have not just a short-term, very negative impact on our current economy but a significant restructuring of the longstanding relationships between individual citizens and generations.

Yes, leaving a legacy of debt to the next generation is a terrible thing for us to do, but leaning on the crutch of the Constitution and the fig leaf of a constitutional amendment to avoid doing our responsibility—a job which the Senate is fully capable of doing—avoids that responsibility to the next generation.

I close with this question: As we say in the law, if there is a right, what is the remedy? If we were to pass this constitutional amendment, how would it be enforced if the Senate in the future were to fail to balance the budget? Would lifetime Federal judges around the country be imposing choices in terms of budget cuts, spending cuts, revenue changes? I think that would be no better—in fact, far worse—than the Senate simply doing its job.

Today I voted against this balanced budget amendment because I think we have it within our power to show self-control and to secure the future for the next generation of Americans.

Mr. KIRK. I would close by saying the Senator and I agree. I think the Simpson-Bowles plan is the right way to go, and my hope is that we join together on a bipartisan basis to reduce expected Federal borrowing by $4 trillion along the lines of that bipartisan Presidential commission. But, unfortunately, the Simpson-Bowles plan is gathering dust. The supercommittee that was given procedural powers to possibly put that forward also collapsed. We have not been able to do our job, and we are now encumbering the next generation with even greater amounts of debt—historic amounts.

I think the Founding Fathers did not contemplate the ability to borrow as much from other countries as we now have, and with the United States as the center of freedom and democracy around the world there is a lot riding on the credit of the United States.

My colleague from Delaware talks about a very vital future—especially for people like my own mother—of Social Security and Medicare, but I think she understands that a bankrupt country cannot support Social Security and Medicare. We have to defend the credit of the United States, and therefore I think a balanced budget amendment is essential to the long-term future of the United States.

With that, I thank my colleague.

Mr. President, we have just finished. I hope we do return to a tradition of actual debate, and I thank my colleague for the chance to carry out this debate.

Mr. COONS. I thank the Senator.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

Ms. LANDRIEU. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

TRIBUTE TO MAJOR GENERAL BENNY LANDRENEAU

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, while we have a bit of quiet time on the Senate floor this evening, I thought I would make brief remarks about the extraordinary career of MG Benny Landreneau. General Landreneau recently retired as the most senior Adjutant General in the Nation, with nearly 14 years of service as head of the Louisiana National Guard, serving under three Governors, and nearly four decades of service to the State of Louisiana and our Nation.

Over many years I have had the joy and pleasure of calling General Landreneau a friend and a colleague and I have worked closely with him and the 11,000 members of our Louisiana National Guard. Through the September 11 attacks on our country and through Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, Gustaf, and Ike and the recent BP oil-spill—one of the largest environmental disasters in our Nation's history—General Landreneau has proven his leadership to the people of Louisiana and our Nation time and time again.

Benny, as he is known by his friends, credits his father with inspiring him to serve in the National Guard. His father Joseph Audley Landreneau was a World War II veteran and engineering soldier and a combat veteran. Benny, who grew up in Vidrine, LA, chose to follow in his father's footsteps and quickly rose through the ranks in the Louisiana National Guard.

As a young man, in 1969 he enlisted as a light weapons infantryman in the 773rd Maintenance Battalion. Two and a half years later he graduated from Officer Candidate School and became a second lieutenant platoon leader as part of the 3671st Maintenance Company. From those very early beginnings in the National Guard, he progressed rapidly through the ranks.

During his time with the Guard, General Landreneau was part of several major campaigns, including a deployment during Desert Storm. During the first gulf war General Landreneau and his 527th Engineer Battalion were tasked with any number of important missions, including the No. 1 mission for the gulf war commander himself, GEN Fred Franks.

General Franks needed an unmanned aerial vehicle landing strip built immediately, so he knew who to call to get that job done. He called Benny Landreneau and his battalion. Need I say that it was done, I am sure, under budget and before time.

