

student who dreams of becoming a civil engineer. We need civil engineers. We give people from different parts of the world permits to come to the United States to do these engineering jobs that we don't have enough domestic people to do. Here is a young man who grew up in America, who is American in every respect, and who is, in essence, pursuing a career path that would inure to the national economic interest. His story is just one more reminder that our country can't afford to lose America's Dreamers. They have so much to offer to our communities and our economy.

In fact, ending DACA is projected to cost New Jersey's economy over \$1.5 billion annually and reduce the overall economy of the United States by \$460 billion over the next decade.

DACA gave Dreamers like Reiniero the freedom to pursue his dreams. But it also gave him a sense of security. He recently wrote this on northjersey.com:

The day I received my work permit and my Social Security card was the day I finally felt proud of who I am. I felt recognized. I felt safe.

That sense of belonging, of acceptance, and of safety was ripped away by the President's decision to end DACA. So long as Congress fails to act, we are complicit in prolonging the very real fear that 800,000 Dreamers feel today—the fear that the knock on the door is not your family or neighbor but an immigration agent ready to whisk you away from your family; the fear that we see when these young people who believed in our government came forth, went through a criminal background check, gave all their information, and gave information on their family, all under the guise that they thought it was going to be confidential. Now all of that is at risk.

The willingness of DACA recipients to share their stories speaks volumes about their integrity, their courage, and the trust they put in us as elected officials. I am reminded of Psalm 56:3: "When I am afraid, I put my trust in You."

Well, Dreamers like Sara, Adriana, and Reiniero put their trust in the United States of America when they applied for DACA. They came out of the shadows. They registered with the Department of Homeland Security. They passed criminal background checks. They handed over personal details about themselves and their families to authorities they had been forced to hide for their entire lives.

DACA recipients went through all of this to get a 2-year renewable work permit and the promise of protection from deportation. That is the limited bargain they made, and the administration has eviscerated that limited promise and struck fear in the hearts of all of these families.

So I ask my colleagues—Democrats and Republicans—was their faith, their trust, their belief in the U.S. Government's word a monumental mistake?

Were they wrong to believe that we could put partisan politics aside and come together and do the right thing in this case? Will the Senate go home for the holidays without lifting a finger to make sure these promising young students feel safe in their homes, in their schools, in their communities?

They have become an integral part of our American family, and many are starting families of their own. In fact, 25 percent of DACA recipients have U.S.-born children. Do we really want these young mothers and fathers to be torn from their children and sent back to the country that they never called home? Do we not have an obligation to protect American children from the trauma of losing a parent? Do we not have a moral responsibility to keep families together? Isn't that one of the basic concepts that we have?

Will we sit idly by with the implementation of the administration's policy, which says: Whether you are selling drugs in your streets—which I am all for deporting—or earning A's in our classrooms or serving in our military, everyone is fair game for deportation. No one is safe, not even children who know no other home. That is a wrong policy. That is not law and order. That is fear and chaos.

So where is our compassion and our sense of urgency? How many more Dreamers have to lose their DACA status before we stand up and do what is right? The time for temporary fixes is over. The time for empty gestures is over. The time for heartfelt words is over.

It is time for us to stand up for these young people, and it is time for us to act. It is time for us—Democrats and Republicans—to use whatever legislative vehicle is necessary to pass the Dream Act. Whether it is a continuing resolution or a straight vote here on the floor, it is time for us to get this done.

Let's put an end to the fear and uncertainty hanging over so many families this holiday season. Let's summon our collective compassion. Let's pass the Dream Act. Let's do it now. Let Congress not go home for the holidays unless we have a solution to this question. For me, it is a moral imperative that these young people, who know no other country but the United States and who are Americans in every other sense of the word, not have to live this holiday season in the fear that a knock on the door is from someone other than a family member or their neighbor.

I yield the floor.

