

confusion over section 137 as to whether the language that is now incorporated in the CR expands DHS authority or allows implementation of a potential Executive order pertaining to cyber security. The answer to that question is no, absolutely not. The provision is limited to funding improvements in the Federal Network Security Program, which provides security systems that monitor cyber attacks on Federal Government computer networks. It helps enhance the protection for those existing networks that are in place.

It is important that both the House and Senate homeland security appropriations bills included this additional funding, and it is considered so critical, it was added to the continuing resolution so that this implementation can continue without interruption. It does so because these networks are constantly under attack by individuals and groups and others who could cause real problems and real harm to our country.

So let me be very clear on the language that has been agreed on in a bipartisan basis and what the colloquy said. This provision does not intrude upon the authorizers' jurisdiction. This provision does not have anything to do with the regulation of private sector infrastructure. DHS has confirmed that in writing. And this provision does not enable a new Executive order in any way. I would be the first to object to this language if that were the case, and I believe we have now remedied any confusion that might exist over that particular language.

I am hopeful that even though we were not able to ultimately pass and incorporate workable cyber protection language, that we can continue to work together.

I wish to thank the chair of the Appropriations Homeland Security Subcommittee, Senator LANDRIEU, for joining me and clarifying this important provision included in the continuing resolution.

With that, I wish to thank my colleague from Rhode Island for allowing me the time, and unfortunately his good presentation was interrupted. I thank my colleague for the time to clarify that.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Madam President, I am very happy to allow my colleague from Indiana the time, and I appreciate his good work on cyber security and hope that he and I and others can work toward a legislative solution on that.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. My topic had been the acidification of our oceans as a result of carbon pollution now up 30 percent in acidity and projected to increase 160 percent in acidity at unprecedented rates in millions of years. It

has been 50 to 300 million years since we have seen this kind of dramatic change in ocean acidity. For species that use calcium carbonate to create their shells and skeletons, such as oysters, crabs, lobsters, and the little plankton that so many other species depend on as the base of the food chain, it becomes harder for these species to thrive.

These unprecedented changes I am talking about in ocean acidity are not happening alone, they are happening on top of dramatically changing ocean temperature that is also driven by carbon pollution.

Just this week on the surface of the Earth, we experienced one of the hottest summers on record. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration released this statement about the northeast shelf large marine ecosystem, which extends from the Gulf of Maine down to Cape Hatteras. Here is what they said:

During the first 6 months of 2012, sea surface temperatures . . . were the highest ever recorded. Above average temperatures were found in all parts of the ecosystem, from the ocean bottom to the sea surface and across the region . . . The annual 2012 spring plankton bloom was intense, started earlier and lasted longer than average. This has implications for marine life from the smallest creatures to the largest marine mammals, like whales. Atlantic cod continued to shift northeastward from its historic distribution center.

I don't need to tell anybody in the Northeast how important the stability of the cod fishery is right now. That historic fishery is facing significant reductions in catch limits because the population is not rebounding as expected from the reduced catches that fishermen are already contributing to try to solve this problem. Something is causing that failure to rebound, and the unprecedented environmental changes occurring in the ecosystem can't be overlooked as the culprit behind this unexplained phenomenon of failure to rebound.

NOAA cited a 2009 study published in Marine Ecology Progress Series that analyzed survey data in the region from 1987 to 2007. It found that about half of 36 fish stocks evaluated have been shifting northward for the past four decades, with some disappearing from U.S. waters as they move farther offshore.

In Narragansett Bay, in my home State of Rhode Island, average water temperatures have increased by 4 degrees. This amounts to an ecosystem shift. In fact, the bay, once dominated by bottom-dwelling fish, such as winter flounder, is now more populated by open-water species, such as squid and butterfish.

Let's look at winter flounder a little bit more closely. In the 1960s, the biomass of winter flounder in Narragansett Bay was as high as 4,500 metric tons. By 2011, it was down to just about 900. This is the total estimated biomass on the blue line. The red line is the landmass. That is what the fishermen

were able to catch and bring in. As my colleagues can see, it went from 1,000 metric tons up to 2,000 metric tons and then, over time, it sagged and returned to 2,000 metric tons, and now it is left to virtually zero. This was a very productive fishery for Rhode Island fishermen and it is now virtually gone.

