

One of the provisions in the RELIEF Act that I urge my colleagues to consider when I make this unanimous consent request is that if you apply for a green card as a parent, the age of your children at that moment is basically frozen for legal purposes. Those children cannot age out while you are waiting in line if you applied while they were still minors. This will protect these children from deportation. This is one of the most important and humane things we can do.

The second thing is, if we are going to establish any standards or quotas for those who are allowed in this country to have employment-based visas and green cards, we shouldn't count the spouses and dependent children. Let's just count those who are, frankly, going to work as engineers and doctors in our communities.

The net result of the RELIEF Act is to create a realistic way to lift the cap in order to allow more to come in each year who are qualified, who have already been vetted, and who have gone through the background checks. It is not to penalize the minor children who might age out while their parents are waiting. We should make sure the spouses and dependent children aren't counted toward any ultimate quota.

The RELIEF Act would lift country caps that limit the number of green cards that go to immigrants from any particular country. These country caps have contributed to this terrible backlog that we currently have. Yet lifting these caps alone will not clear the green card backlog. Without more green cards, which is what I am calling for, the current backlog of 800,000 people total—I mentioned 500,000 were from India—who are waiting for employment-based green cards will actually increase if we don't lift the cap by 300,000 in the next 10 years.

The RELIEF Act is not novel or controversial. You will remember that earlier I talked about a comprehensive immigration bill. What I am proposing today is included in it. It is a bipartisan proposal, and it is one that, I think, we should return to in order to solve the problem.

The RELIEF Act has been endorsed by many national business, immigrant, and labor organizations, including the New American Economy, the National Education Association, the American Immigration Lawyers Association, United We Dream, Asian Americans Advancing Justice, South Asian Americans Leading Together, United Chinese Americans, the National Iranian American Council, the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, the American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association, which, incidentally, is the largest Greek-American organization, and the Ancient Order of Hibernians, which is the largest Irish-American organization.

In light of the failure of our immigration subcommittee's taking any action to solve this problem, I will ask for unanimous consent to move this bill forward.

To those who are considering whether they will accept or reject it, meet with these people in your State. Sit down with them, and hear of the plights they face today. They are trying to follow the law, and the law is not responsive.

Mr. President, as in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be discharged from further consideration of S. 2603 and that the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration. I further ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time 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 (Mr. SASSE). Is there objection?

The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, in reserving the right to object, I come to the floor to, first, compliment Senator DURBIN on his remarkable story and his family's story about legal immigration to this country. It is something I support. I think we should all consider it a compliment when people want to leave the countries of their births to come to the United States, for they know what we know—that it is a great place in which to live and thrive.

I have a concern with the unanimous consent request before us, the RELIEF Act. Senator DURBIN and I have worked on a couple of immigration issues on which we have bridged the gap but have not quite gotten there.

First off, it could lay the groundwork for a significant increase in legal immigration, but I am also concerned with the mechanics we find ourselves in right now. As I understand it, the RELIEF Act has six cosponsors—all Democrats. Yet there is another bill that is moving through the Senate right now that was offered by Senator LEE. It has been offered in other Congresses, but it is actually making headway. It has 35 cosponsors, and 15 of them are Democrats. They include Senator HARRIS, of California, and Senator DUCKWORTH, the junior Senator of Illinois. I believe this is a very narrowly focused effort to address a lot of the concerns that Senator DURBIN has.

I do not believe Senator DURBIN has the support of the Senate to take this through regular order at this point, let alone through unanimous consent. I hope Senator DURBIN and others will recognize that we do have a shortage of high-skilled workers in this country and that we do need to fix a number of problems, but I don't think they can be fixed with the RELIEF Act.

I encourage Senator DURBIN to work with Senator LEE and with the 34 other Senate Members on a bipartisan basis to address this so we can bring the Fairness for High-Skilled Immigrants Act to the floor and send it to the House for its consideration.

Because of the lack of consensus on many of the provisions in the RELIEF Act, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, the Senator from North Carolina and I both serve on the Senate Judiciary Committee. What I have asked for is a hearing before the Immigration Subcommittee so Senator LEE can bring his bill forward and so I can bring my bill forward so we can try to work out the differences between us. That is usually how the Senate operates. Unfortunately, last week, on the floor, Senator LEE announced that he was opposed to having any hearing on his bill. He didn't want there to be a hearing and a markup. I think it is unfortunate. It really will not lead us to having a bipartisan agreement that might actually solve this problem.

