

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican leader is recognized.

RELATIVE TO THE DEATH OF HOWARD O. GREENE, JR.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, this afternoon I wish to say a word about Howard Greene, whose passing we mourn today.

Howard was a leading figure here in the Senate for many years. I know Members of both parties remember his time here with fondness, even though he retired from the Senate nearly two decades ago. And I think that says a lot about Howard.

He began his service here modestly enough as a doorkeeper right outside this Chamber. The year was 1968. Howard was 26, a student at the University of Maryland. He originally intended to become a history teacher, but over time his ambitions changed, from wanting to teach about history to wanting to help shape it—and what a lucky break for the Senate.

His considerable talents were soon put to work in the Republican cloakroom. It was a big promotion, even if Howard had to first explain to his mother that working in the cloakroom didn't mean he would be hanging up people's coats.

Howard quickly gained the confidence of Senators as he rose rapidly through the ranks. His deep institutional knowledge, strong work ethic, honesty, and sense of humor were appreciated by those who worked with him, and his talents were essential for the many who relied upon him.

After the Reagan landslide of 1980, Howard put his institutional knowledge to work as secretary of the new Republican majority. After so many years out of power, it was a challenging task, but he was up to it.

All told, Howard would serve the institution he loved for more than 28 years, working under Republican leaders such as Howard Baker and Bob Dole, until stepping down from his final position of Sergeant at Arms in 1996.

Senators from both parties had a lot of nice things to say about him back then. The late Senator from Alaska, Ted Stevens, said it could seem like Howard had a crystal ball when it came to counting votes and predicting outcomes, and he praised him for his "careful analysis, knowledge of the issues, understanding of the Members, and . . . hard work" that often made his forecasts correct.

Senator David Pryor from Arkansas, a Democrat, noted that Howard "respected and served and answered to not

only the Senators on . . . [the Republican] side of the aisle," but to the Members on his side as well.

It is clear that this man from Lewes, DE, had uncommon talent and ability. We are grateful he chose to share it with us for so many years. We honor him for it today, and we send our sincerest condolences to his family in this difficult time.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 579, submitted earlier today; further, that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 579) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

CCDBG PROGRAM

Mr. BURR. Mr. President, I come to the floor today because in just a little over 2 hours we are going to take up the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 2014. Let me explain what that is.

The Child Care and Development Block Grant Program was created in 1990 to provide a voucher to meet the childcare needs of families at risk of having to make the decision that one or both parents couldn't work because childcare had such a tremendous expense with it. We wanted those parents to be able to participate in the productive part of our economy and society.

I can honestly say this is one of the most successful programs Congress has ever produced. The program, as is the case with every bill, is required to be reauthorized after a certain period of time. It was started in 1995—I might add the year I got here—and it was reauthorized in 1996. This was the last time this bill was ever reauthorized.

Now, let me point out that authorization and funding are two different things. These vouchers have existed in the system but Congress has not reauthorized the program; therefore, we haven't changed the program since 1996. I ask my colleagues to stop for a moment and think about how society has changed since 1996. The world has changed since 1996. Things we took for granted in 1996 we need proof of today. Things we didn't worry about in 1996 we worry about today. Let me suggest

that childcare is no different. There is still a need for some type of vouchers for families who are on the bubble, and I dare say that childcare has gotten incredibly expensive since 1996.

I rise today to congratulate this body because this afternoon, in just under 2 hours, we are going to pass the first reauthorization of the Child Care Development Block Grant program since 1996. I will be really very honest; it wouldn't be possible if it wasn't for my partner in this endeavor, BARBARA MIKULSKI. Senator MIKULSKI has been tenacious. She has stood by my side, and she has told me when she didn't think we should move forward, because as easy and as common sense as it sounds, it has been really difficult to get to this point. This has been a 3-year process. So for those who criticize Congress, let me assure those people, we have touched every base we can touch.

Several years ago, while we served as chair and ranking member of the Subcommittee on Children and Families, Senator MIKULSKI and I promised at that time to address the shortcomings in the CCDBG Program so that children could attend childcare and their families could expect a healthy setting that fostered their development.

Now, for years, we have heard stories about abuse and neglect in many childcare settings—stories that continue to break my heart and, I think, break the heart of every American. We saw numerous inspector general reports that documented unsafe conditions where children were neglected and Federal tax dollars were misused.

Let me stop here and say this. Everything we do in this bill only applies to a childcare facility that accepts CCDBG money. They can be private institutions. They can be faith-based institutions. Their construction can be a combination of all of the above. If they accept one penny of CCDBG money, they are now required to meet the quality standards and safety standards we set in this bill. Now, in North Carolina, that covers practically every childcare facility. But in every State they don't go to the lengths we do in North Carolina nor that we go to in this piece of legislation. I hope my colleagues will go back to the States they hail from, and they will suggest that things such as background checks for workers at a childcare facility is common sense. To say to a parent who is dropping off a young child, whether the Federal Government subsidized with a voucher or not—that parent should feel 100-percent confident that the worker there is not a convicted felon, that they are not a drug addict, that they have passed the minimal background check that most of us would think is common sense.

I might also take the opportunity to stop and say to the Presiding Officer, who represents Virginia, you might think—gosh, this is a financial burden on all childcare centers. No, this is a \$15 investment in the safety of every child who is housed in their facility.

For a program that in many States represents almost all the funding used for childcare subsidies, Senator MIKULSKI and I knew it was an obligation to act to reauthorize this law so appropriate boundaries were put in place. To continue to ignore these realities would have allowed Federal dollars to keep funding abuse, waste—taxpayers, parents, and children deserved our action.

