

a fee. That was understood. But it seemed like a reasonable thing to allow these talented people to stay in America and be part of our future.

DACA has protected more than 830,000 young people from deportation, all of whom were brought to this country as children, some as young as just a few months old.

Last month, I held a hearing in the Senate Judiciary Committee on the importance of protecting Dreamers and DACA. We heard from some amazing witnesses who showed why it is so important that we do this.

One of the witnesses was Officer Mitchell Soto Rodriguez from my State of Illinois. She is the first-ever DACA recipient to serve as a police officer with the Blue Island, IL, Police Department. She was very clear: Without DACA, that would not have been possible. Now she is realizing her dream as a part of the police force of this community.

Let me share another story of a talented DACA recipient contributing to our country. I have come to the floor of the Senate 143 times, as of today, to tell these stories. I believe each one tells a better story than any speech I could give on the subject.

This young man's name is Wilmer Palacios. He comes from a small village in Guatemala. He came to Los Angeles when he was 14 years old. His dream: He wanted to be a registered nurse. But he didn't think it was possible because he was undocumented.

The day Wilmer heard about DACA in 2012, he immediately switched his degree to pre-nursing because, for the first time, he finally felt that he could fulfill his dream.

Mr. Palacios has held DACA status almost since the program's inception 12 years ago. He now has a master's of science degree in nursing and is a registered nurse and family nurse practitioner in a medical cardiac intensive care unit in Fresno, CA. His ultimate goal is to open a medical clinic in a low-income community, and he would like to serve in the U.S. Army as a nurse.

Do we need nurses in America? Let me tell you—go to your local hospital and ask the first person in management that question, and they will tell you we are desperate; we need more nurses. We need more people like Wilmer.

He recently said: DACA offered me the freedom and opportunities I never thought possible growing up, but I cannot deny that I live in constant fear—constant fear—of a court decision and a Presidential election that can take it all away.

DACA has allowed Wilmer to pursue his dreams for now, but it was always intended to be temporary, until Congress acted. The fact is, with precious few exceptions, for 30 years, Congress has failed to act and upgrade our immigration laws.

Everybody knows the immigration system in this country is broken. And

to fix it, we need a determined Senate, House of Representatives, and a President who is looking for a constructive solution. It has been hard to find.

Since President Obama established the DACA Program, Republicans have waged a relentless campaign to overturn DACA and deport these Dreamers back to countries they barely knew. Now, this program is hanging by a thread in the courts due to legal challenges from Republican State attorneys general, and DACA recipients like Wilmer Palacios are being forced to live with uncertainty every single day.

Last September, a Federal judge in Texas declared DACA illegal. Though the decision left in place protections for the current recipients, these Dreamers live in constant fear that the next court decision will upend their lives.

The litigation has also prevented at least 100,000 additional Dreamers from registering for the program. Keep in mind, those who register for the program go through a background check. When I hear people describe our immigrant population in America as murderers, rapists, terrorists, and the insane, I think to myself: Who are they talking about?

These DACA recipients—over 800,000 of them—go through background checks to make certain they are no danger to the United States; and like Mr. Palacios, they turn out to be absolutely essential to our future.

One study estimated that if DACA were to end, 1,000 U.S. workers would be out of work every business day for the next 2 years. Losing 1,000 workers like Wilmer—1,000 every day. Business owners in my State tell me they need more skilled workers.

There isn't a hospital in the State of Illinois that doesn't want a nurse like Mr. Palacios, who has a master's degree in nursing. They are desperate for them.

Some would say: Send them away. Deport them. They are not Americans. Some use harsh terms like they poison the blood of America. I couldn't disagree more. These people are part of our future. They are good, solid people who will be good citizens of the United States.

The threat just doesn't come from the courts. When he was President, President Donald Trump tried to end the DACA Program and deport people like Wilmer Palacios. And it is clear that, given the chance, he would try it again.