I also think there is a fundamental flaw in Senator LEE's approach. He would take care of the issues facing those from India at the expense of the issues of the immigrants from virtually every other country, for they would be denied the opportunity to apply for green cards while we would be taking care of the backlog from this one nation. I don't think that is the way to approach this.

As the Senator from North Carolina said, if we truly believe more legal immigration of those with talents would be good for America, this is our chance to do it. At this point, I am disappointed. I have told these families who come to see me regularly that I will continue to fight for them—to give them a chance to protect their children and to have a future in America.

I hope Senator LEE will reconsider and allow for a hearing to take place so we can move this bill forward and not just exchange unanimous consent requests on the floor.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 2059

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I come to talk about another issue of immigration that concerns me in North Carolina, and I think it is something about which every American should be concerned. It is the sanctuary policies that have been implemented in counties and cities and, at least in one case, statewide.

“Sanctuary city” sounds like a great concept as the United States is a sanctuary to which so many people seek to immigrate. Yet the policy of the sanctuary city actually breaks down the relationship between Federal authorities and local authorities. I think this is dangerous and could potentially—and not only potentially—have serious consequences in communities. I will use a few examples.

Over the past year in North Carolina, we have had over 500 people who have been released who had been arrested by local authorities. Many of them had been arrested for having committed serious crimes. They had been charged with murder, rape, indecent liberties

with a child, heroin trafficking—a very, very long list—in cities just 25 minutes from where I live, down in Charlotte, in Mecklenburg County. They arrest people but not simply because they are illegally present. In fact, you can find virtually no instance in which a local authority would arrest somebody just because one is illegally present. The people who are in these jails have been charged with crimes, and in many cases they have been serious crimes.

Two weeks ago in Mecklenburg County, the Mecklenburg County sheriff had made the decision to release four people—one who had been charged with murder, two who had been charged with indecent liberties with a minor, and one who had been charged with heroin trafficking. They had been illegally present but had not been in jail because they had simply crossed the border or had had their visas expire. They had been in jail because they had committed serious crimes.

When Immigration and Customs Enforcement hears about these folks who have been detained, they issue what they call detainer orders. A detainer order is a request to hold a person in jail for at least 48 hours so ICE can go to the jail, interview him, and determine whether they want to transfer him into ICE's custody and potentially deport him.

This is a very dangerous policy that has actually, ultimately, resulted in other people being harmed. Think about those people being released who have been charged with rape or murder or heroin trafficking. They go back into the community and cause harm to someone else.

What I have decided we need to do is to at least provide a private right of civil action to a victim of that unwise decision. If that charged murderer or heroin trafficker goes out and assaults someone or murders someone—in some cases, someone who has a DWI is charged with vehicular homicide and goes back out and while under the influence harms someone else in, say, an automobile accident—I think the person who gets harmed or, sadly, his survivor should be able to bring a case against that governmental entity that has the sanctuary policy.

For those who think sanctuary policies are safe and that only safe people are being released, this shouldn't be an issue to them—right?—because no harm is going to occur. Yet, if harm occurs, I believe the victim should have a right to seek restitution.

Our bill is fairly simple. It is called the Justice for Victims of Sanctuary Cities Act. It is a bill that reads, if you as a governmental entity refuse to cooperate with ICE and then release someone who does harm to someone else, that person has the right to sue that governmental entity.

Our governments in the United States—the local governments and State governments—have the right to say they are immune, that they can't

be sued. They have that right, and I respect that right. Yet, if they refuse to allow themselves to build their cases in court and say that what they did was appropriate and safe, then it should come at the consequence of the Federal funding for which they would otherwise be qualified to receive.

Again, if sanctuary cities are safe and if all we are doing is releasing people who are not threats to the community, this should be a nonissue for any sanctuary jurisdiction. It would only be an issue if there is a victim as a result of the jurisdiction's political decisions.

That is why we have introduced the Justice for Victims of Sanctuary Cities Act. In fact, we listened to some of the sanctuary jurisdictions, and they said: Well, we could get into legal trouble if we hold them for 48 hours, and for that reason we release them after a judge has ordered their release.

We have another bill that addresses that problem so that liability will go away. We are hearing what they have to say and trying to address it in additional legislation.

But I think this is a bill that makes sense, and I think it is something that law enforcement, county commissions, and city councils should take a look at.

I think they should work with ICE. Here is the last reason why I think working with ICE is very important: ICE has a legal responsibility to pursue these people if they are released by the local government.

