

I look forward to working with my colleagues in the Senate to address this problem and to bring meaningful data access to all parts of this country.

#### THE MARITIME ADMINISTRATION AUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, last Thursday, the Senate passed S. 2487, the Maritime Administration Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2001. Passage of this measure will help to ensure our nation's maritime industry has the support and guidance it needs to continue to compete in the world market.

The bill authorizes appropriations for the Maritime Administration [MarAd] for fiscal year 2001. It covers operations and training and the loan guarantee program authorized by title XI of the Merchant Marine Act 1936. The House Committee on Armed Services, which has jurisdiction of maritime matters in that body, has chosen to include provisions relating to these authorizations in the House-passed version of H.R. 4205, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2001. Further, the House conferees on that measure have refused to fully accept S. 2487 as the Senate position as part of the ongoing House-Senate conference deliberations in part, due to the Senate's slow action on the measure. I hope by passing S. 2487 we will change that course.

In addition to the authorizations for operations and training and the loan guarantee program, S. 2487 amends Title IX of the Merchant Marine Act of 1936 to provide a wavier to eliminate the three year period that bulk and breakbulk vessels newly registered under the U.S. flag must wait in order to carry government-impelled cargo. The bill also provides a one year window of opportunity for vessels newly registered under the U.S.-flag to enter into the cargo preference trade without waiting the traditional three year period.

The bill also would amend the National Maritime Heritage Act of 1994 and allow the Secretary to scrap obsolete vessels in both domestic and international market. It would further convey ownership of the National Defense Reserve Fleet Vessel, *Glacier* to the Glacier Society for use as museum and require the Maritime Administration to including the source and intended use of all funding in reports to Congress. Finally, it amends Public Law 101-115 to recognize National Maritime Enhancement Institutes as if they were University Transportation Centers for purposes of the award of research funds for maritime and intermodal research and requires the Secretary of Transportation to review the funding of maritime research in relation to other modes of transportation.

I want to thank the cosponsors of this measure, Senator HOLLINGS and Senator INOUE for the assistance in moving this measure forward. I hope my colleagues in the House will join us

in supporting passage of this legislation so we can move it on to the President for his signature.

#### THE LATINO IMMIGRATION FAIRNESS ACT

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, last week, the Senate majority blocked efforts to bring the Latino Immigration Fairness Act to the floor. This bill embodies the essence of America: providing safe haven to the persecuted and down trodden, supporting equal opportunity for the disadvantaged, and promoting family values to our country's residents.

Many of my Senate colleagues perceive this provision to be a necessary addition to the H-1B Visa bill, which extends temporary residence to 195,000 foreign workers each year for the next two years. The Latino Immigration Fairness Act legitimates certain workers who have been living in the U.S. for over five years, and are ready, willing, and able to permanently contribute to our workforce and communities.

Unfortunately, the Majority's leadership has used parliamentary procedures to block this bill from coming to the floor. I am disappointed that too few Republican leaders support this meaningful legislation becoming law. I am convinced that the Latino Immigration Fairness bill has been proposed in the best interests of our country and in accordance with our obligations to promoting democracy and freedom in our hemisphere.

My support for this legislation is based on four fundamental reasons: First, this bill would provide Central American immigrants previously excluded under the Nicaraguan and Central American Relief Act, NACARA, the opportunity to legalize their status; it would allow immigrants applying for permanent residency to remain in the U.S. with their families instead of forcing them to return to their country of origin to apply (a process that can take months to years to complete); and it would change the registry cut-off date to 1986, which would resolve the 14-year bureaucratic limbo that has denied amnesty to qualified immigrants who sought to adjust their status under the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act. Finally, this bill would resolve the status of so many valuable members of American society. There are an estimated 6 million immigrants in the United States who are not yet citizens. A majority of these immigrants have been here for many years and are working hard, paying taxes, buying homes, opening businesses and raising families.

For years, U.S. immigration policy has provided refuge to tens of thousands of these Nicaraguans, Cubans, Salvadorans, Guatemalans, Hondurans, and Haitians fleeing civil war and social unrest in their own countries. In 1997 the Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act was signed into law. This statute protects

Cuban and Nicaraguan nationals from deportation from the United States. Those residents who have been in the U.S. since December 1995 can now adjust to permanent resident status. But Salvadorans, Guatemalans, Hondurans, and Haitians are still not as fully protected.

In the last decade, Louisiana has provided refuge to thousands of Hondurans seeking relief from natural and human disasters. Displaced by storms, floods, war, and social unrest, many of these people have found warm and comforting homes for their families in the American Bayou.

My State, particularly in New Orleans, boasts a proud tradition of cultural diversity. The Honduran community was originally brought to Louisiana through a thriving banana trade between the Port of Louisiana and Gulf of Honduras in the early twentieth century. As the community grew, Louisiana's Honduran population became the largest outside of Honduras. For this reason, Louisiana seemed the most logical destination for Hondurans fleeing instability during the 1980s and 1990s. Once again, my state, like many others, opened her doors to our desperate Central American brothers.

The Latino Immigration Fairness Act will help fulfill a promise this government has made to these refugees, and attempt to finish the work of Presidents Reagan and Clinton. Under the Reagan Administration, the Immigration and Naturalization Service set up special asylum programs for these people to reside legally in the U.S.

Since then, they have greatly contributed to American society—raising children, paying taxes, and establishing successful businesses throughout our country—as well as contributed direct support to their relatives left behind in their homelands.

In a democracy such as ours, we must be consistent in the principles we uphold for our Latin neighbors seeking asylum. These people have fled political instability and social upheaval in their native lands.

As the guardian of Democratic ideals and chief opponent of repression in the Western Hemisphere, we must ensure that these residents adjust their status to legal resident under the same procedure permitted for Cubans and Nicaraguans.

In sum, I urge my colleagues to consider the United States' historic commitment to fair immigration policies. Our country has been built and continues to be sustained by immigrants.

In her poem, *The Colossus*, Emma Lazarus named our country the "Mother of Exiles." Personified by the Statue of Liberty, the United States of America continues to shine her torch on refugees from instability and strife—We have opened our doors to people of all races and nationalities, and have prospered from their valuable contributions to labor, community, and culture.

Now, failure to pass Fairness legislation will take away our promise of