

12 months, more than 6.6 million inquiries were run, and they continue to grow.

In Alabama alone, there are 1,000 employers who use the E-Verify system. It has been proven effective, and I think it should be made permanent and mandatory for everybody who does business with the U.S. Government. As a matter of fact, that was what the law was supposed to be in January, but it is not. So the program is to expire in September unless it is extended.

Now, I am told the Homeland Security legislation the House passed—or will pass—will extend the E-Verify Program for 2 years. I am told the Senate Homeland Security bill may well report language that will extend it for 3 years. Why we don't make it permanent is beyond me. It is a cornerstone of the enforcement system of business and employers to ensure that they are attempting to comply with the law, and if they are not, to be able to identify them.

I was extremely disappointed when the economic stimulus package was up earlier this year and passed, where we spent \$800 billion to stimulate the economy and create jobs, it was passed without any requirement that E-Verify be a part of the stimulus package. So a contractor who gets a job with the U.S. Government, with money paid from the stimulus package, legislation that was designed to create jobs for American citizens, could actually go out and hire people illegally in the country. That is not what the American people have a right to expect. That is not good policy. It should not be done.

We have surging unemployment, unfortunately. All of us hoped it would come in less than it is now. I know the President's budget, offered earlier this year, projected that unemployment would top at 8.4 percent. It is now 9.4 percent, the highest in over 20 years. It is continuing to go up, from what it appears. So we have an obligation to try to use what resources we are expending in a way that helps the American worker find work. Some of these stimulus jobs are good jobs. So the House has supported the extension of E-Verify. It passed in the House last July, 407 to 2. Yet it still hasn't become law to extend it past September.

One of the main purposes of the stimulus bill was to see that people got work. I think if we don't extend E-Verify, people have a right to question how serious we are about using that money—that huge amount—wisely to create jobs for American citizens.

An amendment offered and accepted in the House on the stimulus bill was by Congressman Jack Kingston. It said that funds made available under the stimulus package could not be made available to any business that did not use E-Verify. They apparently accepted that without a single dissenting vote. It was in the House legislation. I offered it in the Senate stimulus bill and did everything I could to see that we could make that a part of the law and

make it permanent. It was blocked in the Senate by the Democratic leadership.

I am worried that we talk a good game about doing something about this, but so far, we have been very ineffective in taking real action that will work.

Let me share one more thing about Executive order 12989. President Bush issued an Executive order, and that order called for the implementation of the E-Verify system for government contractors in January of this year. It mandates the use of E-Verify for all Federal contractors and subcontractors. It was supposed to take effect in January. I believed President Bush should have been stronger about that than he was, but they went into it carefully, and that is what they decided to do.

When President Obama came in, immediately he extended that and put it off and blocked its enforcement. So it is still not in the law. Now it is being delayed until September 8—that rule that a government contractor at least ought to check his employees to see if they are legally entitled to be employed. How simple is that? It takes a few minutes, and thousands of businesses are voluntarily doing it today. This decision, again, to delay it now until September 8 is the fourth delay this year by President Obama. I believe it signals the fact that this administration is not yet serious about their stated goal of making sure that employers comply with the law and not hire people illegally.

On January 28, it was pushed back to February 20. A few weeks later, the implementation was pushed back to May 21. Prior to that, it was pushed back to June 30, and now it is further delayed until September 8. This system is up and working. It has been up for years now. It is nothing unusual. I cannot imagine that if this Senate is allowed to vote up or down on whether to make this the law that we would not pass it. I am going to offer an amendment that will do just that. That is the right thing to do. It makes common sense.

What I am afraid may happen is that we will have, through maneuvering and chicanery, actions taken to block that vote. If the Democratic leadership in the Senate blocks a vote on this question, that can only be interpreted as their position is that we should not extend E-Verify and that we should not make it apply to government contractors.

It cannot be interpreted any other way because we have been talking about this for years. Everybody knows what the issue is.

I am concerned. I hope the President, who has had his staff on board now for 5 or 6 months—it is time for them to get their act together and let us know where they stand. Just delaying this is an indication to me they are not serious about it. It should not have taken 5 minutes to know that a government contractor should not be hiring people

illegally in the workforce. How long does it take to do that? This is not a new issue. But they are studying it, they say. OK, let's study it. But sooner or later, it is time to act.

To me, there are no two ways about it. There is one logical answer to this question. If we want to make sure the government money that is going out—money taken from American taxpayers—provides jobs for American workers, we need to pass legislation to mandate that. I hope we will. I hope the President will be able to get this study complete, which they claim they are doing, and get on with doing the right thing. We have waited long enough.

I thank the Chair, yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

CONGRATULATING THE PITTSBURGH PENGUINS ON WINNING THE 2009 STANLEY CUP CHAMPIONSHIP

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Res. 194, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 194) congratulating the Pittsburgh Penguins on winning the 2009 Stanley Cup Championship.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate, and any statements related to the resolution be printed in the RECORD.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 194) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 194

Whereas, on June 12, 2009, the Pittsburgh Penguins defeated the Detroit Red Wings 2-to-1 in Game 7 of the National Hockey League Stanley Cup Finals;

Whereas the victory marks the Penguins' third Stanley Cup Championship in franchise history and capped off a historic playoff series;

Whereas the Penguins are just the second team in league history to win the seventh game of a Stanley Cup Championship series on the road after the home team won the first 6 games of the series;

Whereas the Penguins beat the Washington Capitals in the Eastern Conference Semifinals and the Detroit Red Wings in the Stanley Cup Championship after losing the first 2 games in both series, making the Penguins the only team in league history to rally from 2-to-0 series deficits twice in the same year;

Whereas Mario Lemieux is to be honored for his commitment to keeping the Penguins in Pittsburgh and passing along his legacy to a new generation of players and fans;

Whereas, in February 2009, the Penguins hired Head Coach Dan Bylsma from the Penguins' minor league franchise in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, making Bylsma the first coach in the history of the National Hockey League to begin a season coaching in the American Hockey League and finish a Stanley Cup champion;

Whereas Sidney Crosby, the youngest team captain to ever win the Stanley Cup, was third in scoring during the regular season, had a league-leading 15 playoff goals, and demonstrated leadership by taking the Penguins to the Stanley Cup Finals in 2 consecutive seasons;

Whereas, over the course of the playoffs, Evgeni Malkin led all players in scoring with 36 points, including 14 goals and 22 assists, and won the Conn Smythe trophy for most valuable player in the playoffs;

Whereas Max Talbot is to be commended for scoring the only 2 Penguins goals in the Game 7 victory over the Detroit Red Wings;

Whereas thousands of Penguins fans supported the team throughout the postseason, donning white t-shirts to create a "whiteout" effect at home games or gathering to watch the game on a big screen television outside Mellon Arena;

Whereas the Red Wings are to be commended for a terrific season, commitment to sportsmanship, and excellence on and off the ice; and

Whereas nearly 400,000 fans packed the streets of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, on June 15, 2009, to honor the Penguins in a parade along Grant Street and the Boulevard of the Allies: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) congratulates—

(A) the Pittsburgh Penguins for winning the 2009 Stanley Cup Championship;

(B) Mario Lemieux and the coaching staff of the Penguins and support staff and recognizes their commitment to keeping the team in Pittsburgh;

(C) all Penguins fans who supported the team throughout the season; and

(D) the Detroit Red Wings on an outstanding season; and

(2) directs the Secretary of the Senate to transmit an enrolled copy of this resolution to—

(A) co-owners Mario Lemieux and Ron Burkle;

(B) vice president and general manager Ray Shero; and

(C) head coach Dan Bylsma.

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I wish to say, first, how much I appreciate the action on that resolution. I could spend a lot of time talking about our Penguins; we are so grateful they were successful in a very hard-fought series against the Detroit Red Wings, who have a strong organization and were difficult to defeat.

As a Pennsylvanian, I was especially proud that it now marks three champions in the last year: the Philadelphia Phillies in baseball, the Pittsburgh Steelers in football, and now the Pittsburgh Penguins in hockey.