Here is what happens. You release somebody who is charged with murder or vehicular homicide or heroin trafficking or rape. You release them in the community, and ICE has to go pursue them in the community.

So instead of allowing ICE to go into a jail and have a safe transfer from one jail into the ICE detainee system, they have to actually create a task force. They have got to go into a community, and they have to apprehend them. They have a statutory responsibility to do that.

Ironically, in some of those instances, the very law enforcement agency that released them now has to go into the field and back them up if it is a dangerous situation when they are trying to apprehend this person whom ICE has a legal responsibility to apprehend.

I think this is a commonsense bill. Hopefully, it is one that will give sanctuary cities some pause before they release somebody charged with murder or rape or heroin trafficking—a potentially dangerous person—back into the community, whom the Federal authorities have to pursue no matter what.

Mr. President, as in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Judiciary be discharged from further consideration of S. 2059 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and that the motion to recon-

sider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. DURBIN. Reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, there is more to the story. What he just described to you seems pretty obvious: A dangerous person, subject to deportation, why release them into the community? That is a perfectly valid point, one that we ought to be discussing and debating. But there is more to the story, and here is what it comes down to: Why did the major city police chiefs across the United States oppose what the Senator from North Carolina has just suggested? Because they know that if the Federal Government and its immigration authorities are going to use local police to enforce immigration laws, it is going to change their ability to keep communities and neighborhoods safe.

Now, why would I say that? Let me give you an example. It was just about 4 months ago when ICE officials pulled over a young woman and said to her: Are you here in the United States legally? She said: I am; I am protected by a program call DACA.

They said: We want to go to your home.

They went to her home, and her grandmother was there. They asked her grandmother for proof of her citizenship. Her grandmother had overstayed her visitor's visa. They deported her grandmother.

So the local police are fearful that if they are now going to be recruited to enforce immigration laws, they will not get cooperation in the community when it comes to fighting crime.

Let me give you an example that is timely. On Halloween night, in a section of Chicago, the little kids were out with their parents in a Hispanic neighborhood, walking along, and a little girl, 7 years old, named Giselle Zamago was shot twice. She barely survived. They got her to the hospital, and they saved her life. She is making a miraculous recovery.

What is important about this story and relevant to what the Senator from North Carolina asks is the fact that now community members have come forward to the police to help them find the shooter. They have arrested a 15-year-old gang member. This gang member was aiming at a 32-year-old gang rival standing next to the little girl, and he wasn't worth a damn when it came to shooting a gun. This poor little girl was shot.

What the police in Chicago are telling me is that we need the community to be willing to talk to the police and not be afraid somebody is going to follow someone home and check whether their grandmother is here legally in the United States.

That is why the whole question of sanctuary cities is boiling up and why

the police chiefs in major cities have basically said: This is too simplistic. Let's sit down and do this carefully, not as the Senator from North Carolina has proposed.

The last point I want to make is this. If you visit the Senate Chamber this week in Washington and want to see deliberation on legislation, you are out of luck. There are no bills—no substantive legislative bills—scheduled to be considered on the floor of the U.S. Senate this week, but it is not an unusual week. We hardly ever take up legislation in the committees and bring it to the floor for debate in the Senate.

So the real question I have is why the Senator from North Carolina—who is in the Republican majority, who serves on the Senate Judiciary Committee, who could ask for a markup of his bill if he wished—has decided instead to bypass the whole process and just say: I want to take this bill straight to the Senate with no debate. He is in the majority. We could bring this bill to the floor for debate and for amendment. We could bring it before the committee for a markup, but he chose not to do that.

Sadly, it is a commentary on what has happened to the Senate floor. It has become a legislative graveyard. We just don't do what the Senate used to do—debate amendments, deliberate, agree on things, and compromise. It doesn't happen anymore under Senator MCCONNELL. It is unfortunate. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, maybe just to add another chapter to that story, first, we did have a hearing on this bill about 2 weeks ago in Judiciary. That is the first step before you move to a markup.

I will be asking for a markup on this bill because I think it is a bill that is a commonsense bill. It is a bill that actually has a safe-harbor provision for people in the community who may be illegally present who want to work with law enforcement. We are listening to the concerns that law enforcement have expressed. We have addressed them, like so many times we have addressed these sorts of matters before.