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

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

CONFIRMATION OF SUSAN BODINE

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, the Environmental Protection Agency needs strong and experienced leadership. That is why I come to the floor today to speak in support of President Trump's nomination of Susan Parker Bodine to serve as the Assistant Administrator for the Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance at the EPA.

Her expertise and her experience make her an exceptional pick to lead this important office at the Agency. She has extensive environmental policy knowledge from years working as a private attorney, a staffer on Capitol Hill, and in leadership at the EPA.

From 2006 to 2009, during the Bush administration, she served as the Assistant Administrator for the EPA's Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response. She also served as the staff director of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure's Subcommittee on Water Resources and the Environment.

Most recently, Susan served as my chief counsel at the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee. That is why I know Susan is committed to finding commonsense ways to protect America's land, air, and water.

In this new role, she will work to help communities and small businesses comply with the law, while holding polluters accountable. Democrats and Republicans, alike, agree that she is the right person for the job.

Mathy Stanislaus, a former Obama EPA Assistant Administrator, said: "Ms. Bodine understands both the internal side of the agency and the proper balance of enforcement" and is a "standup person."

Ben Grumbles, a former George W. Bush Assistant Administrator and currently Maryland's secretary of the environment, said: "She's tough and fair and committed to public service."

Susan is an excellent pick to lead the EPA's Office of Enforcement. Taking on the critical task of enforcing our Nation's environmental laws is a big job. I can think of no better candidate for this job than Susan Bodine.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PERDUE). Without objection, it is so ordered.

TAX REFORM BILL

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, I rise today to talk about my support for the Senate tax reform bill and to encourage Congress to help American families.

Our economy and our workforce have changed over the last few decades, and our Tax Code must catch up. If we want to build a better future for our children, we must tackle problems for families juggling responsibilities between their homes and their workplaces.

We have a chance to make history. The Senate-passed bill included my Strong Families Act, which would be the first nationwide paid family leave policy passed by this body. This proposal has the potential to make life easier for working families across our country by providing a tax credit as large as 25 percent for employers who offer up to 12 weeks of paid family leave. Employees would be able to take this time without needing to choose between potentially falling behind on their bills or spending time caring for their loved ones. Caring for families today does not just mean taking care of children. My proposal helps to ease burdens on family caregivers taking care of aging parents as well.

The Senate Special Committee on Aging recently released a report focused on America's aging workforce and the opportunities and challenges associated with it. One of its findings is that a growing group of aging workers are also caregivers. In fact, one out of every four employees over the age of 50 serves as a family caregiver.

Some employers are implementing strategies to support them, but I believe that this credit will go a long way in encouraging additional employers to take proactive steps to help these workers. This proposal also gives businesses the flexibility to set up these plans in ways that make sense for their companies and does so without mandates that some simply cannot afford.

I also want to take this opportunity to briefly address some of the criticisms of my proposal. It has been said that a provision in this bill was designed to punish States and localities that have laws mandating paid leave already in place. If employers in States and localities that already require some paid leave go beyond what is mandated at the local level, they will be able to take advantage of this credit.

We designed this credit to be targeted toward lower and middle-income workers who do not currently have access to paid family leave. We want to expand that access.

Moreover, I was happy to see an addition that was included in the Senate tax bill regarding State and local taxes. Most Nebraskans will tell you that our property taxes are too high. I agree. I supported the proposal to allow for a State and local property tax deduction of up to \$10,000 on Federal taxes.

As this bill moves toward a conference committee, I urge our conferees to keep this proposal and my Strong Families Act in the final bill. These provisions would help our families and they would help America's middle class.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LANKFORD. 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. LANKFORD. Mr. President, we are in the middle of a very protracted conversation about tax reform. This conversation started in January. I have heard people say that it has been rushed through at the end. We started in January, and we are starting month 12 of this process: hearings in the House; hearings in the Senate; different drafts coming out, shot down, starting over again, and coming back and forth. Now we are starting our 12th month of going through this process.