Since then, between the two of us and our staffs, we have held four HELP Committee hearings. We have 236 hours of negotiations. We have dozens of meetings with 44 advocacy organizations supporting this legislation. The Senate had 18 amendments considered and voted on in this institution, the Senate, back in March when the legislation passed this body of Congress 96 to 2. That was March.

We are here today because the House changed the bill a little bit with our blessings, and this afternoon we are going to take up passage of the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 2014.

My hope is this is going to be a unanimous vote by the Senate.

Bringing the HELP Committee together, as the Presiding Officer knows, is very difficult because of the diverse ideology of the makeup of members on the HELP Committee.

It is no small feat we have gotten to this point, and we hold together the support of people who look at the world a little bit differently than I do and may geographically come from a different area than I do.

I wish to publicly say thank you to Chairman HARKIN, Ranking Member ALEXANDER, Ranking Member ENZI before that, because if it wasn't for the leadership on the full committee, Senator MIKULSKI and I would not have had the opportunity to mark it up in committee, to pass it on the Senate floor, to work with the House, and now to have a bill back.

As I conclude, let me just say for the 1.7 million children served nationally by CCDBG and the 80,000 served in my State of North Carolina, safe and quality childcare will now be a priority, ensuring working parents trying to better their lives and those of their children will feel safe using their Federal vouchers.

In short, I urge my colleagues to unanimously support this legislation. We waited way too long since 1996 to make the commonsense changes that provide safety and quality in the childcare that we, the taxpayers, provide to those families on the bubble.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

IMMIGRATION

Mr. CORNYN. Only a few years ago a prominent Democrat firmly and unequivocally rejected the idea that the President of the United States could singlehandedly enact an amnesty for millions of immigrants who entered the country without legal authorization. In 2011, for example, this same person reminded us that “there are laws on the books that Congress has passed” and that therefore it should not be permissible for the President to “suspend deportations through executive order.” Then in 2013 this same individual noted that granting a unilateral amnesty for adults who came to the United States illegally was “not an option” because it would amount to “ignoring the law.” A few months later this same individual was speaking at an immigration event and was interrupted by a heckler who urged him to stop the deportations by Executive fiat. In response, he said:

If in fact I could solve all of these problems without passing laws in Congress, then I would do so. But we are also a nation of laws. That is part of our tradition.

Of course, you might have guessed who that person was. It was President Barack Obama on numerous different occasions in the past few years saying he did not have the authority to issue a unilateral Executive order granting, in effect, a right to waive the law with regard to illegal immigration. I have to say that our President has a preternatural ability to say one thing and then do another—the opposite.

Now the President is threatening to authorize exactly the type of action he previously said he did not have the authority to order, and he is threatening to do so even after his go-it-alone approach on immigration and so many other issues was so roundly repudiated in this most recent election on November 4. In other words, he is showing contempt for the Constitution, for the voters, and basically anyone who disagrees with him. It is the classic “my way or the highway” approach.

According to press reports, he will act as early as this week and he will unilaterally grant work permits. Under what authority—I have no idea how he can legislate authority to grant work permits for people who illegally entered the country, but he said, apparently, he is going to try. These are the kinds of maneuvers we would expect to see from tin-pot dictators and banana republics, not from the Commander in Chief and the Chief Executive of the world's greatest democracy.

Apparently the President now thinks that he and, I assume by precedent, any future President can simply ignore the laws that he finds inconvenient, that “if Congress hasn't passed the law, that is a good enough excuse for me to go it alone and do it my way,” go around it, go against the will of Congress and the American people. This is a dangerous precedent, I hope the President recognizes. If after the next election a President of the other

party—my party—is elected, won't this be viewed as a precedent which has been established by this President which could be used on everything from taxes, to regulation, to ObamaCare—you name it. But that is not how our Constitution is written. That is not what the separation of powers doctrine—which is an essential element of our Constitution—provides. Even the Washington Post—not known as being a bastion of conservative thought—has said that failing to get his way in Congress does not “grant the president license to tear up the Constitution.”

Unfortunately, the President has shown that he has very little patience with constitutional safeguards, especially when they hamper his agenda or complicate his political needs. After all, this is the same President who has unilaterally rewritten ObamaCare by granting extensions, waivers, and the like and who has unilaterally gutted welfare reform and who has made blatantly unconstitutional appointments to the Federal bureaucracy and to the Federal judiciary, only to be corrected by the courts.

For that matter, the President has already made a number of unilateral changes in U.S. immigration policy with disastrous results. We have seen literally thousands of convicted criminals released from U.S. custody, including those with violent records. And, of course, it wasn't that long ago that we saw what had been called a genuine humanitarian crisis unfold along the southern border in my State as tens of thousands of Central American children made a treacherous journey in order to cross illegally into the United States and take advantage of a loophole in a 2008 law that we tried to correct but couldn't even get a vote on it in the Senate.

At the height of the crisis in early June, the New York Times told the story of a 13-year-old Honduran boy who was detained in Mexico while trying to reach the U.S. border, and his story was pretty typical of what we heard from many people. The Department of Homeland Security conducted interviews with many of the immigrants who came across at that time. “Like so many others across Central America,” the Times reported, this boy “said his mother believed that the Obama administration had quietly changed its policy regarding unaccompanied minors and that if he made it across, he would have a better shot at staying.”

In other words, the impression that we are not going to enforce our law is a magnet.

I have no idea how this unilateral action by the President will be interpreted—granting legal status presumably to millions of people by the swipe of his pen. Will that be viewed as a green light for people who want to come to the United States from all around the world, saying: Well, if I can just get to the United States, President Obama will let me stay too.