After the 527th returned to the command headquarters, General Franks called General Landreneau to thank him for what he did, which was extraordinary, and asked the general what he could do as a return favor. Without blinking an eye, General Landreneau just said:

> Sir, please, if you could get us home for Mother's Day, it would be appreciated.

So all of the mostly guys were home from other States—some women in the battalion as well—and they were thrilled to be home with their parents.

In 1996, shortly after the gulf war, General Landreneau retired from the Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources where he served also as a State conservationist for almost 30 years. Since that time, he has taken the National Guard in Louisiana from a strategic reserve force to an operational force that continues to lead the Nation both on and off the battlefield, and I will talk about off the battlefield in just a minute.

General Landreneau was quoted as saying:

> The Louisiana National Guard soldiers and airmen are part of the finest National Guard in America. It is their dedication and professionalism, their commitment and their hard work that has made the Louisiana National Guard the finest guard in America. The Louisiana National Guard has performed in such an outstanding matter in accepting these new challenges of being an operational force and responding to the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and deploying throughout the world when called on and, at the same time, being able to take up the work of their State emergencies—

Which have been too numerous to count—

> and being able to respond to the citizens of this State in an outstanding fashion.

This is due in part, I say, to his leadership and vision.

General Landreneau has also been instrumental in implementing one of the most phenomenal programs in our country: the Louisiana National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program. It is part of the National Youth ChalleNGe Program. This is what I mean by off-the-battlefield expertise as well as on-the-battlefield expertise.

Some years ago—I think about 15—when General Conway was the general for the National Guard, he helped to start this program that now has graduated over 100,000 young people between the ages of 16 and 18 who are unfortunately drifting from the straight and narrow path. They haven't ended up in prison yet, but they are headed that way. They have given up on themselves. They have gotten into a little bit of trouble and need a second chance. This program offers them that chance.

Under General Landreneau's leadership, we run three of the dozens of programs operating in the United States. I might say we run the best three, having been granted and acknowledged with awards in ceremonies for many years in Louisiana and having graduated the largest number of young people. This has been done because of General Landreneau's extraordinary commitment to the citizens of our State

and to the young people of our State and the respect he has of his rank and file for these men and women to go beyond their regular duties and responsibilities and step up and say: There is an epidemic in America. Our dropout rate is too high. What can the National Guard do, in addition to everything else they do both abroad and at home, to help? It is extraordinary.

His grandchildren and his children are proud of him. I know he is very proud of them.

He has assembled over the last 14 years arguably the most tested staff in the Nation. He is being succeeded as Adjutant General by GEN Glenn Curtis, who has served as General Landreneau's right-hand man for the last 6 years. It is the hallmark of his leadership that General Landreneau leaves his staff ready to step up, ready to serve, and ready to continue the excellent service they have given to the people of our State and our Nation. Although General Curtis will bring his own brand of leadership to the National Guard, there is no doubt, as he has said to me many times, he has learned at the elbow of GEN Benny Landreneau.

In conclusion, I would like to personally, on behalf of the people of our State, thank GEN Benny Landreneau for his many years of service and dedication to the people of Louisiana and our country. I want him to know he has positively impacted our State in ways that will long be remembered. The people of Louisiana are grateful for his service and for his dedication, and we honor his admirable career in the National Guard.

Thank you, Mr. President. I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. FRANKEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Senator WHITEHOUSE and I be permitted to engage in a colloquy.

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

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. FRANKEN. Mr. President, I rise today to address an alarming trend that I see in our national discourse. As legislators, our decisions need to be rooted in facts. Science driven by data and rigorous analysis needs to inform our policymaking.

Scientists are the ones who made the United States the world's innovator in the last century. Scientists are the people who gave us antibiotics, for example. Do you like being able to use antibiotics? Well, then, thank scientists.

Scientists put a man on the Moon—several men, actually—and got him back safely. These are rocket scientists.

Scientists made it possible for Americans to watch this speech on C–SPAN—that is C–SPAN, the Cable Satellite Public Affairs Network—also rocket scientists.