As we get close to the end, I want to outline a few things we are actually working on to be able to send back to this body and the American people—what is actually happening here. The focus of this from the beginning—from the very start—was two simple things: How can we reduce the rates for individuals so they can keep more of their own money and spend their own money, which stimulates the economy? The second aspect was this: How can we simplify the system? There is a lot of back and forth on the final details of it, but those two things are very clear.

This dramatically simplifies the tax structure that we have, and it reduces rates for people, so that people have more of their own money to be able to spend, and businesses have more of their own money to be able to invest in their businesses, to be able to pay their workers more, to be able to buy more equipment, and to be able to expand their businesses. That helps everybody in the economy. Whether you save your money or whether you spend your money, you are able to keep your own money.

So here is what this means for hardworking Americans and, in particular, in my State, for hardworking Oklahomans. Every bracket gets a tax deduction. In fact, as the Tax Foundation studied the Senate plan, going State by State, it looked at the middle-income family in Oklahoma, and the Tax Foundation stated that the middle-income family will have an increase in its take-home pay of \$2,200 over the next year. People will see it in their own paycheck from what is not being withheld anymore, because they are able to keep more of their own money.

The Senate plan doubles the standard deduction. For a single working adult, the first \$12,000 of their money is not taxed at all. For a married couple, \$24,000 of their income is not taxed at all. We also double the Child Tax Credit to \$2,000, directly, to be able to protect the people who need the help the most.

What does that look like for us?

Take an Oklahoma family of four. That typical family of four in my State, with all incomes put together and with two working parents, makes about \$73,000, combining all of their incomes together. That family of four, with \$73,000 of total income for the family, will see a cut in their tax bill of \$2,200 next year. Typically, they pay about \$3,600 in Federal taxes. Next year, they pay \$1,500 in Federal taxes. It is a pretty dramatic shift for them.

Let's take a teacher in Oklahoma who has been teaching for a couple of years—a single mom, a couple of kids, with \$41,000 in total income and trying to make ends meet. That single mom with a couple of kids will see a tax reduction of \$1,400. That is incredibly significant in just her day-to-day life. I can assure you that every Oklahoman would be glad to see an extra \$100 or \$150 in their paycheck every single month. That buys a lot of groceries, and it sure does help.

This is a process that really does affect real people, and it has been lost in the conversations. It has been interesting to hear the debate and all the noise on it.

I am hearing things I am calling tax myths of this bill. The most common one is that it is actually going to increase taxes on those in poverty. So for people who are saying that this is going to increase taxes for those individuals, it does not. It actually does exactly the opposite—not only by reducing rates but by increasing the standard deduction, by increasing the child tax credit. It helps people that need help the most.

I have also heard individuals in the media saying: This is going to hurt people because the individual mandate—something unrelated to tax policy entirely—has been snuck into the tax bill. The individual mandate of the Affordable Care Act is a tax policy that was actually added to a healthcare bill.

So this is a tax bill dealing with the tax aspects that were snuck into the original Obama healthcare bill. How does that work? The individual mandate says: If you don't buy the insurance approved by the folks in Washington, DC, then, you get an extra tax on you.

Where does that tax go? In Oklahoma, 81 percent of the people who pay that extra tax make \$50,000 or less. That extra ObamaCare tax—that penalty that was put on there—was targeted directly at the middle class, and the middle class in Oklahoma pays that fine. Eighty-one percent of the fine that is paid is paid by people making \$50,000 or less, in my State. We want to see that tax rate go down for those individuals, and we want to allow people to have a choice. That is a significant change for those individuals, who not only are trying to make ends meet, but they don't want to see one more tax laid on top of them.

Here is another myth I have heard. The tax cuts for the individuals aren't

permanent. May I remind everyone that the tax changes for the individuals made by the Bush administration had the exact same effect. They had a 10-year life span. As we went out to the end of that 10-year life span, they were then renewed. This is the same type of experience, where this individual tax is put in place, and a future Congress will go back and evaluate: Are all of these tax rates correct? Is this the right formula that should be in place? And they will be able to evaluate them at that time—just like we did in 2011, when those tax rates were made permanent—look at them again, give them that future window, and evaluate: Is this the right direction?

