed by OMB, for the rule to come into effect, it must now be published in the Federal Register. The rule was first proposed in January 2017. We have been waiting for it to be finished for 2½ years. I hope that President Trump now makes that happen as soon as possible.

The proposed rule would raise the minimum investment amounts required under the program. It also makes sure that investments are directed to rural areas and truly high-unemployment areas, as Congress intended when EB-5 was created in 1990.

Considering those points of where EB-5 ought to be concentrated and now looking at how they have been diverted from the original intent of Congress is the very best reason for these rules to be put in place—to get us back to square one, the original intent of the law.

Since the 1990s, rampant and abusive gerrymandering of the EB-5 Program's targeted employment areas has undermined that congressional intent, which was to direct it toward high-unemployment areas and rural areas. Instead of channeling investment to rural and high-unemployment areas, EB-5 has become a source of cheap foreign capital for big-city, big-moneyed interests. The targeted employment area reforms in the proposed rule would take a first step toward refocusing EB-5 investment in the way that Congress originally intended in that 1990s legislation.

In addition to channeling investment away from the areas of our country that need it the most, this is what has happened. The EB-5 Program has been plagued with other forms of fraud and abuse, and this has been going on for years and years. There are examples of EB-5 fraud from all over the country, and I am going to give just a few examples as a reminder to the President why these rules need to be put into the Federal Registry right away.

In Chicago, a businessman defrauded 290 investors of \$150 million in funds that were supposed to be used for construction of a hotel and conference center near O'Hare Airport.

In Palm Beach, FL, a real estate developer and real estate attorney teamed up to defraud 60 Chinese and Iranian EB-5 investors of \$50 million. Instead of that money being used to fund the construction of a proposed hotel, it was instead used to pay personal taxes and purchase a 151-foot yacht.

In Wisconsin, a businessman used over half of the \$7.6 million in funds he had solicited from investors to pay for personal expenses, including Green Bay Packers tickets and the purchase of a Cadillac Escalade.

I could go on all day.

In May of 2017, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services conducted an internal fraud assessment and found 19 cases of national security concerns

within the EB-5 Program. Those are national security concerns. The No. 1 responsibility of the Federal Government is to protect the American people, and that involves national security. These cases related to terrorism, espionage, and information and technology transfer.

Unfortunately, multiple bipartisan efforts in the Congress to modify the EB-5 Program have been consistently stymied by powerful special interest groups and big-moneyed interests. Because I have been in the middle of those battles—and they are bipartisan battles—over the years, I know exactly where these big-moneyed interests are coming from and the special interest groups that keep this program from being reformed.

Now we have an opportunity for one person—the President of the United States—through regulation, to reform this program in a way that would be very helpful. So that makes the publication of the EB-5 reform rules even more important. I applaud President Trump and the administration for getting the proposed rule to this point, but now it is time for the President and his team to finish the process and make sure the final rule goes into effect as soon as possible.

Iowans and all Americans who live in rural and high-unemployment areas deserve to have the investment that Congress intended when the EB-5 Program was created almost 30 years ago. President Trump and his administration now have a chance to finally address some of the very serious flaws in this program that have hurt rural America. We have been waiting for these reforms for over 2 years. It is time for this final rule to be published, and it needs to happen right now, if not sooner.

#### TREATIES

Mr. President, I rise today for the purpose of expressing my support for the passage of the resolutions of advice and consent that the Senate is considering this week with respect to the protocols to our tax treaties with Spain, Switzerland, Japan, and Luxembourg.

Tax treaties are a very integral part of the architecture of our tax system. For example, these treaties would help define the rules of the road for cross-border investment and trade for U.S. individuals and companies doing business in one of our treaty partner countries, like Spain, as an example, and for individuals and companies in those countries doing business in the United States.

The protocols before us today provide important updates to the tax treaties with these four countries. In general, several of them lower withholding taxes and include provisions to prevent double taxation. Several provide mechanisms for resolving disputes in a timely manner through mandatory binding arbitration. In addition, they provide important updates to the exchange of information provisions in the underlying treaties.

I am aware of the concerns that have been raised regarding the standard

used to provide for such exchange of information. The standard provided for in these protocols is that relevant information shall be exchanged between the United States and its treaty partners. That relevant standard has been used throughout our treaty network for decades and is also the standard used in U.S. domestic tax laws.

This issue was raised last month in the Foreign Relations Committee, and an amendment was offered to the resolution regarding the protocol with Spain that would have required a narrower standard. That amendment was appropriately defeated. If the issue is raised again as an amendment here on the floor, I will urge my colleagues to vote no on the amendment.

These four protocols have been awaiting action by the Senate for many years. In some cases, it has been nearly a decade. It is important that the Senate fulfill its constitutional duty to provide its advice and consent on tax treaties and protocols. It is also important that our treaty partners know that the United States really values these agreements and negotiates these treaties and protocols in good faith, with the expectation that they will be implemented without lengthy delays.

Our actions on these protocols are also timely, given the international effort to address the effects of digitalization on the international tax system.

For the past several months, representatives from the Treasury Department have been actively engaged in negotiations at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. These talks are focused on finding a multilateral agreement to these issues and avoiding the regrettable unilateral approach that some countries have taken—most notably, France. Ultimately, if these negotiations are successful, there could be a need for the United States to update its bilateral income tax treaties.

It is important that the Senate take action on the pending protocols and send a strong signal to our treaty partners that the international tax agreements are a priority for our country.

In addition to moving forward on these four protocols, we have three new income tax treaties with Chile, Hungary, and Poland that are awaiting action by the Foreign Relations Committee. I urge Chairman RISCH and Ranking Member MENENDEZ to use the wave of momentum that is building this week to move forward on those three new treaties and send them to the floor of the Senate as soon as possible.

I thank the chairman and ranking member for moving these protocols to the floor. These treaties were reported favorably by the committee by voice vote without amendment, and their consideration is long overdue.

I thank Leader MCCONNELL and Minority Leader SCHUMER for their efforts to bring these protocols up for consideration on the floor this week.