So we will have a markup on the bill, we will have a vote out of committee, and I hope that we have a vote on this floor, because at the end of the day, some of the examples that Senator DURBIN noted are sad and should be avoided, but the real sad examples are the people who are dying, being raped, and being poisoned by people who were detained and could have been transferred into ICE custody and deported to make our communities safer, including the communities of illegally present people, who are less safe as a result of the current sanctuary policies.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I am going to yield to the Senator from

Iowa who has waited patiently on a separate issue that he and I are working on together and allow him to speak first if he wishes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

PRESCRIPTION DRUG COSTS

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I thank Senator DURBIN. He and I are working on something that successfully passed the Senate last year and was not agreed to by the House of Representatives. So we are back to bring some transparency to pricing of drugs, and that is what I want to speak about now.

I am here to share a secret with the American people. It is about prescription drug pricing. As chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, it is no secret that one of my biggest priorities is to rein in the soaring costs of prescription medicine. It is no secret that Americans are having a hard time paying for medicine. It is no secret that Big Pharma doesn't want us to change the status quo.

In fact, Big Pharma is spending big money to stop Congress and the Trump administration from legislating a cure of these high prices. That is the secret. They want to keep drug pricing a secret from the American people. So what does that mean? It means that Big Pharma wants to keep secrecy baked in when it benefits Big Pharma.

Right now, the very murky drug pricing supply chain is a mystery to consumers. There seems to be no rhyme or reason to what consumers will owe at the pharmacy counter when they pick up their prescriptions. American taxpayers, American seniors, and this U.S. Senator are fed up with the lack of consumer information when it comes to pharmaceuticals. That is why I am working to inject some Midwestern common sense into prescription drug pricing.

As you can see, I am working with my friend Senator DURBIN. We have teamed up before on issues that naysayers said couldn't get done.

You might recall that President Trump signed our FIRST STEP Act into law last year. The landmark reforms are protecting public safety, saving taxpayer dollars, and bringing fairness to the criminal justice system.

Today, we are teaming up once again to fix an injustice with prescription drug advertising.

Big Pharma spends billions of dollars a year advertising to the U.S. consumers. The FDA regulates what these direct-to-consumer ads must tell consumers. For example, advertisers must include in their ads potential side effects. You hear it all the time on TV—things about nausea, diarrhea, depression, weight gain, or even death if you might buy one of their drugs.

But let me tell you what seems to scare Big Pharma to death—price transparency. They do not want to tell consumers how much a drug costs when they saturate the airwaves with advertising that shows happy families

enjoying the grandkids, celebrating birthdays, and going on vacations.

Senator DURBIN and I believe that Americans have a right to know about the price of drugs, like they need to know the side effects of drugs or the value of drugs. Consumers should then know what the advertised drug costs.

It happens that the Trump administration agrees with Senator DURBIN and this Senator on that point, but, of course, Big Pharma sued to stop the Department of Health and Human Services' regulations from taking effect.

It is up to Congress, then, to change the law. That is what Senator DURBIN and I are here to talk about today.

Almost exactly 1 year ago, I said here on the floor of the Senate that it is time for Big Pharma to talk turkey on this subject. Yet here we are again, 1 year later, and Big Pharma has ridden the taxpayers' gravy train for another 12 months, and part of that gravy train is keeping the price of drugs off of the television screens when they advertise all of the value of the drugs and the dangers and the side effects of those drugs.

As Americans get ready to count their blessings around the Thanksgiving table a couple weeks from now, I hope they can count on all 100 Members of the Senate to approve the Durbin-Grassley bill.

There is no good reason to oppose it unless you would rather keep secrets for Big Pharma.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, let me thank my colleague from Iowa.

Senator GRASSLEY and I are friends, colleagues, and we work together on a lot of issues. We come to this body with different political philosophies, but occasionally our ideas converge, and this is one of them.

We know that the pharmaceutical industry spends \$6 billion a year on television advertising. If you have never seen a drug ad on TV, I know one thing for sure: You don't own a TV. You can't get away from them. Every time you turn around, there is another ad. And what are they telling you in the ads? Don't take this drug if you are allergic to this drug.

How are you supposed to know that?

You may die if you take this drug. They tell you everything under the Sun, except a very fundamental fact, as Senator GRASSLEY has pointed out: How much does this cost?

Xarelto—I know it takes a long time for the drug Xarelto to finally reach the point where the average consumer, the average American, can even spell it, let alone pronounce it, so they can go ask their doctor for it. And do you know how much Xarelto costs—this blood thinner—each month? It is about \$520 a month. But it is not the most heavily advertised drug on television.

At least a few months ago, the most heavily advertised drug was HUMIRA.