Past overfishing had a role to play, but so too has the dramatic temperature change and the stock's ability to recover is made all the more difficult by ongoing temperature change as well as acidification.

The changes facing our oceans do not stop at higher temperatures and greater acidity. I wish they did. But as average global temperatures rise, water expands. Water expands as it gets warmer, and new fresh water pours out of the snowpack and ice sheets of Antarctica and Greenland. Long-term data from tide gauges in our traditional sailing port of Newport, RI, show an increase in average sea level of nearly 10 inches since 1930. At these tide gauges, measurements show that the rate of sea-level rise has increased in the past two decades compared to the rate over the last century. The increase is not just happening, it is speeding up. This is consistent with reports that since 1990, sea level has been rising faster than the rate predicted by scientific models used to generate the IPCC estimates.

Global predictions for sea-level rise range from 20 to 39 inches by the year 2100, with recent studies showing that the numbers could be even higher than that due to greater than expected melting of glaciers and ice sheets.

Our Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council has used these predictions to estimate that by 2100, the sea level in Rhode Island could rise approximately 2 to 5 feet. For our coastal ocean State, that is a dramatic threat.

Sea-level rise and the increase in storm surges that will accompany it threaten at-risk coastal areas, whose roads, powerplants, wastewater treatment plants, and public facilities may need to be reinforced or relocated.

The natural environment there—estuaries, marshes, and barrier islands—has a role. They act as natural filtration systems and they act as buffers against storms, and they are being inundated by rising seas. In Rhode Island, local erosion rates doubled from 1990 on to 2006. Some of the freshwater wetlands near our coast are already transforming themselves into salt marsh as a result of this inundation.

Our Coastal Resources Management Council has documented places such as a beach in South Kingstown, where 160 feet of shoreline has been lost to erosion since 1951 at a rate of 3 feet per year.

In the small but vibrant coastal community of Matunuck, beaches have eroded 20 feet over the past 12 years. The town faces difficult decisions as the only road connecting the community and its restaurants and businesses

is protected by less than a dozen feet of sand. The road provides access for emergency vehicles and it lies on top of the water main. These are not easy concerns for communities with limited resources and lives and livelihoods at risk.

Geo-engineering solutions have been theorized to keep the temperature of the planet in check as a result of global climate change by blocking in various ways the heat of the Sun. These notions may seem somewhat farfetched, but even given that, they will not stop the chemical process of acidification of our oceans. Only curbing global carbon dioxide emissions can do that.

Sadly, our government in Washington these days responds more to dollars than to truth, and the dirty energy dollars are on the march this campaign season. Over the weekend, the New York Times analyzed 138 energy-related campaign ads aired on television. It estimated that over \$153 million has been spent this year to promote coal, argue for more oil and gas drilling, and to attack clean energy. With nearly 7 weeks to go before this Presidential election, 2012 ads promoting fossil fuels are nearly 150 percent higher than 4 years ago, and that is with 7 weeks to go, the peak buying season.

Other disturbing details emerged from the New York Times article. Governor Romney, his PAC, and the RNC have received at least \$13 million in campaign contributions from fossil fuel industry executives or related groups. Governor Romney has accepted \$3 million in contributions from Oxbow, a coal company controlled by William Koch, a brother of David Koch.

Nature could not be giving us clearer warnings. Whatever higher power gave us our advanced human capacity for perception, calculation, analysis, deduction, and foresight has laid out before us more than enough information to make the right decisions. These God-given human capacities provide us everything we need to act responsibly if only we will.

But the polluting special interests appear to rule here. The party of Theodore Roosevelt, the great conservationist; the party of President Nixon, who founded the EPA; the party of John Chafee of Rhode Island, who was instrumental in the passage of the Clean Water Act and the Clean Air Act; and the party of Russell Train who, as I mentioned earlier, died this week at the age of 92 after a distinguished career in environmental protection in the Republican Party—that party has now become the servant and handmaiden—perhaps “paid consort” would be a better way to say it given the money involved—of polluting special interests.