If my Republican colleagues will join us, Congress can protect the Dreamers and DACA recipients. I urge my colleagues: Meet the Dreamers personally. You will realize they are not a threat to this country; they are the future of our country. They can bring to us things that we need desperately.

They have earned the right to live in this country without fear. They should be able to put down roots, start families, further their education, and contribute to our society without the fear of deportation hanging over them.

It is time for Congress to get to work on a bipartisan basis and pass the DREAM Act. It is the right thing, and it is long overdue. I thought we had a chance to do that a few weeks ago. There was a bipartisan bill that moved forward. I look back at it and say that JAMES LANKFORD, a Republican conservative from Oklahoma, and two other Senators—CHRIS MURPHY and KYRSTEN SINEMA—all came together with a bill which would have really moved us forward in bringing order to the border, ending the crisis that we found there; put more resources into stopping the illegal flow of drugs into the United States; hire more people to do the jobs at the borders.

A leading union for Border Patrol agents endorsed this bipartisan bill. Well, what happened to it? Why wasn't it passed? Why didn't the Senate pass this bill?

There is one reason, and it is very public. The former President of the United States, Donald Trump, said: I don't want this bill to move forward. I want this issue to remain in the campaign until November.

So our opportunity for a bipartisan solution to this problem was lost.

We have got to move back to the point where we are working on a bipartisan basis to solve this program. We can do it. Virtually all of us who believe that immigration is an integral part of the history and future of the United States have an obligation to the American people to meet that responsibility.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Vermont.

PRESCRIPTION DRUG COSTS

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, let me be as clear as I can be. That is, the American people—whether they are Democrats, Republicans, or Independents—are sick and tired of paying, by far, the highest prices in the world for prescription drugs. The American people are sick and tired of being ripped off by giant pharmaceutical companies who make huge profits every year while charging us outrageous prices that the American people cannot afford.

A few months ago, the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee—the HELP Committee—that I chair held a hearing on the extraordinarily high prices of prescription drugs in the United States, and this is what we learned.

We learned that Merck, one of the largest pharmaceutical companies in the world, made \$14.5 billion in profits last year charging Americans struggling with diabetes \$6,900 for Januvia, when the same exact product can be purchased in Canada for \$900 and in France for \$200.

Here you go: \$6,900 in the United States, \$900 in Canada, \$200 in France. This is not a generic. This is the exact same product.

We found that this same company—which, by the way, could afford to

spend \$7 billion last year on dividends and a \$52 million compensation package for its CEO—\$52 million for its CEO—charges Americans struggling with cancer \$191,000 for Keytruda, while the same exact drug can be purchased in Canada for \$112,000, \$91,000 in France, and \$89,000 in Germany.

Keytruda: \$191,000 in the United States, \$112,000 in Canada, and \$91,000 in France.

And it is not just Merck. This is Merck, but it is not just Merck. Our committee also discovered that Bristol Myers Squibb, a company that made over \$6 billion in profits last year, charges patients in America \$7,100 for Eliquis, the popular blood thinner, when that same exact product can be purchased for just \$900 in Canada and just \$650 in France.

Eliquis: \$7,100 in the United States; \$900 in Canada; and \$650 in France—same exact product.

That same company, Bristol Myers Squibb—which, by the way, could afford to spend some \$14 billion on stock buybacks and dividends and hand out \$41 million in compensation to its CEO last year—charges Americans with cancer \$192,000 for Opdivo, while that same exact drug can be purchased for just \$89,000 in Canada and \$68,000 in France.

Opdivo, cancer drug: \$192,000 in America, \$89,000 in Canada, \$68,000 in France—same product, same company.

What else did our committee learn from its investigation? Well, we found out that Johnson & Johnson, which made over \$18 billion in profits last year, charges cancer patients \$204,000 for Imbruvica, which can be purchased for just \$46,000 in the UK and \$43,000 in France.

