

They played on the sports teams. They probably attended the same churches and temples and synagogues as our own kids. They were just part of the group. But they knew—they privately knew they were not. They knew that they were one knock on the door away from being deported from the United States.

It was because of one of these young people that I decided to introduce that DREAM Act legislation 19 years ago. Her name is Tereza Lee, brought to the United States at the age of 2 from Korea by her parents to Chicago. She grew up in a family that struggled to make ends meet. Her father wanted to be a minister, but never quite put that church together. Her mother worked in a dry-cleaning establishment to feed the family. She went to public schools, and as luck would have it, there was a program at one of these schools called the Merit Music program that gave her a chance to learn how to play the piano.

She started playing, and she followed her father around to these churches. Then she took it seriously, and she became an amazing pianist to the point where, when she finished the public high school, she was offered an opportunity to go on for music education at the Manhattan Conservatory of Music. When she filled out her application and reached the point where they asked her nationality and citizenship, she asked her mom: What am I supposed to put on here? Her mom said: I am not sure. We better call Senator DURBIN's office.

They did, and we checked the law, and the law is very harsh. For Tereza Lee—who had lived 15 or 16 years in the United States, beat the odds by finishing high school and developing this great talent at the piano—the law told her that she had to leave the United States for 10 years and apply to return. That is the law.

It seemed unfair to me that a young woman, brought here at the age of 2, should face that as her only legal choice, so I introduced the DREAM Act. It said, if you were brought here as a child, raised in the United States, went to school, and had no criminal record of significance, that you should be given a chance—the chance to make it in the United States to earn your way to legal status and citizenship.

That is what the DREAM Act was all about. We passed it in the House and in the Senate, but never in the same Congress, so it is still not the law of the land. It was 8 years ago when I appealed to my former colleague in the Senate, Barack Obama, as President, to try to help, and he did.

By Executive action, he created DACA, which said that young people like Tereza Lee could apply, go through a criminal background check, fill out the necessary forms, pay the filing fee, and be allowed to stay in the United States for 2 years at a time, renewable, not to be deported, and be able to legally work.

After President Obama came up with DACA, over 780,000 young people came

forward and became protected by DACA. It really changed their lives. For the first time in their lives, they had some government-recognized status. They were no longer just undocumented. Then amazing things happened. They went on and pursued an education, a career, a life, a future. They started realizing their dreams. It was a good and positive thing all around.

Then, President Trump came into office. Initially, he was very complimentary of Dreamers, saying positive things about them, but, unfortunately, over a period of time he changed his attitude about this issue. On September 5, 2017, President Trump announced he was going to end the DACA Program, end the protection for these young people.

It was a sad day and a challenge for us to decide what to do, to try to pass legislation in the Congress that would protect these young people, and we rolled up our sleeves and put together several bipartisan measures in the Senate. President Trump rejected every single one of them. He wasn't going to have it. He was opposed to our enacting legislation that dealt with it.

That repeal of DACA has created uncertainty for hundreds of thousands. A lawsuit was filed in an effort to try to protect them, and the courts said their protection would continue while the case was being argued. The case worked its way through the courts and ended up, this morning, at the U.S. Supreme Court across the street.

I was proud to lead 172 current and former Members of Congress on a bipartisan amicus brief in support of DACA. Now it is clearly up to the Justices in the Supreme Court to follow the law and to reject what I consider to be President Trump's illegal repeal of DACA, but only Congress can provide a permanent solution for Dreamers.

The U.S. House of Representatives has responded to President Trump's cruel decision to repeal DACA by passing the Dream and Promise Act on a strong bipartisan vote of 237 to 187. This legislation is based on the DREAM Act I originally introduced 19 years ago. This bipartisan legislation would give Dreamers a chance to earn their citizenship. The bill passed the House. It is here. It is now up to Senator MITCH MCCONNELL of Kentucky, the Republican leader, to call the Dream and Promise Act for a vote in the U.S. Senate.

Mr. President, I want to make a unanimous consent request in relation to that measure and ask for a consent after we debate my UC request to complete my remarks. I see a Senator on the floor who I believe is here to object. I want to be courteous to her because she has been in the Chair for a while. Can I have a unanimous consent to return to the debate after I make my unanimous consent request?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—H.R. 6

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, for clarity, I ask unanimous consent to bring to the floor the Dream and Promise Act for a vote in the Senate—a measure which would address the very issue that is before the Supreme Court today. I am making this on behalf of Senator SCHUMER, Senator LEAHY, Senator ROSEN, Senator TIM Kaine, Senator MENENDEZ, and Senator CARDIN.