We are very fortunate in our State to have three champions this year. We let the Lakers have basketball for this year. We will try to get that next year.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I rise this afternoon, at the end of a week where—and the Presiding Officer knows this in his work representing the State of Oregon and in his work as a member of our Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee—we have spent a lot of time on health care, as we did the week before and several weeks leading up to this time. But now we are at the point where in our committee we are actually voting—voting on amendments.

We know this is a challenge that has faced America for decades: the challenge of covering people in our country who do not have coverage and making sure those who do have coverage have quality health care coverage that is affordable. So all these challenges are presented to us now.

We have a situation in the country today—and Chairman DODD mentioned this this morning in a hearing—that about 14,000 people a day lose their health care coverage. It is hard to comprehend that every single day that number of Americans are losing their health care coverage. Candidly, if the number was half that, it would be unacceptable—or even less than that—but that is, in a very real way, the status quo, where we are now. Thousands and thousands of people losing coverage every day, 14,000 by one count; people who might have coverage but it is hard for them to afford it or to continue to afford it, and sometimes people have coverage and it is not of the kind of quality that would ensure the best health care for them and for their families.

We are at a point now where we are beginning to see a basic choice that the Congress has to make and the American people have to make. It is the status quo or change. It is the status quo—where we are now—which, in my judgment, is unacceptable—or reform. It is coming down to a basic, fundamental choice.

The status quo right now is the enemy of change. The status quo is the impediment in front of us, the tree across the road or whatever image you want to illustrate. So we have to get to work making sure that the status quo doesn't stay in place.

There are so many ways to tell this story. Every Member of the Senate and every Member of the House and, frankly, virtually every American could tell a story about someone they know or someone they have read about and the challenges they face. In Pennsylvania, we have a lot of examples about people who are living the reality of a lack of coverage or bad quality coverage or coverage they cannot afford. One letter I got stood out for me, among many. It was written back in February of this

year by Trisha Urban from Berks County, PA, the eastern side of Pennsylvania. I will read portions of her letter which I think tell the story about as well as anyone could; unfortunately, in this case, in a tragic circumstance. She wrote, talking about her husband Andrew, that he had to leave his job for 1 year to complete an internship requirement that he had to get his doctorate in psychology. The internship was unpaid and they could not afford COBRA coverage—extended health care coverage. Now I am quoting from the middle of the letter. Trisha Urban says:

Because of the preexisting conditions, neither my husband's health issues—

He had some heart trouble—

neither my husband's health issues nor my pregnancy would be covered under private insurance.

Now I am quoting again:

I worked 4 part-time jobs and was not eligible for any health care benefits. We ended up with a second rate health insurance plan through my husband's university. When medical bills started to add up, the insurance company decided to drop our coverage, stating that the internship did not qualify us for the benefits. We were left with close to \$100,000 worth of medical bills. Concerned with the upcoming financial responsibility of the birth of our daughter and the burden of current medical expenses, my husband missed his last doctor's appointment less than one month ago.

Trisha Urban's letter goes on. She talks about what happened at one particular moment after summarizing their health care situation. She says, describing her pregnancy:

My water had broke the night before. We were anxiously awaiting the birth of our first child. A half-hour later, two ambulances were in my driveway. As the paramedics were assessing the health of my baby and me, the paramedic from the other ambulance told me that my husband could not be revived.

She concludes her letter this way. Again, I am quoting Trisha Urban from Berks County, PA:

I am a working class American and do not have the money or the insight to legally fight the health insurance company. We had no life insurance. I will probably lose my home and my car. Everything we worked so hard to accumulate in our life will be gone in an instant. If my story is heard, if legislation can be changed to help other uninsured Americans in a similar situation, I am willing to pay the price of losing everything.

Trisha Urban is telling us through that poignant but tragic story about her own circumstances and the circumstances surrounding the birth of her daughter and the death of her husband, all we need to know about this debate.

Then, posing that question—or that challenge, I should say—to all of us, especially those of us who have a vote in the Senate:

I am willing to pay the price of losing everything if my story can be told and legislation can be enacted to deal with health care.

That is the basic challenge that Trisha Urban has put before the Senate and the Congress and the administration. It is the challenge we must respond to. We cannot pretend it is not