And that same company, which recently spent over \$17 billion on stock buybacks and dividends and gave its CEO a \$27 million compensation package last year, charges Americans with arthritis \$79,000 for Stelara when it can be purchased for just \$30,000 in Germany and \$16,000 in the UK. Stelara, Johnson & Johnson: \$79,000 in the United States, \$16,000 in the UK, \$30,000 in Germany.

Let us be clear. It is not just Bristol Myers Squibb. It is not just Merck. It is not just Johnson & Johnson. Incredibly—and this is quite incredible and unbelievable and talks to our broken and dysfunctional healthcare system—while one out of four Americans cannot afford the medicine their doctors prescribe, 10 top pharmaceutical companies in our country made over \$110 billion in profits last year and spent tens of billions on stock buybacks and dividends. In other words, you have the insane situation where people get sick. They go to the doctor. The doctor writes out a prescription. They cannot afford to fill that prescription. Well, if you are sick and you can't afford to fill the prescription, what happens to you? Likely, you even get sicker. You may end up in the hospital at an additional cost to the system, not to mention human suffering.

As the chair of the Senate HELP Committee, one of the top priorities for me is to try to substantially reduce the price of prescription drugs in the United States. And one of the ways to do that, in my view, is to hold the executives of some of the largest pharmaceutical companies in our country accountable for their actions; let them know that we understand what is going on and that the American people will not accept what is going on.

That brings us to another major pharmaceutical company, and that is Novo Nordisk, the manufacturer of the blockbuster drugs Ozempic and Wegovy. On April 24, the HELP Committee launched an investigation into the unbelievably high prices Novo Nordisk charges for Ozempic and Wegovy in the United States for millions of our people who are struggling with diabetes and obesity. We have an epidemic in this country of diabetes and obesity. People need these very, very important drugs.

Today, our investigation has found that Novo Nordisk charges Americans with type 2 diabetes \$969 a month for Ozempic, while the same exact drug can be purchased for just \$59 in Germany, \$122 in Denmark, and \$155 in Canada. Here we got it. Ozempic, blockbuster drug, important drug dealing with diabetes and obesity: United States, \$969, Canada \$155, Denmark, \$122, Germany, \$59. The same exact drug made by the same company is almost 10 times higher—more than 10 times higher. My arithmetic is not that good. It looks to be almost 20 times higher between the United States and Germany.

Novo Nordisk charges Americans with obesity—that was for diabetes—\$1,349 a month for Wegovy, while the same exact product can be purchased for just \$92 in the UK, \$186 in Denmark, and \$265 in Canada. Further, if half of the adults in our country—this is not an unreasonable projection. If half of the adults in our country with obesity took Wegovy, which is apparently a very successful drug, and the other new weight loss drugs, it could cost—and this is quite incredible, and every Member of Congress should be listening to this—it would cost us, as a nation, \$411 billion every year for weight-loss drugs dealing with diabetes and obesity. That is \$5 billion more than what Americans spent on all—A-L-L—all prescription drugs at the pharmacy counter in 2022.

Let me repeat it. If we do not change, fundamentally change, this scenario, Americans could be spending more at these incredibly absurd prices on weight-loss drugs than on all prescription drugs at the pharmacy counter for cancer, for whatever—more for weight-loss drugs than all the other drugs in the country. Clearly, it doesn't take an economist to understand that this is unsustainable. It can't happen.

The HELP Committee also found that if half of all Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries who are obese—not

talking about diabetes, talking about obesity—took Wegovy and other weight-loss drugs, Medicare and Medicaid could spend \$166 billion every year, roughly what these two major healthcare programs spent on all retail prescription drugs in 2022. That would also be unsustainable.

The scientists at Novo Nordisk and the other drug companies deserve a lot of credit and thanks for developing these important lifesaving drugs. But these drugs mean nothing for the millions of people who cannot afford them. And if we do not substantially lower the prices these companies are charging, they will have a disastrous impact on the Federal deficit and the future of Medicare and Medicaid.

