

anyone who has done well, but it is preposterous to suggest that the real problem in our economy, when we have a record stock market and record income inequality, is that wealthy individuals and businesses don't have enough.

My final chart is this chart, which shows median household income. Since 1980 until now, the cost of housing, cost of higher education, and cost of healthcare—we have done nothing to address or help this. We have turned our back on this.

I think we could have written a bill, as I said at the outset, that had a real middle-class tax cut in it, but we chose not to do it.

Last year, I met a mom in Rifle, CO, at an early childhood center. In the course of our conversation, she said to me: "I've got a job so I can have health insurance, and every single dollar I earn goes to pay for this early childhood center, so I can work."

That is the story of too many people in my State. My State has one of the most dynamic economies in the United States of America, and still too many people whom I represent are middle-class families whose incomes haven't really gone up, not over 10 years but since 1980, for whom the cost of housing, cost of healthcare, cost of higher education, and the cost of early childhood education have conspired to create for them impossible choices that their parents and grandparents never had to make.

Tax reform should have been the opportunity to have addressed that. It should have been a chance to remind that mom in Rifle that our government or at least someone in our government understands the struggles she faces and has the capacity and the will to help to do something about it. This bill squanders that opportunity. This tax bill squanders it. Worse than that, it reminds Americans of the vast space between their lives and the priorities in Washington. It reminds them of the yawning gap between their voices and the voices of powerful special interests.

We should reject this bill. It fails on the merits. We should reject it because the bill makes a mockery of how our government should work. There is still time to set aside this legislation and do bipartisan tax reform. I know the other side may believe that it has to forge ahead for a political win, but I would ask, at what cost?

As with so many actions around here, we have put it on the next generation of Americans. We have kicked all the hard choices to them ever since I have been here. We have told them that we are going to continue to live in the house of our democratic Republic but that they are going to pay the mortgage. We are so fortunate that our parents and grandparents didn't behave the way we have—they had the decency to look ahead and think of those to come. We have enjoyed years of peace and prosperity in this incredible country. I think, tonight and this week, it is worth all of our asking, will our children be able to say the same of us?

I thank my friend from Pennsylvania for his indulgence.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I ask to speak in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is recognized.

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Colorado. I heard most of his remarks, some of them on television before my moving to come over here to speak. I am grateful for his commitment to the arguments that he has made on tax reform and his commitment not only to the people of his State but to the people of our country. I will be speaking about tax reform later this week.

#### DACA

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I rise to talk about this so-called DACA Program for the Dreamers, the young people whom we have heard so much about, especially in the last couple of months.

As many people across the country know, in September, President Trump ended the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Program, known as DACA. This decision and, so far, congressional refusal to pass the Dream Act have created both fear and uncertainty for nearly 800,000 young people across our country, so-called DACA recipients.

I know that a lot of Americans have met these young people over the course of not just the last couple of months but maybe over the course of many years. I had that chance most recently, at least on two occasions, when we set up time to sit with young people who were Pennsylvanians. Once was in the city of Philadelphia, where I sat with young people from both Philadelphia and Lancaster, which is not too far of a drive from Philadelphia—about an hour or so. They came to Philadelphia to sit with us. Then a couple of months later, it was in the Lehigh Valley, which is about an hour just north of Philadelphia. The first group was a larger group of maybe 15 young people, and the second group was a group of 3 individuals.

In both of those meetings, I was struck by not just how concerned and worried these young people were about what would happen to them and happen to their friends and, in a larger sense, happen to their families, but I was impressed by their stories—what they had achieved in their young lives. I was also moved by the commitment that they have had to hard work, to being part of the fabric of America, and the real concern that they have had about and the love they have for their own parents. They worried about how this might affect their parents but also had love for the commitment that their parents had made and their family members had made to allow them to succeed in coming here, in some cases

as babies or as very young children, and to live in America for all of these years, not technically as citizens but to live full lives.

