

OPENING STATEMENT BY SEN. CHARLES E. SCHUMER
SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE
MAY 9, 2013

Thank you Mr. Chairman. First, let me thank you for giving us the time here and showing great leadership as we move forward on this legislation.

The group of eight of us—four of whom are on this committee, along with Senator Feinstein and Senator Hatch—spent a great deal of time on this legislation and we believe it is a sound, balanced, sturdy ship that will now begin its voyage. We believe we have taken all the considerations into account and we have come up with a fair bill where no one gets everything they want, but at the end of the day it will mean dramatic improvement for the American economy, the American people, and will make our immigration policy much more in sync for what is good for jobs and America.

And I would say to my colleagues here, what we do is founded on a fundamental premise: that Americans will support commonsense solutions to both future immigration and the 11 million who are living here in the shadows, but only if, only if they are convinced that there will not be future waves of illegal immigration in this country.

This bill is, far and away, the strongest bill that has been put together that has a chance of passing in turns of stopping future flows of illegal immigration—just on the border alone. Senator McCain and I had an amendment a few years ago that spent about \$600-\$800 million on the border that made the effectiveness rate go up from 68 to 82. We spend much more than that—as much as \$6.5 billion dollars. The border will effectively be closed with these expenditures and the way that they will be done.

We take future immigration and make sure that we deal with the industries that desperately need help. Google moved 400 Engineers as part of Google's map to Vancouver because Canadian immigration policy allowed people to go there and ours didn't, and they couldn't get the workers to go here. At the same time, in New York state, the leading cabbage grower in New York, a Mr. Yunker from Ontario County, did not plant his thousands of acres of cabbage this year because he couldn't get people to pick the crops. We will change our policy so that the people who are needed to help our economy grow can come into this country, and at the same time we will note that when families are divided the humane thing to do is bring those families back together. Because we so dramatically stop the flow of illegal immigration, we can do both. And we do, and do it fairly.

We know our present system is broken, we know the status quo is unacceptable, but we also know that there are many who would want to kill this bill. I would ask my colleagues, if you don't agree with everything, no one does. Be constructive. We are open to changes. But don't kill a bill that is the best hope, I believe, at immigration reform we have had in this country and frankly the best hope to break the partisan gridlock that has strangled the Senate, the Congress, and the country.