As if in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 112, H.R. 6; further, that the bill be considered read a third time and passed, and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon table, with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. President, I am reserving the right to object, and I will object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. President, I would like to articulate the reason for the objection to the legislation that is brought forward by my friend the Senator from Illinois.

Once again, I found it necessary for the good of the order to object to a unanimous consent request brought by our friends in the minority. Once again, they are attempting to bypass the Senate's rules on behalf of a piece of legislation this body has not had time to debate, to deliberate, or to consider in committee.

The American Dream and Promise Act passed the House of Representatives by a near party-line vote; unsurprising, considering the bill addresses the contentious issue of immigration law. This bill, supported by the Senator from Illinois, would offer temporary legal status to 2½ million undocumented immigrants.

Those affected immigrants have tried to remain in the United States under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or the DACA Program—a backstop made possible by nothing more than an Executive memo signed by former President Barack Obama.

I think this is important for us to realize that it was an Executive memo that put this program in place. It is not a Federal law. President Trump ended the DACA Program in 2017, arguing the Obama administration's attempt to subvert immigration law on such a massive scale was unlawful and possibly unconstitutional. Soon after, President Trump offered a path to legalization for DACA recipients, but our friends in the minority refused to take him up on that offer.

We have to remember this: There was a path to legalization for DACA recipients that was offered by President Donald Trump. Our friends in the minority said: No; no, we do not want that.

They continued with the issue. I will tell you, every Dreamer in the country should be outraged by the minority's

refusal to come to the table and negotiate on an offer that was on the table. I encourage my friends on the other side of the aisle to remember that the Supreme Court affirmed a lower court decision to maintain an injunction on the nationwide DAPA Program—a scheme similar to DACA but aimed at parents, as opposed to children.

Although that decision set no legal precedent, it did open up an opportunity for the new administration—and for each and every one of us in the Senate—to rebuild various fixes in our immigration system without running afoul of existing legal barriers.

As my friend the Senator from Illinois likes to point out, Senators from both sides of the aisle have been working on this issue—it has been with us for years—and it is imperative we find a consensus solution.

If the minority wishes to offer peace of mind and a path forward to Dreamers, they should do it in such a way that allows the American people to hold each and every one of us accountable for repercussions. We should do this through regular order. I reiterate my objection to the minority whip's motion.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Does the Senator object?

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. President, yes, I do object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, for the record, how many pieces of legislation did we consider in the Senate last week? None. The week before? None. How many months has this measure been sitting in the Senate, the Republican-controlled Senate? Five months, and for five months the Republican leader has not considered it worthy to even bring it before the Senate for debate.

I don't control the agenda. Senator McCANNELL does. He has decided this measure is not worth debating on the floor of the U.S. Senate.

When I come and make a unanimous consent request to bring this measure to the floor, it isn't as if we are taking away an option, which the Republican leader is using. He is not. When we look back to the debate or at least the effort to find a compromise with President Trump on this issue, it is next to impossible. He is surrounded by people who are completely against DACA and Dreamers. Stephen Miller is a good illustration of one. It used to be Jeff Sessions. He is no longer with the administration. Every time the President starts to lean toward DACA and the Dreamers, these people intervene and stop him, and negotiations come to an end.

It is time for us in the Senate not to wait for a permission slip from President Trump to pass legislation. I am prepared to bring this matter to the floor and to accept the decision on the amendments on the floor. We are in the minority. We will lose some of these

amendments. So be it. Let's let the Senate be the Senate and deliberate these measures. To argue that I shouldn't be asking to bring it to the floor because it has to go through regular order, the obvious question is: When is Senator McCANNELL going to pursue regular order on a measure that has been sitting here for 5 months?

Let me say a word, if I can, while we are on the subject, about the people who are involved. We can talk about Senate procedure and law all we wish, but what we should do is discuss the real people who are involved.

In 1,000 days in office, this President has issued 11,000 tweets. No surprise, is it? There are 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 a day. He issued one this morning about the young people who are in question here. I would like to read President Donald Trump's tweet from this morning, as the case was headed to the Supreme Court. Here is what he tweeted:

Many of the people in DACA, no longer very young, are far from "angels." Some are very tough, hardened criminals. President Obama said he had no legal right to sign order, but would anyway. If Supreme Court remedies with overturn, a deal will be made with Dems for them to stay!

May I address one particular aspect of the tweet of the President of the United States on this subject affecting the fate of 780,000 young people living in the United States? Probably the best thing is not to do it generically but to talk about specifics.