They were made a promise by the President of the United States that if they were to come forward and make certain disclosures, this program would protect them. I think that promise is inviolate and should not be broken by any administration. Congress certainly has work to do to enforce the promise and to give the promise an even stronger foundation.

You don't have to be on one side of the aisle or the other to be moved by these stories, and I will get to some of the details later. One of the young women was in the first group that I mentioned when we were sitting around a big conference table. Of course, these individuals don't have to sit with me, and they don't have to travel to tell their stories, but they are worried. They are concerned about the policy and how it might affect their lives.

One young woman said to me: The only country I have ever known doesn't seem to want us—or at least that was her impression. She has lived nowhere else.

If you go person after person after person, these are young people who have lived here virtually their whole lives even though they technically were not born here. They have achieved so much and have gone through our schools. Our Nation has invested in them, and they have succeeded in holding down jobs and getting educations and getting higher educations. All they ask is that we set up a process so that they will not be deported.

It doesn't make a lot of sense, the direction in which we seem to be heading. Rescinding the DACA Program will cost the United States of America jobs. I think it will hurt our security over time.

As I said before, it is a broken promise—a promise that was made to young people by our government. It was not just a casual promise but, I would argue, a commitment, a bond, an agreement that should be honored. As I have said so many times before—and I will keep saying it—why would other countries believe us when we make a commitment if we cannot keep our commitment to these young people? Something on the order of 800,000 young people who live in the United States of America were promised that if they came forward, they would be protected. Why would any country believe us after that if we were to break that promise? Why would they believe Republicans or Democrats? Why would they believe the administration—this administration or future administrations—or this Congress or future Congresses down the road, the House and Senate? If we were to break that promise, would our word be good around the world?

These Dreamers are young people who have lived in this country since

they were children. They have been law-abiding residents. They have learned English. They pay taxes. They have secured jobs that have supported themselves and their families. They were made a promise.

What are some of the numbers? Here is the economic impact in the context of one State in our country. In Pennsylvania alone, estimates say that ending the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Program would cost the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania nearly \$357 million per year in GDP losses. This is according to the Center for American Progress. So, for one State, it is \$357 million. How about for the Nation? The comparable number for the Nation is about \$460 billion. The first number was with an “m”—millions—in the context of the State. The second number is \$460 billion, with a “b”—almost half a trillion dollars—from the GDP over the next decade. Roughly, in the context of a yearly number, it is \$46 billion a year.

Even if you don't think that we have to honor the promise, even if you don't believe in the program, why would we want to take a step that would hurt our economy in our losing about \$46 billion every year for 10 years, adding up to \$460 billion over 10 years?

According to FWD.us, 91 percent of DACA recipients are employed, and repealing DACA could result in an average of 8,500 DACA recipients—young people—losing their jobs each week as a result of that. There are 91 percent of them who are employed—working—in the United States of America. It is the country that promised them that if they came forward, we would give them protection. They are working every day, following the law, loving this country.

We have told them, at best, that their status or their fate is uncertain. That is the best that we can say about what has happened between the administration's making the announcement a number of months ago and Congress's doing nothing to address this problem.

DACA recipients have jobs in sectors that are critical to our economy, such as healthcare, science and technology, and engineering and math—so-called STEM jobs. Additionally, more than one out of every seven DACA-eligible immigrants has language skills that are currently in short supply in the U.S. military, according to the New American Economy. The U.S. military benefits when we have individuals residing in our country who have that skill in languages. The Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy estimates that the 1.3 million young people who are enrolled in or who are eligible for DACA pay \$2 billion each year in State and local taxes. So they are working, and they are paying taxes.

Dreamers across Pennsylvania and the Nation represent the America that we should all be proud of. I think everyone could agree to that in the work that they are doing and their commitment to our country. We should be

proud of that. This is a country in which hard-working young people who are working to better themselves and their communities are given a chance to do just that. That is the kind of country we all profess to believe in. That is the kind of Nation that we want to be.

Another estimate is that between September 5, 2017, when the program was terminated, and March 5, 2018, which is the deadline that is coming up, 122 DACA recipients will lose their protection every day. That means that by March 5 of 2018, 22,000 Dreamers will have lost their DACA protection.

Congress should move immediately—the U.S. Senate should move immediately—to make sure that we protect these Dreamers and pass the so-called bipartisan Dream Act. Here is what the bill would do in short form. It would allow the Dreamers to become permanent residents if they meet the very stringent qualifications outlined in the bill. We aren't talking about any kind of a free pass. These are young people who have worked so hard to become the very sort of Americans we want: employed, law-abiding, and paying taxes. The numbers of Dreamers in Pennsylvania are about 5,900 individuals who have been given DACA status. Passing the Dream Act would give these young people some security and a future they can count on.

I was proud to support a version of the Dream Act back in 2007 and 2010. We should have an up-or-down vote on the floor of the U.S. Senate that is a clean version of the Dream Act—not embedded in some other legislation—but an up-or-down vote on the Dream Act. Let's see where people stand. I would hope it would be an overwhelming vote. I think it probably would be. Let's have an up-or-down vote for these young people.

Let's keep the promise to these Dreamers so our promise is good here at home, and our promise and our word and our credibility will be good the world over because if we break that promise, it is going to be pretty difficult for people around the world to believe us on a whole host of fronts. I know that may offend somebody, but that is the way I see it.

Keeping a promise is the principal reason to pass the Dream Act, but we should also try to help our economy, not allow our economy to lose hundreds of billions of dollars over 10 years, tens of billions each and every year because we are deporting people who have offered so much to the country, who have worked so hard, who have become part of the fabric of American life, part of the fabric of the American family. These are folks who live in every community, who are part of the fabric of a neighborhood, part of the fabric of a community, part of the fabric of a school, part of the fabric of a State, and the fabric of a nation.

The third reason we should pass the Dream Act is to unite our country. This is one area where we can all come

together. We might have a lot of disagreements, and they will be played out this week on the tax bill, on this issue or that issue, but we can bring the country together. Most people in both parties understand what this is all about. They understand the promise, they understand the impact on our economy, and they also understand that a great country can make the right decision on this issue.

By uniting our country on the Dream Act, we can make a downpayment on a bright future for these young people who love the United States of America and who have demonstrated that by their commitment to the country, by their work ethic, and by the commitment they have made to their communities. Let's pass the Dream Act.

I yield the floor.

#### CONFIRMATION OF DON R. WILLET

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, I opposed the nomination of Don Willet to serve as a judge on the Fifth Circuit. Senate Republicans, lacking a robust legislative agenda, despite unilateral control of the government, decided to confirm another highly controversial nominee.

Last week, Republicans confirmed three circuit court judges. In early November, Senate Republicans confirmed four judges in 1 week. This accelerated confirmation pace is unconventional and alarming. Republicans on the Judiciary Committee are willing to set aside decades of standing tradition and policies in order to confirm highly ideological judges who, in many cases, seem to have more of a political agenda than the impartial temperament necessary for the fair administration of justice.

This seat has been open for years because Senate Republicans refused to work with the Obama administration and agree upon a consensus mainstream nominee that reflects the views and opinions of the majority of Americans. Now that Republicans are in the majority and no longer need to obstruct the White House, they have decided to advance Judge Willet, a judge described as the “most conservative justice in Texas.”

Judge Willet was on Trump's Supreme Court short list which indicates that he met the Federalist Society's and the Heritage Foundation's ideological litmus test. This should concern all Americans, regardless of party affiliation. Our judicial system should not be outsourced to outside groups who want to stack the courts with judges who share their extreme political agenda.

Judge Willet has expressed insensitive views towards the LGBTQ community and skepticism that women face unique challenges in the work place, such as unequal pay and sexual harassment and discrimination. In light of the #MeToo movement and the countless women who have shared their stories of workplace sexual harassment,