There has been an interesting one I have heard several times by people saying this will hurt teachers and it will hurt schools. I even heard someone this past weekend specifically say: The Senate bill takes away classroom expenses from teachers. The ironic part about that is that the Senate bill actually doubles the deductibility for teachers and classroom expenses. The lie out there is that the Senate bill takes it away. The truth, if you read the bill, is that it actually doubles it so that teachers have twice as much that they can deduct.

Teachers make a limited salary already. The last thing we need to do is to hurt teachers as they are trying to take care of the kids in their own classes. So this doubles the deductibility for teachers for classroom expenses.

It also puts in place an extension of the 529. Many parents set aside a little bit of money every month to go toward their child's college education. This would allow that to also be used for education, if they choose to have those expenses, in kindergarten through 12th grade, as well as college. It increases that opportunity.

The House bill did have a portion in their bill about student loan interest and tuition waiver for graduate students. The Senate actually does not have those two areas, protecting graduate students in their tuition waiver expenses. I think that is important.

There has also been a great myth out there that Republicans are cutting Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid with this bill. Can I tell you, there is nothing in this bill about Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid. We are not trying to damage or change any of those programs. In fact, it was in one of the hearings just last month where JCT, or the Joint Committee on Taxation, was asked that question directly, and they affirmed that there is nothing in this bill that is trying to change those policies. That is just a myth that is sitting out there.

What we need is a healthy, growing economy. Our economy has been flat for the last 8 years, growing at around 2 percent. Historically, the U.S. economy since World War II has grown at about 3 percent. That little 1 percentage point change may not seem like a

big deal, but that is a lot of jobs across the country. It is increased wages across the country, and it is increased opportunity.

I feel sorry for college graduates who graduated in the past several years because they are trying to land a job in this economy and finding out how difficult it is to get a job. They wonder: Has it always been like that? It has not. Go back just a decade or two decades ago, and people were graduating out of college and landing into great jobs because the economy was growing faster.

If we don't do something to get this economy growing faster again, we will continue to have limited opportunities for all Americans, and people's paychecks will continue to be flat yet another decade. This is a way to nudge the economy, to say: Let's get it going again.

Quite frankly, my Democratic colleagues 8 years ago passed a \$1 trillion stimulus package and said that is what would nudge the economy, but the economy didn't budge at all. This is an opportunity to come back and say: Let's actually do this right, not having the government spend your money but allowing you to keep more of your money and allowing the free market—just from people spending, buying, and saving—to lift the economy. That lift makes a tremendous difference.

One last interesting conversation. There have been a lot of folks who talked about deficit or debt effects in this bill, that this bill could be up to \$1 trillion in addition to the deficit. This is typical Washington speak and the challenge of serving here in Washington.

There are 130 economists that looked at this. All turned in reports. Everybody has a different outlook. Economists study hard, they look at the numbers, and they run their models, but everyone is guessing, and I get that. They are educated guesses, but they are all guesses. It is the responsibility of us here, in this Chamber, to look at the models, to look at the study, and to determine: Does this work?

For instance, JCT in their study said there will be about a half trillion in deficit because of this bill. But what they didn't take into account, when you look at their actual numbers, is any real increase in international funding—any increase in our American businesses that do business here in America and across the ocean. That is not really taken into account in theirs.

They also don't look at tremendous swaths of our economy because they don't have that in their model. But the JCT estimates that we will have half a trillion dollars in deficit spending. As I mentioned before, over the last 10 years, our economy is stuck at less than 2 percent GDP growth. In the context of the Senate bill, current policy assumes that tax extenders expire, meaning we start with a \$500 billion headwind. Our tax bill should not have

to cover the effects of current policy extensions. The \$1 trillion gap that is left equates to around 0.4 percent increase in GDP over the 10-year budget window. CBO's current GDP baseline is 1.9 over 10, and given the pro-growth policies in our bill, we should fully expect to a .4 percent boost, getting us to 2.3 percent, which closes the deficit gap, and brings future growth much more in line with where we should be historically.