Scientists also came up with such useful things as the Internet.

A scientist from the University of Minnesota, a Noble Price-winning agronomist named Norman Borlaug, is credited with saving over 1 billion lives worldwide. He did this by using science to develop a high-yield, disease-resistant wheat that was planted in Pakistan, India, and elsewhere around the world.

By engineering our next-generation weapons systems, scientists ensure that our military will continue to be the most powerful in the world.

We rely on science and scientists, and if we are to progress as a country, if we and future generations of Americans are to be healthy and prosperous and safe, we better put science right at the center of our decisionmaking. Yet, right now, foundations and think tanks funded by the fossil fuel industry are spreading misinformation about the integrity of climate science, much as think tanks paid by the tobacco industry used misinformation to cast doubt about the health hazards of smoking.

Ignoring or flatout contradicting what climate scientists are telling us about the warming climate and the warming planet can lead to really bad decisions on natural energy and environmental policies here in Congress. So today Senator WHITEHOUSE and I want to take some time to talk about climate science and about the fact that a scientific consensus on climate change has been reached. Climate change is happening and is being driven by human activities.

From the National Academy of Sciences, to the American Meteorological Society, to the American Academy for the Advancement of Science, all of the preeminent scientific institutions agree that manmade greenhouse gas emissions are warming the planet and are a threat to our economy, to our security, and to our health, and so do the overwhelming majority of actively publishing climatologists.

This graph, taken from a study published by the National Academy of Sciences, shows responses to the survey question: Do you think human activity is a significant contributing factor in changing mean global temperatures?

What you see here is that as climate expertise goes up, so does the affirmation that climate change is real and is caused by human beings. Among the most expert pool of respondents, climatologists who are actively publishing on climate change, represented by this bar right here, the rightmost bar, 97 percent of that category of scientists answered yes. Of course, there are a few articles published by climate skeptics in peer-reviewed journals, but the vast majority—97 percent—of the peer-reviewed literature supports the notion that people are causing the Earth's climate to change.

What are peer-reviewed articles? Well, they are articles scientists write after conducting experiments. The experimentation is designed to test a hypothesis. If the hypothesis holds up, the scientist writes a paper describing the experiment and sends to it a professional journal. The journal then sends to it other experts in the field—peer reviewers—who see if they can tear any holes in the theory. They question the methodology. They check the math. Very often, they send the paper back with questions. And the researchers will make changes to satisfy the reviewers' inquires. If in the end the peer reviewers think the work is sound, they recommend the paper for publication. Then, after publication, other scientists in the field are free to read the paper and plug away and disprove it if they can. That is a peer-reviewed paper.

I repeat, the vast majority of peer-reviewed literature supports the notion that people are causing the Earth's climate to change, and 97 percent of published climatologists say yes when asked: Do you think human activity is a significant contributing factor in changing mean global temperatures?

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, as Senator FRANKEN has pointed out, despite the efforts to mislead and create doubt, the jury is not out on whether climate change is happening and being caused by manmade carbon pollution; the verdict is, in fact, in, and the verdict is clear, as shown by this group of scientific organizations that signed a letter supporting our efforts to do something about carbon pollution in the Senate back in October of 2009: the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the American Chemical Society, the Geophysical Union, the Meteorological Society, the Natural Science Collections Alliance, the Botanical Society of America.

Virtually every significant scientific organization accepts that these are the facts and that the verdict is in, and, indeed, there is some recent added support. The scientific community continues to examine this question.

A recent report by James Hansen and Makiko Sato says:

> Climate change is likely to be the predominant scientific, economic, political and moral issue of the 21st century. The fate of humanity and nature may depend upon early recognition and understanding of human-made effects on Earth's climate.

They continue:

> Earth is poised to experience strong amplifying polar feedbacks in response to moderate global warming. Thus, goals of limiting human-made warming to 2 degrees Celsius are not sufficient—they are prescriptions for disaster.

Another recent report, ''Climate Change and European Marine Ecosystem Research,'' reads as follows: