

To Michael, DACA means hope—hope that the United States will one day accept Dreamers and allow them to remain here without the threat of deportation. To Giovanni, DACA signifies promise—a promise to Dreamers that if they work hard and contribute to America, they will be granted protection and a pathway to citizenship.

It is long past time that we uphold our end of the bargain. Michael and Giovanni are not only role models; they are living representations of the American dream. It is time for us in Congress to protect these Dreamers.

Unfortunately, since President Obama established DACA, Republicans have waged a relentless, unending campaign to overturn this stopgap solution and to deport Dreamers like Michael and Giovanni back to countries they do not even remember.

This war against immigrants is mindless. We need to be safe for sure, but how can we ignore what immigrants have meant to this country? Last week, I went for a routine hospital procedure here in Washington. It was noteworthy that the doctor I had was from Syria, a young woman from Syria, the anesthesiologist was from Germany, and my nurse was from Ethiopia. Do you think I would bemoan these immigrants and want them to return to their country? I thank all three of them for coming to America and making this a stronger and better country and giving quality, professional medical service. It happens day in and day out.

I want to urge my colleagues not to ignore these Dreamers and their lives, which are at stake every single day. They need to live in America without fear of deportation. It is time for Congress to get to work on a bipartisan basis to pass the Dream Act. It was the right thing to do 20 years ago; it is the right thing to do today. These young Dreamers prove my case every single day of their lives.

I thank Members of the Senate who have supported me. We need more in the future.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Illinois.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—S. 4698

AMENDMENT NO. 3293

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, as if in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding the passage of S. 4698, action on the Peters amendment No. 3292 be vitiated and amendment No. 3293 be considered and agreed to, and the remainder of the order be in status quo.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment (No. 3292) in the nature of a substitute was withdrawn.

The amendment (No. 3293) in the nature of a substitute was agreed to, as follows:

(Purpose: In the nature of a substitute)

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “DHS Joint Task Forces Reauthorization Act of 2024”.

SEC. 2. AMENDMENT TO SECTION 708 OF THE HOMELAND SECURITY ACT OF 2002.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 708(b) of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 348(b)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (9)—

(A) in subparagraph (A)—

(i) in clause (ii), by striking “and” at the end;

(ii) in clause (iii)(II), by adding “and” at the end; and

(iii) by adding at the end the following:

“(iv) a staffing plan for each Joint Task Force;” and

(B) by amending subparagraph (C) to read as follows:

“(C) not later than December 23, 2024, and annually thereafter, submit to the committees specified in subparagraph (B) a report containing information regarding—

“(i) the progress in implementing the outcome-based and other appropriate performance metrics established pursuant to subparagraph (A)(iii);

“(ii) the staffing plan developed for each Joint Task Force pursuant to subparagraph (A)(iv); and

“(iii) any modification to the mission, strategic goals, and objectives of each Joint Task Force, and a description of, and rationale for, any such modifications.”; and

(2) in paragraph (13), by striking “2024” and inserting “2026”.

(b) ANNUAL BRIEFING.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter, the Secretary of Homeland Security shall brief—

(A) the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate;

(B) the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate;

(C) the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives; and

(D) the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives.

(2) TOPICS.—Each briefing required under paragraph (1) shall cover the latest staffing and resource assessment at Joint Task Force-East, including—

(A)(i) a determination of whether the current staffing levels of Joint Task Force-East are sufficient to successfully advance the mission, strategic goals, and objectives of such Joint Task Force; and

(ii) if such determination reveals insufficient staffing levels, the cost, timeline, and strategy for increasing such staffing levels; and

(B)(i) a determination of whether sufficient resources are being provided for Joint Task Force-East in accordance with section 708(b)(7)(a) of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 348(b)(7)(a)); and

(ii) if such determination reveals insufficient resource levels, the cost, timeline, and strategy for providing any remaining resource requirements.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Iowa.