Moreover, by JCT's own admission, eight one-hundredths of a percent could yield \$500 billion in dynamic economic growth. So using those numbers, sixteen one-hundredths in boosted GDP should provide the sufficient revenue to cover any shortfall.

The focus of this is that, when you look at the studies and you ask the questions, they all have very conservative estimates—as they should, as economists. But if our economy even goes up to maybe 2.5 percent—so a half percentage point, which is typical for us—we are far in the black.

I understand that it is always a risk. My Democratic colleagues took a risk 8 years ago when they spent almost \$1 trillion in the stimulus package, saying: I hope this works. And it did not.

I understand it is a risk, but I think it is an appropriate risk, to be able to say: Let's allow Americans to keep more of their own money to invest in this economy on the risk that we grow the economy by 0.2 percent more to be able to break even. I think the American economy can grow much faster than that. She has for decades, up until the last decade. Let's get us back to our old normal and allow that to be our new normal.

There are a lot of questions on the tax policy, rightfully so. It is important to all of us. Let's get it right, but let's keep moving. Over the next couple of weeks, this body, along with Members of the House, will do a conference committee. It is a back-and-forth about how we resolve the differences between the House bill and the Senate bill. When that is done, it will have to pass the House, pass the Senate, and go to the President's desk.

In the days ahead, Americans will see the changes in their own paycheck as they see the rates go down and are able to keep more of their own money. The rates of the median family are set to go down by 60 percent in this bill. It will be a tremendous benefit to them. I think that opportunity is one we shouldn't miss.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

DACA

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, as you know, and many do, 16 years ago I introduced a bill called the DREAM Act. The DREAM Act was written to cover young people, brought to the United States by their parents, who have grown up in this country but do not have legal status. They are undocumented. Some of them don't learn that until they are in high school or later. They think they are Americans. They have gone to school with a lot of American kids. They pledge allegiance to the flag. They sing our national anthem. They truly believed they were Americans and didn't learn until later in life that they had overstayed their visas. Their parents had overstayed their visas, is probably a better description, and that has affected their legal situation.

So I introduced this bill—a simple bill—that reads, if you have children in America who are caught up in that circumstance, we will give them a chance to get legal. They didn't make the decision to come here in the first place, but they ought to have a chance to become legal in America and become citizens. That is what the DREAM Act said, and we set up certain standards.

How do you become legal in America?

First, if you have a serious criminal record, goodbye. We don't want you. We don't need you. Second, if you are not going to finish school and are going to drop out, sorry, there is no future for you in this country—or a limited future. Third, would you consider serving in our U.S. military as a way of proving that you want to be a part of America's future? We set that up with the DREAM Act.

Time passed, and we didn't pass the bill. One of my colleagues in the Senate went on to be elected President of the United States, Barack Obama.

I reached out to him and asked: Mr. President, can you figure out a way to protect these young people who are subject to deportation through no fault of their own? He did. He came up with an Executive order called the DACA Program.

Under the DACA Program, young people, like those I described, came forward. They paid a \$500 filing fee, then went through a criminal background check to make sure they had no problems, and they submitted their information. Each of them was given a 2-year renewable protection plan so they could live in America, not be deported, and be able to legally work.

What happened to those people? There were 780,000 of them who showed up, paid the fee, and got the protection under the DACA Program.

Then came a Presidential campaign—the last one—in which Donald Trump, as candidate for President, said: I am going to get rid of this DACA Program. I think it is wrong. It never should have been done by Executive order.

He said that and then was elected and set out to do it. Last September 5, he did just that. It was announced by

the Attorney General of the United States. They said that by March 5 of 2018, the program would end.

What it means is, today and every day, more and more of these protected young people fall out of protection—about 120 a day. There are 10,000 of them who were protected by DACA who can now be deported, and the number will continue to grow until March 5, when the President said the program should end—when 1,000 young people a day in America will lose DACA protection, be subject to deportation, and will not be able to legally work.