So all of those people worried about the Federal deficit, worried about the future of Medicare and Medicaid, listen up because just these drugs, Ozempic and Wegovy, can bankrupt those programs. We have, in my view, a moral responsibility to make sure that every American with diabetes and obesity who receives a prescription for Ozempic or Wegovy can afford to purchase those drugs. It would be a horrible thing for somebody who was in need of those drugs, who could be helped by those drugs, to not to be able to get them because they can't afford these outrageous prices.

Further, as Members of the Congress, we have a fiscal responsibility to make sure that Ozempic and Wegovy do not bankrupt Medicare, Medicaid, and, in fact, our entire healthcare system, which already spends twice as much per capita on healthcare as the people of any other country.

That is why the HELP Committee has, time and time again, invited the leadership of Novo Nordisk to voluntarily testify about the unconscionably high prices they are charging for these drugs in the United States. The reason why we invited the executives at Novo Nordisk to testify before Congress is not complicated. It is a very, very simple question that we want answered. And that question is, Why do they think it is acceptable for Novo Nordisk to charge Americans \$969 for Ozempic when that same exact drug can be purchased for just \$59 in Germany and \$155 in Canada? We want to ask them why they think it is acceptable to charge Americans \$1,349 for Wegovy when that same drug can be purchased for just \$92 in the United Kingdom.

After all is said and done, what are we trying to accomplish? The answer is obvious, and the answer is simple. We want Novo Nordisk to stop ripping off the American people, and we want them to stop charging us prices that are far, far higher than they charge the people of other countries. That is what I want to see, and that is what the overwhelming majority of American people want to see.

Unfortunately, despite the many, many discussions that I and my staff have had with Novo Nordisk over the past several months, I must confess

that we have made virtually no progress in getting them to lower their prices. We have asked the leadership of the company to come before the committee to explain why their prices are so much higher in the United States than in other countries. Unfortunately, they have not agreed to do that.

Therefore, the HELP Committee has no choice but to subpoena the leadership of Novo Nordisk to testify and explain their actions. I look forward to the presence of the leadership of Novo Nordisk at a HELP Committee hearing on July 10.

Let me be very clear. The HELP Committee that I chair will continue to ask the tough questions that the pharmaceutical industry would prefer us to ignore: Why is it that the median price of new prescription drugs in America is now over \$300,000, including for many new cancer drugs? Why has the pharmaceutical industry spent over the past 25 years some \$8.5 billion on lobbying and over \$700 million on campaign contributions?

Right now, as we speak, there are some 1,800 well-paid lobbyists of the pharmaceutical industry all over Washington, former leaders of the Republican Party and the Democratic Party, doing everything they can to make sure we do not ask those questions and that we are not successful in getting them to lower their prices.

Mr. President, let me conclude the way I began. This is an issue that is not a Democratic issue. It is not a Republican issue. It is not an Independent issue. The American people are sick and tired of being ripped off by the pharmaceutical industry, sick and tired of paying by far the highest prices in the world.

And the time is now for the Congress to have the courage to stand up to the 1,800 paid lobbyists here in Washington, DC, all the campaign contributions that come in, and tell the industry enough is enough. Lower the prices you are charging the American people.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Massachusetts.

TRIBUTE TO RICHARD CORDRAY

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize my friend and my former colleague, Rich Cordray. Rich's career demonstrates public service at its very best.

Nearly 14 years ago, I picked up the phone and made one of the smartest phone calls I have ever made. It was to Rich Cordray. I asked him to take a chance on me to join me in starting a new Federal Agency. That just-getting-started Agency turned out to be the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.

Rich was finishing up his term as attorney general for the State of Ohio. As AG, he had earned a strong reputation for being the kind of public servant who looks out for the little guy. He was in multiple battles, and he led major lawsuits against both Bank of America and AIG. Protecting con-

sumers seemed to be in his blood, so it was a natural fit for Rich to take charge of the enforcement arm of the CFPB.