All of this money can alter how Congress behaves, and all of this money can influence the laws we pass, but the laws of nature are not subject to repeal no matter how much special interest money flows into campaign coffers. The laws of chemistry don't care about

the filibuster. The laws of physics don't care how Senators vote. Nature will work its will and one day there will be an accounting.

Madam President, I yield the floor, and I note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. MCCASKILL). The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

THE 47 PERCENT

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Madam President, this week the leader of the Republican Party—their candidate for President—was seen in a video speaking at a fundraising meeting with wealthy campaign donors in Florida. In the privacy of the event, Mitt Romney spilled to the donors there what he really thinks about nearly half of the American people. That is almost 150 million people. He disparagingly said 47 percent of Americans support President Obama simply because they do not owe Federal income taxes or they are getting benefits from a government program.

Just to make sure there is no misquote here, this is Mitt Romney's statement. He said:

There are 47 percent who are with him—

“Him” being President Obama

who are dependent on government, who believe that they are victims. . . . my job—

Mitt Romney says—

is not to worry about those people. I'll never convince them that they should take personal responsibility and care for their lives.

This is coming from the leader of the Republican Party, a man who is running to represent every American—all 310 million—from the Nation's highest office. These comments are disturbing coming from anybody, but coming from him they are a disgrace. In plain English, he says that if you do not pay Federal income tax or you receive a government benefit, then you do not take responsibility personally for your life.

So who are these 47 percent for whom Mitt Romney and his Republican friends feel such contempt? They are parents who work hard every day to give their families a better future. They are seniors who helped build this country and now depend on Social Security to keep food on the table. They are veterans who risked their lives in Iraq or Afghanistan. As it says on this chart, “Who Mitt Romney Says Doesn't ‘Take Personal Responsibility And Care For Their Lives.’” Working families with children, senior citizens, veterans. Mitt Romney seems to think they are a bunch of lazies just taking money from the wealthy. So today I want to take a closer look at some of these Americans who Mitt Romney

says do not take personal responsibility and care for their lives.

Let's first look at working families. He says:

I'll never convince them that they should take personal responsibility and care for their lives.

What kind of contemptuous statement is that? We are talking about nearly 150 million people.

Millions of parents across the country work long hours, struggling to put food on the table and clothes on their children's back. A family of four making as much as \$46,000 a year often will not owe any Federal income taxes. So these families would be part of the 47 percent of Americans whom Mitt Romney accuses of being lazy and irresponsible. These families deserve our support, not our scorn. They did not ask anybody for a handout, and they certainly do not deserve Romney's condemnation.

Let's now look at another group of Americans who by Mitt Romney's definition are victims who do not take responsibility for their lives: senior citizens.

More than half of those who do not pay Federal income or payroll taxes are senior citizens on fixed incomes. He says, “I will never convince them that they should take personal responsibility and care for their lives.” People showing some age, they ought to take personal responsibility for their lives. Romney seems to think that because these seniors depend on Social Security they are not willing to take personal responsibility for their lives. Mitt Romney has no business lecturing these people, these Americans about personal responsibility.

These seniors worked, paid taxes their whole lives, fought to defend our Nation's freedom, and built the greatest middle class the world has ever known. It is Mitt Romney who needs a lesson from them about personal responsibility.

Let's look at another group of Americans that Romney has dismissed, troops and veterans. When we send our troops into harm's way, their combat pay is not taxed. When veterans come back injured, physically and emotionally, we don't ask them to pay taxes on their disability benefits. Should they pay taxes on these benefits in order to be honorable in Mitt Romney's eyes?

I believe they have already given their country more than their share. If you look at this picture, it tells you so much. In that hug a returning veteran gets, glad to see his family, they are glad to see him standing straight, able to communicate. Romney says, “I can never convince them that they should take personal responsibility and care for their lives.” Imagine that, for him to make statements such as that to include veterans. We give our veterans government benefits that they earn through their service. They get education benefits tax free under a new GI bill. Many receive health care from the VA and some get housing assistance.