veto it will receive if it ever reaches the White House.

IMMIGRATION

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, another issue in which this Republican Congress is ignoring working families is immigration.

Action on the Latino and Immigrant Fairness Act is long overdue. The issues in this legislation are not new to Congress. The immigrant community—particularly the Latino community—has waited far too long for the fundamental fairness this legislation will provide.

The Latino and Immigrant Fairness Act keeps families together. It rewards immigrants who work hard and pay taxes, and it makes our immigration policies simpler and fairer.

Our proposal is based on the fundamental principle that immigrants in similar situations should be treated equally. The Latino and Immigrant Fairness Act includes parity for all Central Americans, and for Haitians and Liberians. In 1997, Congress enacted legislation granting permanent residence to Nicaraguans and Cubans who had fled their repressive governments. But Congress did not grant the same protection to other Central Americans and Haitians. The Latino and Immigrant Fairness Act will eliminate these disparities and create fair, uniform procedures for all of these immigrants.

The Latino and Immigrant Fairness Act will also change the registry cutoff date, so that long-time immigrants who have been residing in this country since before 1986 will qualify to remain in the United States permanently, and it will restore a provision to the immigration laws that was unfairly allowed to expire in 1997.

These proposals are pro-family, pro-business, fiscally prudent, and a matter of common sense. But that hasn't stopped the Republican leadership from opposing them and offering a blatantly inadequate substitute that pays lip service to fairness for Latinos and immigrants in our communities but denies them real help.

Under even the most generous interpretation, the Republican proposal ignores the vast majority of immigrants and families. It will perpetuate the current patchwork of contradictory and discriminatory provisions enacted by the Republican Congress in recent years.

Republicans propose two things. First, a new temporary ''V'' visa would be created that allows certain spouses and minor children of lawful permanent residents to enter or stay in the U.S. and be granted work authorization while waiting for their green card. To qualify for the visa, applicants must have had applications for entry pending for over three years.

On the surface, this may sound like a good idea. But it unfairly picks and chooses among family members, granting relief to some, but not to others. The GOP proposal perpetuates the piecemeal and discriminatory immigration policies we are seeking to end.

Second, the Republican plan would provide an opportunity for individuals to apply for green cards—but only if they were part of two particular class action lawsuits against the INS for improper handling of the 1986 amnesty program. This selective proposal is grossly inadequate. It provides relief only for individuals who sought counsel from a specific lawyer and joined a specific lawsuit, even though countless other individuals affected by the INS ruling are left out. Also, of those people who are actually covered by this plan, less than 40 percent are expected to prevail.

Republicans acknowledge that the 1986 law was implemented unfairly. It is wrong and inconsistent to deny a remedy to all who were affected. It is wrong to help only those who were able to hire the right attorney, and who filled out the right forms. All eligible individuals should receive relief.

Governor Bush praises his trillion dollar tax break for the wealthy, and criticizes Democrats for supporting targeted tax relief that helps some individuals, but not others. It's obvious that Republicans don't care about uniformity when the issue is immigration. It's unfair and unjust to pick and choose among immigrants who will receive this well-deserved and long-overdue relief.

We have welcomed these individuals to the United States. They are part of our communities. We have come to know them as neighbors, friends, and colleagues. We should support those who have come here in their search for freedom, equality, and a better life. These are the same dreams our ancestors came here to find in the past.

It is essential to pass the real Latino and Immigrant Fairness Act and treat immigrants fairly. Hard-working immigrant families deserve this long-overdue relief, and they deserve it now.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The minority controls the remainder of the time.

Mr. REID. I yield that time to Senator DORGAN.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota is recognized for 9 minutes 17 seconds.

THEY HAD THEIR CHANCE

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I am not going to talk about Texas. There has been plenty of discussion about that tonight. I am going to talk about this country. I saw this morning an interview in which Governor Bush said: ''They had their chance,'' talking about Vice President GORE, of course. ''They had their chance.'' I want to talk about what has happened in the last 8 years.

It is important to remember exactly what the Clinton-Gore administration inherited and where we are. They had their chance. Let's talk about President Clinton and Vice President GORE.

In 1993, when they took office, we had a $290 billion deficit that year, and it was rising. That deficit was exploding. Our economy was in trouble. Economists predicted slow anemic growth for an entire decade ahead. That is what the Clinton-Gore administration inherited.

Now, instead of the largest deficit in history, we have the largest surplus in history. Is that an accident? I don't think so. We had a vote in this Senate and they had a vote in the House on a new plan to take this country to a new direction, and it passed by one vote—one vote in the House and one vote in the Senate. Not one member of the majority party voted for that in either the House or the Senate. We moved this country to a new direction. Now instead of the largest deficits in history, we have the largest surpluses in history.

This is a chart which shows what these deficits and surpluses were when Governor Bush said: They had their chance. This is what we inherited from President George Bush in 1992 and 1993: red ink that was growing every year. This country was choking on deficits, and every year, when we changed direction and created a new economic plan to give people hope that we would make the tough decisions to turn this country around, we have seen lower and lower deficits and finally surpluses. That is not an accident.

They had their chance, Governor Bush said. They turned the biggest deficits into the biggest surpluses. How about economic growth? In the 12 years prior to the Clinton-Gore administration taking office, average economic growth was 2.8 percent. Since then, economic growth has been on average 3.9 percent.

Jobs: 1988 to 1992 was one of the worst 4-year periods in history for the creation of jobs. In fact, I have a chart that I think will be useful to show in terms of the creation of jobs: In the Bush administration, 1988 to 1992, 2.5 million new jobs in 4 years. In 8 years, the Clinton-Gore administration had an economy that rebounded, and we had 22 million new jobs created in this country. They had their chance.

How about the unemployment rate? In 1981–1982, Reagan-Bush averaged 7.1-percent unemployment. Currently, there is 4.1-percent unemployment, the lowest level in 30 years.

Home ownership: From 1982 to 1992, home ownership fell in this country. Now it is the highest in history.

Welfare rolls increased 22 percent from 1981 to 1992. Now they have decreased by 53 percent.