WHISTLEBLOWERS

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, as my colleagues know, I get a lot of information about wrongdoing in government from whistleblowers. A sig-

nificant part of my investigative activity is driven by whistleblower disclosures. To make that very effective, I have directed my investigative staff to cultivate those whistleblower relationships.

Whistleblowers share information with me that the government likes to hide from Congress and, indirectly, then hiding it from the American people.

Today, I am going to discuss a very concerning problem within the U.S. Postal Service. Based on whistleblower disclosures to my office, I have been alerted that the post office hired a registered sex offender as a letter carrier.

The employment was confirmed in writing by that same Postal Service. Based on whistleblower allegations, this employee disclosed his status as a registered sex offender on his job application.

If accurate, did the Postal Service then even bother to read his application before he was hired? After the Postal Service figured out what they had done, my office has been told via whistleblower disclosures that they put the employee on paid leave.

So I began digging deeper to figure out the extent of this problem at the Postal Service. Since then, the Postal Service has obstructed every effort that I have made to get the information that Congress is entitled to.

Wouldn't the American public like to know how many letter carriers are registered sex offenders? Where are they working? Do they travel near schools, homes, and where children are often seen?

Now, the Postal Service apparently disagrees. The Postal Service was asked by my staff for a list of letter carriers who are registered offenders.

Now, as you might expect, the Postal Service refused. So I and my staff asked for a list of letter carriers on the payroll. The Postal Service later said:

Current employees' names, titles, and duty stations are generally considered to be public information and releasable.

But then the Postal Service refused to provide the information because my staff might cross-reference the names on the public registries. Specifically, the Postal Service said this:

They have a personal privacy interest in protecting the fact that their names appear on a sex offender registry.

The Postal Service also said that it is refusing to provide this information because I “intend to use the provided list to infer what employees appear on the public sex offender registries.”

Now, it is time to get this straight for everybody. The names of Postal Service employees are publicly releasable, as admitted by the Postal Service to me in writing. These offender registries are public, which was also admitted in writing to me by the Postal Service. But the Postal Service says a privacy interest prohibits them from providing the names of all Postal Service letter carriers because my staff might cross-reference them on a public list? What a disgrace.

Further, the Postal Service had the audacity to ask my staff this garbage request, and I am quoting from the Postal Service:

We ask that you agree not to publicly release the names of any employees that you believe appear on a sex offender registry as a condition precedent to the release of a list of letter carriers to you.

Now, that kind of appears to be a shakedown, doesn't it?

In support of its obstruction, the Postal Service cited a 2020 Freedom of Information Act court case, *White Coat Waste Project v. U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs*. The Postal Service claimed that this case allowed them to withhold the information.

Now, there are two problems with that. First, this isn't a FOIA request that I am making. It is a congressional request under the constitutional power of checks and balances of the government to make sure that the executive branch of government faithfully executes the laws. Congress isn't subject to the Freedom of Information Act.

Second, in the case, the court held that the government had to produce requested names of government employees, in part, because it "will ensure that the public stays informed about what their government is up to."

Like you often hear me say, transparency brings accountability in our government.

My staff then later asked the Postal Service the following, related to employee names:

So, what's public is being treated as non-public because there's a chance some letter carriers are sex offenders?

The Postal Service's employee answered:

Yes, because you can't put that together without both lists.

The Postal Service conduct is without any legitimate basis. Postmaster General DeJoy and the Postal Service Board need to fix this mess and fix it immediately. When it comes to this matter, our community deserves much better than what they are getting from the Postal Service.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Texas.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, as most people know, the majority leader is the only one who can schedule action on legislation on the floor of the U.S. Senate. None of the 99 other Senators can make that happen, which means that the lack of productivity on some very important matters by the U.S. Senate lies squarely at the feet of the majority leader.

And I have to say that our lack of productivity here in the U.S. Senate verges on what can only be described as malpractice. I say that as a recovering lawyer who used to defend cases of alleged malpractice.

