

Servicemembers and veterans of the U.S. military—and their family members who support them—deserve a better life than worry and fear.

In March, just a few weeks ago, James and Sharon came to Washington. They came with hundreds of other immigrants who are concerned about being deported. They are concerned about immigration reform. They know the system is broken and needs to be fixed. This is what James said:

I did what my country asked me to do. Now I'm asking my country to keep us together for the sake of humanity and freedom.

James spoke about keeping his three American children together with the mother of those three children, his wife.

When I heard James and Sharon's story, I was recommitted to doing something to help them. And I did. Not only is Sharon a wonderful mother and wife, she is also caretaker to her disabled husband. Her family needs her.

Last month, James and Sharon learned that immigration officials have deferred her status, her deportation. She is no longer in immediate danger of being separated from her family.

See, Mr. President, she was a DREAMer, and that is who President Obama stepped forward to help. In effect, what this did is it allowed her to stay and care for her husband and three children. Her children are 16, 11, and 8 years of age.

While I was happy to help James and Sharon, it is unfortunate that they needed any help in the first place. When our servicemembers are fighting overseas, they should be focused on the difficult and dangerous job they face—not worried about their family members back home.

Think about that. If she had been deported while he was overseas, what would the three boys do? Dad is overseas. They are Americans. They were born here.

No veteran of the U.S. military should have to fight to keep his wife, the caretaker of his children, by his side. Her story is compelling. Their story is compelling. But there are millions of stories just like it—stories of mothers and fathers terrified of being torn away from their U.S. citizen children; stories of young men and women fearful of being deported from the only country they know, they have ever called home; stories of families forced to live in the shadows despite coming to America in search of a brighter future.

There are 11 million reasons to pass commonsense immigration reform that mends our broken system—11 million stories of fear of being deported, fear of heartbreak, fear of suffering, and actual suffering they have facing them every day worrying about if they can go to the store, do they have to stay home. They certainly cannot travel. But for this fine young woman, that has been taken away because of President Obama.

These stories should motivate Congress to act. The bipartisan proposal before this body takes important steps to strengthen border security. It is remarkable what we already have there. We have drones, 700 miles of fencing. We have sensors. We have fixed-wing aircraft flying around with helicopters. We have 21,000 Border Patrol agents. But if there are ways people believe we could do better on security that is important, that is not just some reason to try to kill this legislation, let's take a look at it.

I spoke this morning with the chairman of the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, Senator CARPER. He has some ideas. He is preparing amendments. I like Senator CARPER always. He is very thoughtful, and I am sure he will do something that he believes would improve the situation on the border. He has gone, as a member of that committee and chairman of that committee, all over the southern part of this country looking at what is happening on the border.

So the bipartisan proposal before the Senate takes important steps to strengthen border security. It also makes crucial improvements to our broken immigration system so families like James and Sharon's are never subject to this kind of anguish again.

While this legislation is not an instant fix for families, it does provide a pathway to earned citizenship. It does not put them at the front of the line. It puts them at the back of the line. They have to stay out of trouble. They have to work, pay taxes, and focus on learning English. That is what it is about.

Passing meaningful immigration reform will be good for our national security, it will be good for the economy, it will be good for James and Sharon Courtney and millions of families just like them.

James is a veteran who sacrificed his time and his health to keep this Nation safe from harm. He is now disabled. We can at least thank him by keeping his family safe—and together.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

Mr. REID. Would the Chair announce the business of the day.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

BORDER SECURITY, ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY, AND IMMIGRATION MODERNIZATION ACT—MOTION TO PROCEED

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to S. 744, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows: Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 80, S. 744, a bill to provide for comprehensive immigration reform and for other purposes.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I would ask the Chair at this time to recognize the

Senator from Hawaii, Mr. SCHATZ, who replaced Senator Inouye. I understand he is going to give his maiden speech in the Senate today. I would ask that the Chair recognize him.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Hawaii.

NATIVE HAWAIIAN GOVERNMENT REORGANIZATION

Mr. SCHATZ. Mr. President, today, June 11, marks a public holiday in the State of Hawaii, King Kamehameha Day, celebrated since 1872. We hold a statewide festival and mark the day with lei draping ceremonies, parades, hula competitions, and other festivities. It is a day to honor Kamehameha the Great, who unified the Kingdom of Hawaii, and to celebrate the rich culture and traditions of the Hawaiian people.

I chose this day to come to the Senate floor to talk about an issue of great importance to me and to the great State of Hawaii: Native Hawaiian government reorganization. It was a top priority of my immediate predecessors in this body, Senators Inouye and Akaka. For more than three decades, they worked together in the Congress to advance priorities important to Hawaii and to the Nation.

They made history at almost every step of their careers—securing dozens of firsts in the House and in the Senate. But for the indigenous people of the United States, Senators Inouye and Akaka will be forever remembered for their work as members and then chairs of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, and for their advocacy on behalf of American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians.

I want to acknowledge their legacy and to thank Senator Akaka for the role he continues to play in our great State and in the Native Hawaiian community in particular. Here is the reason I have chosen to carry forward this fight on behalf of Native Hawaiians: Simply stated, it is right to seek justice.

Native Hawaiians are the only federally recognized native people without a government-to-government relationship with the United States, and they deserve access to the prevailing Federal policy of self-determination. Opponents have argued that Native Hawaiians are not "Indians," as if the word applies to native people of a certain racial or ethnic heritage or is limited to indigenous people from one part of the United States but not another. This is misguided.

Our Constitution makes it clear. Our Founding Fathers understood that it was the tribal nations' sovereign authority that distinguished them from others. It was the fact that tribes were native groups with distinct governments that predated our own that justified special treatment in the Constitution and under Federal law.

In what is now the United States, European contact with native groups began in the 15th and 16th centuries on the east coast, and the 16th and 17th