Let me tell you a story about two DACA recipients, both attending Loyola University in Chicago—the city I am honored to represent. They both came to Washington, DC, today, and sat in the Supreme Court during the argument. I am going to leave it up to my Members and colleagues in the Senate, as well as those who are following this debate, to reach their own conclusion about these two whom I am about to tell the story of. You decide whether this man is a tough and hardened criminal. His name is Cesar Montelongo. He grew up in the State of New Mexico. He was a pretty good student. In fact, he was an excellent student. He graduated from high school with a grade point average of 4.0 and ranked third in his class. He went on to New Mexico State University, where he was a triple major in biology, microbiology, and Spanish, as well as two minors in chemistry and biochemistry. Cesar graduated with a 3.9 GPA.

This hardened criminal then went on to earn a master's degree in biology, with a minor in molecular biology, while working as a teaching assistant. Then DACA came along. For the first time in his life, he had a chance to apply for medical school. He never thought that could happen. He applied and was accepted at Loyola University's Chicago Stritch School of Medicine. It is quite an achievement.

The Presiding Officer, who is also a medical doctor, I am sure understands that, but he did one better. He enrolled in the M.D.-Ph.D. program at Loyola

University. He was just in my office upstairs, and he told me that in a matter of 2 or 3 years, he will have completed his Ph.D. in microbiology, and then he can go on to complete his medical degree and his residency.

This tough, hardened criminal—according to the President—has designs on becoming a medical researcher in the United States of America. When he completes this highly competitive program, he will have a medical degree and a doctorate degree in science.

He is one of dozens of DACA recipients at the Stritch School. My hat is off to Loyola University. They have admitted more DACA students to their medical school than any other medical school in the United States. They are amazing students. I have met them. Many, if not all of them, have promised to come back to my State of Illinois, having had this chance to go to medical school in Chicago, and serve in underserved areas after they have become practicing doctors. Loyola doesn't give them any special treatment in the selection process. They are not eligible for any Federal financial assistance.

I just want to thank them and say to the President of the United States: Before you put out a tweet calling Cesar Montelongo or people like him hardened criminals, Mr. President, take a minute and meet these young people.

While you are at it, meet this young lady too. She was just in my office. Her name is Fernanda Herrera Vera. When she was 2 years old, her family brought her from Mexico to the United States. When she was 7, her family was forced to leave Guntersville, AL, when her father lost his job due to his immigration status. The family settled in Gadsden, AL, where Fernanda attended a private Catholic school on a scholarship.

When she was 10, her parents opened a restaurant. Every day after school, she went to the restaurant to wait tables and help run the restaurant, doing her homework in her spare time. During Fernanda's junior year of high school, Alabama passed the harshest anti-immigration law in the country, which forced her family to close down their restaurant.

Alabama barred Dreamers from attending even public colleges, but thanks to DACA, Fernanda was able to attend a private school, Samford University in Birmingham, AL. Her parents worked hard to pay tuition. She qualified for no Federal financial assistance. Her dad worked 80 hours a week at a chicken plant so that she could go to college. She graduated from Samford in 2017, and her experience has driven her to become an immigration activist. She worked at the Alabama Coalition for Immigrant Justice.

After President Trump repealed DACA in 2017, Fernanda came to Washington for a 4-day hunger fast with other DACA recipients on the Capitol lawn.

Last year, Fernanda was admitted to the Loyola University Chicago School

of Law. But this spring, her mother was pulled over in Georgia for driving with a broken taillight. Her mother is now in deportation proceedings.

It is tough enough to go to school without Federal financial help. It is tough enough to work your way through it. It is tough enough not to know how the Supreme Court is going to rule tomorrow or the day after and whether it will change your fate. It is tough enough to know that any knock at the door could mean deportation for members of your family. Yet she has persevered.

A hardened criminal, Mr. President?

Fernanda's dream is to become an immigration lawyer. She wants to help people just like her mom.

Without DACA, Cesar Montelongo will not become a doctor. Fernanda Herrera Vera will not become an attorney. Will America be a better country if they are forced to leave, if they are deported? I don't think so.

Cesar, Fernanda, and hundreds of thousands of other Dreamers are counting on the Supreme Court to do the right thing and reject President Trump's repeal of DACA. They are also counting on those of us who serve in the Senate to stop making excuses and solve this crisis.

A bill has passed the House. I tried to bring it to the floor of the Senate, and there was an objection today. It isn't because we are overwhelmed with work. As you can see, we spend a lot of time making speeches.

Since Senator McCONNELL refuses to take any action to address the plight of the Dreamers, I am going to continue to make this unanimous consent request. Next week, I don't want the excuse to be that we are not following regular order, but in the meantime, I hope the Senate Judiciary Committee will take up this measure, as they have so many times over the last 15 years or so, and bring it to the floor of the Senate.

Once and for all, could we be the U.S. Senate for a week? Could we actually consider a piece of legislation here that addresses an issue that is critically important to hundreds of thousands of people living in the United States of America?