When he eliminated the DACA Program on September 5, President Trump said to us: I challenge Congress. Do what you are supposed to do. Pass a law to take care of this.

I accepted that challenge, and I joined with Senator LINDSEY GRAHAM, the Republican of South Carolina. We introduced the Dream Act. We are ready to pass the Dream Act. I think there are the votes on the floor to pass the Dream Act.

Some of my Republican friends have said to me: We support it, but we want a show of good faith on your part that you will strengthen our border operations to reduce others from coming into this country.

I said: Sign me up. As a Democrat, I will join with you as a Republican to fund things that are sensible, realistic, and effective to take our tax dollars and make our borders safer. I accept that.

Now we are in a position in which the President's challenge has really come to the spot where we have to do something. We are going to leave here by December 22 to go home and enjoy the holidays. If we do not fix this problem before we leave, imagine what that will mean to these 780,000 young people. They don't know what their futures are going to hold.

Who are they?

There are 20,000 of them who teach in grade schools and middle schools and high schools across the United States—20,000 of these DACA-protected young people. When they lose their right to legally work in America, they are finished as teachers—finished, out the door. These are 20,000 teachers who could be lost.

In addition, there are students who are in a pretty tricky situation. About 30 of them go to the Loyola University Chicago Stritch School of Medicine in Chicago. They won the competition to be accepted at that medical school because Loyola, unlike other medical schools, said they will open competition to DACA-eligible people. Some of them are the most brilliant kids in America who never dreamed that, in being undocumented, they could make it to medical school. They have. They are doing well.

There is a problem. You cannot finish medical school and move on to where you want to be unless you complete a residency after medical school. The residency is actually a job—a job in-

volving a lot of hours in hospitals learning to be a doctor. All doctors go through it, and these medical students would go through it as well except, if they lose DACA protection, they cannot legally work; therefore, they cannot even apply to be residents and complete their medical educations. Our failure to act, our delay in acting, jeopardizes their medical educations.

Do we have a surplus of doctors in the United States? No. The AMA tells us just the opposite. Across Illinois, I can point to communities downstate and to neighborhoods in the Chicago area that are desperately in need of doctors. Can we waste a medical student at Loyola's medical school because the Senate is just too darned busy to take it up?

Does it look to the Presiding Officer like the Senate is too busy to take up an issue like this? The fact is, we have done precious little this year, and we have plenty of time. It is also a reality that a lot of people are watching carefully to see if we do our job.

A long time ago, I started coming to the floor of the Senate, telling the story of these Dreamers—the stories of these people who are protected by DACA. I can give the greatest speech in the world, and people will yawn, but when I tell them the stories of these lives and these people, it changes the conversation. They come to understand who they are and why this is critically important. Today is kind of a milestone. This is the 100th story I have told on the floor of the U.S. Senate. They are all in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD for those who want to take a look at them.

It is the story of another one of these Dreamers. His story is particularly compelling. This is his photo.

His name is Kyungmin Cho. Kyungmin Cho was 7 years old when his family brought him from Seoul, South Korea, to the United States. He grew up in New Jersey.

From a young age, he was quite a good student and active in his community. In high school, he took multiple advanced placement courses. He was Vice President of the National Honor Society and president of his class. Here is a picture of him at his high school graduation. In high school, Kyungmin was a member of the Math and Science Academy and a member of the varsity track and field team. He was a volunteer at his church, and he taught summer school. At the same time, he was working over 40 hours a week.

You see, these kids, these young people—Dreamers—don't get Federal Government loans or Pell Grants so they have to work extra time to get the money to go to school. He worked 40 hours a week in a restaurant to help support his family and pay for his education. Now he is a student at Temple University's Fox School of Business and Management. He is studying accounting in the Honors Program. He continues to work two restaurant jobs a week for nearly 40 hours to help his