

to call the bill or debate an alternative to it. It literally died from lack of any effort to deal with the issue in the U.S. House of Representatives.

So one would ask—that was more than 6 years ago—what has happened since? The answer is nothing—virtually nothing—except decisions by the Trump administration, for example, to eliminate some aspects of our immigration law, like the DACA provision.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent for 3 additional minutes.

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

Mr. DURBIN. In light of an attempt to pass the Fairness for High-Skilled Immigrants Act without hearings or debate, I come to the floor today to present an alternative. I am introducing the Resolving Extended Limbo for Immigrant Employees and Families Act, known as the RELIEF Act, which will treat all immigrants fairly by eliminating immigrant visa backlogs.

One of the most serious problems of our immigration system is that there are not enough immigrant visas, known as green cards. As a result, immigrants are stuck in crippling backlogs for decades. Close to 4 million future Americans, many of whom already live and work in the United States, are on the State Department's immigrant visa waiting list. However, under current law, only 226,000 family green cards and 140,000 employee green cards are available each year. Children and spouses of lawful permanent residents, known as LPRs, count against these caps, which further limit the number of available green cards.

The backlogs are a tremendous hardship on families caught in this situation. Children of parents waiting to become LPRs often age out, as I described earlier, because they are no longer children by the time the green cards are available for them. The solution is clear: increase the number of green cards.

Let's be clear. Lifting green card country caps alone, without increasing green cards, as the bill that Senator LEE is sponsoring would do, will not eliminate the backlog for Indian immigrants, the nationality with the most people in the employment backlog, and it will dramatically increase backlogs for the rest of the world.

Mr. Ira Kurzban, who is the Nation's expert on immigration laws, has said that we are virtually trying to solve the problem with Senator LEE's bill for Indian immigrants at the expense of everyone else in the world. He says:

From 2023 until well into the 2030s, there will be zero EB-2 visas for the rest of the world. None for China, South Korea, Philippines, Britain, Canada, Mexico, every country in the [European Union] and all of Africa. Zero.

It would also choke off green cards for every important profession that isn't in the information technology field.

More than 20 national organizations have now rallied against the Lee legis-

lation and have said things such as that the bill offers a “zero-sum approach,” pitting one group of immigrants against another to fight the broken immigration system.

The RELIEF Act, which I am introducing today, is a solution.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 2603

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, as in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration—

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has used his extra 3 minutes.

Mr. DURBIN. I am making a unanimous consent request.

As in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. 2603, introduced earlier today; further, that the bill be considered read three times and passed and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Louisiana.

Mr. KENNEDY. Madam President, reserving the right to object, no one in this Chamber has more respect for the senior Senator from Illinois and the Democratic whip than I do. I share much of his frustration. I also share, and I believe what the Senator also believes, that immigration is an extraordinarily important subject that this body should be addressing. We are a nation of immigrants. The American people support legal immigration. I know the senior Senator from Illinois supports it. I certainly support it.

I am rising to object because a number of my colleagues—and I don't want to simply put it on them; I join with them in this—would like a little additional time to study this bill. Equally important, if not more important, many of my colleagues' sentiment is that we should take this bill up first in the Judiciary Committee.

I commit to the minority whip that I will join with him in trying to get our esteemed chairman to take this bill up. I don't think we ought to be afraid of this issue. I don't think we ought to be reluctant to take difficult votes. That is why we are here in the U.S. Senate. I also cannot think of a subject that is more important for this body to address than the subject of immigration, including but not limited to legal and illegal immigration.

The fact of the matter is that the American people deserve an immigration system that looks like somebody designed it on purpose.

For the reasons I just expressed, Madam President, I respectfully object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. I thank my colleague from Louisiana. We have worked on things together, and I hope we will continue to do so in the future.

This is controversial, but it is so timely and important. The hundreds of people who demonstrated against this Senator last Sunday were people I welcomed into this country and believe will be an important part of our future. I am willing to find a solution to the problem, and I am willing to work on a bipartisan basis to do it. Your help will be invaluable.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The bill clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Frank William Volk, of West Virginia, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of West Virginia.

Mitch McConnell, Martha McSally, Rick Scott, John Thune, Mike Crapo, Lamar Alexander, Johnny Isakson, John Corryn, Roy Blunt, Roger F. Wicker, John Hoeven, Mike Rounds, Kevin Cramer, Steve Daines, John Boozman, Cindy Hyde-Smith, James E. Risch.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Frank William Volk, of West Virginia, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of West Virginia, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER), the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON), and the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. JOHNSON).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER) would have voted “yea” and the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. JOHNSON) would have voted “yea.”

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET), the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER), the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS), the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO), the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS), and the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) are necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 90, nays 0, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 315 Ex.]