What a relief it would be to see this Senate actually as a Senate, to see Members on the floor debating issues. I am not going to win every debate. Every amendment I want is not going to pass, but I am prepared to accept the outcome. Let's do what the Senate was elected to do.

I am sorry there was an objection today. As long as I am a U.S. Senator, I am going to continue to come to the floor of the Senate to advocate for Cesar, Fernanda and all of the Dreamers. It would be an American tragedy to deport these two promising young people.

Now it is in the hands of Senator MITCH McCONNELL, the Republican majority leader, to give the Dream and Promise Act a vote and to say to those

780,000 who do not know what their future will be just days or weeks from now that there is an answer: We want you to be part of America.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I know my friend from Illinois, Senator DURBIN, is sincere in his desire to get some relief for the DACA recipients, whose case is now pending before the U.S. Supreme Court. I share a desire to give them some certainty. That is why I supported what President Trump offered in February of 2018, which was a pathway to citizenship not only for the individuals who had applied for and received deferred action under President Obama's administration but for all those who were eligible but did not apply.

What continues to confuse me is how our Democratic colleagues will routinely vote against that offer, which was incredibly generous. I don't think any other President in my lifetime would have had the boldness and the courage to offer a pathway to citizenship for 1.8 million DACA-eligible young people, but President Trump did, and our Democratic colleagues turned it down. That leads me to wonder about their sincerity. Do they like this political issue more than they have a desire to find a solution to the problem?

I agree that these young people, who through no fault of their own came to the United States because their parents brought them here, are the most sympathetic and deserving cohort of immigrants in the country. I wish we could work together to come up with a solution. But at some point you have to wonder whether our Democratic colleagues prefer not to solve the problem but would rather try to portray this as a political football for partisan advantage in the runoff to the next election.

That is tragic—toying with the lives of these young people, stoking their insecurity, telling them you are on their side but on the other hand voting against an offer to provide them a pathway toward citizenship. I don't know how you reconcile those two positions.

PRESCRIPTION DRUG COSTS

Mr. President, on another matter, I introduced a bill with our colleague from Connecticut, Senator BLUMENTHAL, to address the rising costs at the pharmacy counter. Senator BLUMENTHAL is a Democrat. I am a Republican. He is from Connecticut. I am from Texas. But we both heard the same thing from our constituents: Prescription drugs—particularly the out-of-pocket costs to consumers—are too high, especially with the huge deductibles and the huge copays under the Affordable Care Act.

Over the last several months, we have dug into the reasons behind those high costs, and it is safe to say there is a lot that concerns us.

One of the most egregious forms of abuse we have seen deals with the pat-

ent system. Under the patent system, if you come up with a new lifesaving drug, then you are guaranteed the exclusive right to make and to sell that drug, and you are protected from any competition for a period of time. But after that period of time expires, what is supposed to happen is that generic alternatives are supposed to be available to compete and bring down the price for consumers. That is the case for 90 percent of the drugs we take.

Our country offers the most robust protection in the world for intellectual property. We know companies are unlikely to pour extensive time, money, and resources into developing these new cures unless, at the end of it, there is some reward. I get that, and I support that.

But the patent system is designed to provide a limited time period during which the manufacturer can be the sole seller on the market before generic alternatives can become available and before competitors can enter the market. What is happening is that some companies are abusing that system and extending that period of exclusivity by filing tens—sometimes in excess of 100 patents.

In one case involving a drug called HUMIRA, which is one of the best selling drugs in the world, there are four approved competitors in Europe. In the United States, HUMIRA has in excess of 120 separate patents designed to crowd out and prevent any competition while maintaining their exclusivity in the marketplace.

That is what is called the patent thicketting. It involves using intricate webs of patents to keep competition at bay for as long as possible, meaning that your profits and your exclusive rights to sell this drug are high.

There is also something called product hopping, which occurs when a company develops a reformulation of an existing drug about to lose its exclusivity and then pulls the original product off the market. This is done not because the new formula is more effective necessarily but because pulling the original drug off the market before it loses its exclusivity prevents generic competitors. That is called product hopping.

The bill Senator BLUMENTHAL and I introduced aims to stop these anti-competitive behaviors, allow competitors to come to market sooner, and bring down prices for consumers. The Affordable Prescriptions for Patients Act streamlines the litigation process by limiting the number of patents companies can use when they are litigating their patent rights. Ultimately, we believe—and I believe it is borne out by the Congressional Budget Office scoring—this would allow competitors to resolve patent issues faster and bring those generic drugs to market sooner. This is how we improve competition and lower prices without getting in the way of lifesaving innovation.

The added benefit to this bill is the Federal savings it would provide for