Establishing the CFPB was a huge task. Critics said the new consumer Agency was a pipe dream. Republicans said that it would never get through Congress. Armies of lobbyists poured millions of dollars into opposing it. But none of that fazed Rich at all. He always stayed level, calm, and absolutely determined. He did the work needed to bring that Agency to life because that is just who he is.

Rich's courage and determination paid off. On July 18, 2011—a day I will never forget—I stood beside President Obama in the Rose Garden as he announced Rich Cordray as his nominee to be the first official Director of the CFPB. President Obama told me two things about Rich: He said he liked Rich, and he said he thought Rich would be a good leader. I agreed. I just knew that Rich would be terrific, and we were both right.

As CFPB Director, Rich forced the biggest financial institutions in this country to return billions of dollars to the consumers they cheated, and through his work, he proved that government could work not just for the millionaires and billionaires but for ordinary people.

One of the ways he did it was by having what I call the perfect balance of nerve and skill.

I will share just one story. Rich has never been shy about taking on the biggest financial institutions in this country. In the early days, he investigated Capital One for misleading customers about their cost of “free” add-ons to their credit cards. These “free” services actually cost customers a total of about \$140 million. So what did Rich do? He put in the work, fought back the armies of lobbyists and lawyers, and forced Capital One to send the hidden fees back to every single customer they had cheated. The best part—the customers didn't have to wade through reams of paperwork or stay on hold for hours. Rich set up the system so that the checks came automatically in the mail. He set the standard for what it means to protect consumers. But that is not all. On top of getting hard-working Americans their money back, Rich and his team got Capital One to pay an additional \$25 million fine. It takes a special kind of leader to get that done.

At every turn, Rich Cordray has been fearless. Thanks to Rich, the CFPB has become the watchdog that so many of us fought for, and his legacy is felt each and every day as the CFPB continues to put money back into the pockets of working people.

Since it got off the ground, the CFPB has now returned over \$20 billion and helped more than 205 million consumers. I will say that again—\$20 billion returned and 205 million consumers helped. That would not have happened without Rich Cordray. That

record of public service is awe-inspiring.

Nobody would have blamed Rich if he had said: OK, I am tired, and I am ready to throw in the towel. But that is not Rich. After his work at the CFPB, he asked: What more can I do? And for the past 3 years, he has led the Office of Federal Student Aid at the Department of Education—a powerfully important and often thankless gig.

Since joining the Department of Education, Rich has changed millions of lives for the better, and, again, that is not an exaggeration. His North Star was always clear. He worked day in and day out to protect working people who are getting crushed by student loan debt.

Rich stood up to the student loan servicers who were cheating Americans, and, like he did with the big banks, he held these guys accountable.

For years, servicers failed borrowers over and over and over but faced no consequences as they raked in hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars. Rich reversed the Trump-era guidance that stopped States from protecting their own residents against abusive servicer behavior. He implemented new accountability standards for servicers, and he backed that by hard data on customer service and performance. When those servicers didn't meet those standards, Rich wasn't afraid to hit them with penalties and push out the bad servicers. Rich was committed to ending the days of lousy service and big profits for the loan servicers.

One of the most important ways that Rich changed the lives of Americans all across this country was by overseeing the Biden administration's efforts to cancel student debt. With Rich Cordray's help, President Biden has canceled more student loan debt than any President in the history of this country. Nearly 5 million people have seen their student loans canceled, and the administration has a plan to cancel debt for 30 million Americans in total.

Rich Cordray led the way in fixing the broken debt-cancellation programs and making them work for hard-working Americans. I will give you just one example on this.

Before President Biden took office, only 7,000 people in total, everywhere in the United States, had gotten relief through the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program—7,000 total. Today, the laws are the same, but with Rich at the helm, nearly 1 million public servants have had their debt wiped out. For working people in this country, for mommas and daddies, for firefighters and nurses, for DMV workers down the street and the teacher at your local elementary school, this debt cancellation has been absolutely life-changing.

On a personal note, I am beyond proud of Rich. Rich is one of the most effective and honest public servants I have ever met. He has talent and dedication. But what makes him so special