But we have wasted valuable floor time on partisan nominees and political show votes and not advanced the fundamental causes that are so basic to governing—things like funding the government, things like passing our annual Defense authorization bill—something we have done more than 60 years in a row. And, unfortunately, it looks like we are headed toward another short-term continuing resolution and a delay on both of these essential tasks, which will damage our military when global conflicts are more tense than at any time in recent memory. And that is not hyperbole.

Earlier this year, the House and Senate Armed Services Committees created something called the Commission on National Defense Strategy. This is a bipartisan group of top national security and defense experts to assess the world's strategic threats to the safety and security of the United States and to analyze any shortcomings in America's preparation.

Well, the Commission's report that came out last week was nothing short of stunning, and I would like to highlight some of its findings. They described China as the most serious and longest term threat to the safety and security and peace in the Indo-Pacific.

Militarily, the People's Republic of China, governed by the Chinese Communist Party, are expanding their forces from air to cyber, to space, and they now have the world's largest navy at nearly 400 warships. And their capacity to build more ships is estimated to be about 230 times greater than ours.

China now possesses missiles and continues to enhance their capabilities, which would put any of our aircraft carriers in the Indo-Pacific at grave risk in the event of a conflict. And as the report states, they may very well use these significant advantages to invade Taiwan by 2027 and attempt to defeat American or other allied attempts to defend Taiwan and its sovereignty.

Turning to Europe, Ukraine continues to defend itself against Russia's unprovoked aggression, which began, really, back in 2014, when they invaded Crimea, but was escalated approximately 2 years ago when they intended to essentially take the entire country.

As the defense strategy report indicates, America's continued support of Ukraine against this invasion by Vladimir Putin's Russia isn't just essential to Ukraine's survival; it is paramount to sending the message to the world that aggressors that seek to invade smaller nations simply cannot win. That is what we call deterrence.

In essence, global security is interconnected, and what happens in the European theater can impact our security in the Pacific theater and around the world.

Of course, in the Middle East, our close ally Israel is defending its very existence, following a brutal and unprovoked attack by the terrorist group Hamas, which is backed by its sponsor Iran, the No. 1 state sponsor of international terrorism.

Iran and its proxies—namely Hezbollah, Hamas, the Houthis—are more emboldened than they have ever been as they continue wreaking havoc across the region.

More broadly, the Commission's report cautioned against the growing alignment of China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea. This isn't exactly breaking news, but to see some of the best military leaders in our country put their concerns in writing about this axis of autocracies and their statement that it may lead to coordinated opposition to U.S. interests globally should wake all of us up.

They also called attention to America's deficiencies in terms of our preparation. The military experts point out that our equipment is old, our technology is outdated, our industrial base has shortcomings, our force readiness is not what it should be, and the Department of Defense is too slow to respond because of bureaucratic redtape and the failure of leadership.

Let me repeat. These are among the most admired and talented military minds in the country who are saying these things. This assessment should wake up every American but especially Members of Congress, because it is up to us to respond and to respond appropriately.

And the question is: What are we going to do about it?

My dad was a B-17 pilot in the Army Air Corps in World War II and flew 26 bombing missions over Nazi Germany, until he was shot down and captured as a POW. My dad, like so many of the "greatest generation," came back to the United States; they went to school on the GI bill of rights and helped rebuild our country and helped rebuild the rest of the war-torn world. But I know they believed that we would not have any large military conflicts between great powers—again, perhaps that would be the last. But as Bob Gates, the former Secretary of Defense, has reminded us, he said that our holiday from history is over. In other words, war intends to be more the rule than the exception. And the only thing that prevents wars from breaking out in military conflicts is the strength of American power and our willingness to take a leadership role.

Ronald Reagan was exactly right when he talked about peace through strength. So we need to be ready and we need to be prepared and we need to be engaged in order to deter these would-be aggressors around the world.

Exactly how are we going to be prepared? Well, Congress's role is to make sure that we pass the authorities necessary in the Defense authorization bill to enable our warfighters to be prepared and to get the training and