

our U.S. immigration laws would be to improve the effectiveness of the current law against the knowing employment of aliens not authorized to work or even to be present in this country. The passing of a bill such as S. 269 would be a monumental step toward making that contribution.

In the coming weeks, I will make additional statements to this body, describing other provisions of S. 269 and exactly why those provisions are important. Hearings will begin at the end of that period in the Senate Subcommittee on Immigration, which I chair. And a fine group of Members are on that subcommittee, Democrat and Republican alike. I look forward to working with my ranking member, Senator KENNEDY. He and I have worked together on immigration issues for 17 years.

Hearings will be held. We will consider all other immigration reform legislation from all of my colleagues, comprehensive, bipartisan, as well as specific proposals such as this one for the accuracy of a more fraud-resistant system for issuing these documents. We have to look into the one for issuing of birth certificates and matching records. Can Senators believe we do not even match birth and death records?

I sincerely look forward to hearing the ideas of my fine colleagues on these issues. Then we will be able to avoid things that are bringing down the system, things that give rise to the power of the force of proposition 187.

It reminded me of the story of the child who was at the graveyard in a jurisdiction noted for rather shabby election processes. Pick your own State, as you might imagine. The child was crying, and the person came up and said, "Son, why are you crying?" And he said, "I just learned that my dad came back to vote, and I never even saw him."

So we do want to try to avoid that in the future, because people use these cards to vote, to vote themselves largess from the Treasury, to then draw on our resources that we taxpayers—legal taxpayers—provide. That must stop. There is a way to stop it. We propose that. I would enjoy working and will enjoy, as I always have, working with all of my colleagues on this most serious issue. We are very dedicated to this process. I intend to spend a great deal of time and effort in these next months in doing responsible immigration reform—not only illegal immigration, but legal immigration.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I may use

time from that under Senator DASCHLE's control.

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

HEALTH CARE REFORM

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, last year, Congress spent an enormous amount of time considering health care reform. After the debate came to a close, after all the posturing, speeches, and amendments, we failed to produce a health care bill. The greatest disappointment of the 103d Congress was our failure to enact health care reform. Millions of Americans are without health care, millions more are underinsured, and countless others are only a paycheck away from losing health care coverage. The crisis in our health care system will simply not go away.

Thirty-nine million Americans are uninsured. Last year, an additional 1 million Americans lost health insurance. If we don't enact legislation this Congress, the number of uninsured will continue to rise. I commend the Democratic leader, Senator DASCHLE for recognizing this dire need and for leading the U.S. Senate into the crafting of some form of health insurance for the people of America.

In Hawaii, we have solved the problems of affordability and access. Hawaii has achieved the American health care dream—near-universal health care coverage for its citizens at a cost that is 25–30 percent below the national average. For 20 years, Hawaii has maintained a model health care system. We have one of the healthiest populations in the Nation. A study by the Journal of the American Medical Association found that Hawaii has one of the lowest infant mortality rates. Deaths from chronic health problems such as cancer, heart disease, and lung disease are also among the lowest in the Nation.

Nearly everyone in Hawaii has some form of health insurance, so these life threatening conditions are detected earlier, which reduces premature death and shortens hospital visits. Because our population has ready access to a primary care physician, we use hospital emergency rooms only half as often as other States.

There is no reason why the rest of the Nation should settle for anything less than what Hawaii enjoys. Americans do not want a Band-Aid approach to health care reform. They do not want a medisave program or a savings account approach to health care. They want real, tangible health care that gives coverage when they need it. By developing a bipartisan consensus, we can take major steps to contain costs, expand choice, and increase access to care.

Hawaii has enjoyed its health care program, and we hope that we can extend this to the rest of the Nation.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The Senator from New Jersey.

DEFENSE SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, I want to take a few minutes this morning to review and comment on action taken this week by the House of Representatives during consideration of the defense supplemental.

I am deeply concerned by the legislation that the House is sending us. It is, in my view, deficient in at least three respects.

First, it spends too much money. The administration asked for a \$2.6 billion in emergency defense spending to pay for operations already undertaken in the past in Somalia, Rwanda, Bosnia, Southwest Asia, Haiti, and Cuba. The House approved that, but it also added an extra \$680 million that neither the administration nor the Pentagon requested.

Even Defense Secretary Perry has said the Pentagon, and I quote him, "has higher priority bills that should be funded first," and that the Pentagon would seek to reallocate money from existing defense funds in the spring to pay some of the \$680 million worth of bills that the House wants to fund immediately. Since there is no urgent need for these unrequested funds, I see no reason to provide them in a supplemental.

My first point then, Mr. President, is simply the additional \$680 million should be stricken out when the Appropriations Committee considers this legislation.

Second, I am not yet persuaded—and I sit on the Defense Subcommittee of the Appropriations Committee—that all of the \$2.6 billion that the administration did ask for ought to be funded necessarily in the supplemental. A supplemental request is supposed to be reserved for unexpected and unanticipated exigencies. However, at least some of the administration's request appears to be for normal or routine or expected expenses, like the no-fly zone over Bosnia and Iraq, which has been underway for years. If we are to really reform the budget process, we have to prevent agencies from low-balling their initial requests because they believe they can always come back and ask for more later in a supplemental. It is kind of a habit that we have gotten into, and I do not think it is a particularly good one. We need to insist that the military, like every other agency, submit budget requests sufficient to cover predictable expenses.

And third, I am concerned about the offsets the House used to pay for this supplemental. Now, I agree that we should offset expenditures whenever