YEAS—90

Baldwin	Blumenthal	Braun
Barrasso	Blunt	Brown
Blackburn	Boozman	Burr

Cantwell	Heinrich	Roberts
Capito	Hoeven	Romney
Cardin	Hyde-Smith	Rosen
Carper	Inhofe	Rounds
Casey	Jones	Rubio
Cassidy	Kaine	Sasse
Collins	Kennedy	Schatz
Coons	King	Schumer
Cornyn	Lankford	Scott (FL)
Cortez Masto	Leahy	Scott (SC)
Cotton	Lee	Shaheen
Cramer	Manchin	Shelby
Crapo	Markey	Sinema
Cruz	McConnell	Smith
Daines	McSally	Stabenow
Duckworth	Menendez	Sullivan
Durbin	Merkley	Tester
Enzi	Moran	Thune
Ernst	Murkowski	Tillis
Feinstein	Murphy	Toomey
Fischer	Murray	Udall
Gardner	Paul	Van Hollen
Gillibrand	Perdue	Warner
Graham	Peters	Whitehouse
Grassley	Portman	Wicker
Hassan	Reed	Wyden
Hawley	Risch	Young

NOT VOTING—10

Alexander	Hirono	Sanders
Bennet	Isakson	Warren
Booker	Johnson	
Harris	Klobuchar	

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 90, the nays are 0.

The motion is agreed to.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the remaining votes in the series be 10 minutes in length.

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

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Charles R. Eskridge III, of Texas, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Texas.

Mitch McConnell, Martha McSally, Rick Scott, John Thune, Mike Crapo, Lamar Alexander, Johnny Isakson, John Cornyn, Roy Blunt, Roger F. Wicker, John Hoeven, Mike Rounds, Kevin Cramer, Steve Daines, John Boozman, Cindy Hyde-Smith, James E. Risch.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Charles R. Eskridge III, of Texas, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Texas, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER), the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON), and the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. JOHNSON).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER) would have voted “yea” and the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. JOHNSON) would have voted “yea.”

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET), the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER), the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS), the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO), the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS), and the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) are necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LANKFORD). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 61, nays 29, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 316 Ex.]

YEAS—61

Barrasso	Fischer	Risch
Blackburn	Gardner	Roberts
Blunt	Graham	Romney
Boozman	Grassley	Rounds
Braun	Hawley	Rubio
Burr	Hoeven	Sasse
Capito	Hyde-Smith	Scott (FL)
Cardin	Inhofe	Scott (SC)
Carper	Kaine	Shaheen
Cassidy	Kennedy	Shelby
Collins	King	Sinema
Coons	Lankford	Sullivan
Cornyn	Lee	Thune
Cotton	McConnell	Tillis
Cramer	McSally	Toomey
Crapo	Moran	Warner
Cruz	Murkowski	Whitehouse
Daines	Murphy	Whitehouse
Enzi	Paul	Wicker
Ernst	Perdue	Young
Feinstein	Portman	

NAYS—29

Baldwin	Heinrich	Rosen
Blumenthal	Jones	Schatz
Brown	Leahy	Schumer
Cantwell	Manchin	Smith
Casey	Markey	Stabenow
Cortez Masto	Menendez	Tester
Duckworth	Merkley	Udall
Durbin	Murray	Van Hollen
Gillibrand	Peters	Wyden
Hassan	Reed	

NOT VOTING—10

Alexander	Hirono	Sanders
Bennet	Isakson	Warren
Booker	Johnson	
Harris	Klobuchar	

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 61, the nays are 29.

The motion is agreed to.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The bill clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of David John Novak, of Virginia, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Virginia.

Mitch McConnell, John Boozman, John Cornyn, Mike Crapo, Pat Roberts, Mike Rounds, Thom Tillis, Roger F. Wicker, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Kevin Cramer, John Hoeven, Rob Portman, Dan Sullivan, Chuck Grassley, Richard Burr, John Thune, Roy Blunt.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of David John Novak, of Virginia, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Virginia, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER), the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON), and the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. JOHNSON).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER) would have voted “yea” and the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. JOHNSON) would have voted “yea”.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET), the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER), the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS), the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO), the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS), and the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) are necessarily absent.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 86, nays 4, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 317 Ex.]

YEAS—86

Baldwin	Fischer	Reed
Blackburn	Gardner	Risch
Blunt	Graham	Roberts
Boozman	Grassley	Romney
Brown	Hawley	Rounds
Brown	Hoover	Rubio
Brown	Hyde-Smith	Sasse
Burr	Inhofe	Schatz
Cantwell	Jones	Schumer
Capito	Kaine	Scott (FL)
Cardin	Kennedy	Scott (SC)
Carper	King	Shaheen
Casey	Lankford	Shelby
Cassidy	Leahy	Sinema
Collins	Lee	Smith
Coons	Manchin	Stabenow
Cornyn	McConnell	Sullivan
Cotton	Menendez	Tester
Cramer	Merkley	Thune
Crapo	Moran	Tillis
Cruz	Murkowski	Toomey
Daines	Murphy	Udall
Duckworth	Murray	Van Hollen
Durbin	Paul	Warner
Enzi	Perdue	Whitehouse
Ernst	Peters	Wicker
Feinstein	Portman	Young

NAYS—4

Gillibrand	Markey
Heinrich	Wyden

NOT VOTING—10

Alexander	Hirono	Sanders
Bennet	Isakson	Warren
Booker	Johnson	
Harris	Klobuchar	

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 86, the nays are 4.

The motion is agreed to.