

to improve health and economic opportunities will never be fully realized.

In fact, a dollar spent on clean water and sanitation returns between \$4 and \$8 in economic, health, and other benefits. Paul understood all this.

In 1998, he wrote the book, *Tapped Out*. It was prescient in its wisdom and policy proposals. Despite my recommendations, the book never became a bestseller. Though Senator Simon's wife, Patti Simon, has become a champion on water in her own right.

In 2005, the Congress passed the Senator Paul Simon Water for the Poor Act, which made providing access to clean water and sanitation for the world's poor a key priority in U.S. development assistance.

When we passed this bill, it was the first time our Nation had written into law our commitment to any of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals.

Since then, we have succeeded in increasing funding for these important goals. USAID established an Office of Water and a Senior Water Coordinator for Water, and last year, it launched its first-ever Global Water and Development Strategy to significantly increase clean water and sanitation programs.

These efforts and the original legislation have made real differences in the lives of the world's poor. I have seen the simple wells providing water for thousands in Haiti.

For the first time, water and toilets have been provided to slum communities in Indonesia, where USAID's program has helped the local water utility reach thousands upon thousands of poor people who never had access to clean water and sanitation.

In fact, in 2012, the world achieved the Millennium Development Goal of reducing by half the proportion of people in the world without access to clean drinking water and basic sanitation. At that time, it was the only Millennium Development Goal to have been achieved.

So for the last several years, we have tried to pass the Simon Water for the World Act—and in 2009 it passed the full Senate, only to stall in the House. Again last Congress, it passed out of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

Today's version does not include everything from the original bill—I wish it would have included more. But such is the nature of compromise.

Today, with passage of the Senator Paul Simon Water for the World Act, we are going to make more progress.

It would not have happened without my partner in this effort, Senator CORKER, and strong support from Senators COONS, FLAKE, and MURRAY here in the Senate. I also need to acknowledge the leadership of Representatives BLUMENAUER and POE and the great help of Representative ROYCE in the House.

This bill will lock in many of the leadership, program, and strategic changes that have occurred around

USAID water and sanitation programs in recent years. It will establish the diplomatic and conflict mitigation priorities around water at the Department of State. It will refine and establish key criteria to ensure our scarce foreign assistance dollars for water and sanitation are truly reaching the world's most impoverished populations.

We have made progress. But there are still almost 1 billion people around the world who lack access to clean water, and at least 2.5 billion more people lack access to adequate sanitation.

Every day in the developing world, 5,000 children die from water-borne diseases. Millions of poor children miss school every day because they have to walk for hours to find water for their families, or they are sick from drinking dirty water. Girls and women suffer most when this happens because they are the water-carriers of the world.

Experts in the Pentagon and elsewhere have called the world water shortage a real and growing threat to America's own security.

New York Times columnist Tom Friedman published a devastating piece about how drought and water mismanagement contributed to Syria's bloody civil war that makes that clear.

We also know that every dollar we invest in clean water and basic sanitation yields many times that amount in benefits: people are healthier; kids stay in school; food is safer; AIDS drugs and other critical health treatments are able to work.

So I thank my colleagues, my key cosponsors in the Senate and House, Patti Simon, and the many organizations for supporting this important legislation. It will help save lives.

VOTE EXPLANATION

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, I was necessarily absent for the vote on the motion to proceed to executive session to consider the confirmation of the nomination of Sarah R. Saldana, to be an Assistant Secretary of Homeland Security, which occurred on Saturday, December 13, 2014. Had I been present, I would have voted in favor of the motion.

ARMY PUBLIC SCHOOL MURDERS

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I wish to offer my heartbroken condolences to the people of Pakistan and to the friends and family, the parents and loved ones, of those murdered yesterday at the Army Public School in Peshawar.

As the Pakistan military continues its assault on the Pakistani Taliban in North Waziristan, the terrorist group responded yesterday with an act of murder and barbarity that simply has no parallel, as nine gunmen murdered more than 140 students and teachers who together were simply gathered to ensure a brighter future for their country.

This is a crime that simply passes comprehension. As the father of three,

I can only imagine in my worst nightmares the reality that those parents are now living.

Unfortunately, as a nation, Americans have in our not so distant past also felt the grief that now envelops Pakistan.

Two years ago this past weekend, a gunman stormed the Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, CT and murdered 26 of our sons and daughters, our brothers and sisters. Two years later we remain in mourning, for the lives taken from us and for the futures that were so quickly extinguished.

My prayers are with all Pakistanis who mourn today and with the loved ones of the victims of Newtown who remain in mourning. May we pray for the safety of those who are most precious and sacred to us, and may we remain undeterred in the face of such evil.

TRIBUTES TO DEPARTING SENATORS

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, before this Congress ends, I wanted to pay tribute to several of my colleagues who will not be here when we convene next year. Some chose not to run again, and others unfortunately lost their reelection campaigns, but we will miss them all next year. I begin in order of seniority.

TIM JOHNSON

Mr. President, I wish to begin with Senator TIM JOHNSON. After several years of service in South Dakota, where he received the Outstanding Citizen Award and the Billie Sutton Award for Legislative Achievement, TIM was elected to the House of Representatives in 1986. He served there for 10 years, earning many distinctions, among them, one for passing more legislation than the other 50 first-term Members. In 1996 he was elected to the Senate, where he has served three terms. In recent years Senator JOHNSON has served as chairman of the banking committee, of which he has been a member since 1997. Over the years he has advocated for community banks in South Dakota, worked to pass the Safe and Fair Deposit Insurance Act of 2005, which updated the Federal deposit insurance system, and pushed to deal with the special needs of consumers in rural areas. TIM has also shown immense courage in dealing with health issues and has been an exemplary public servant. We will miss him next year and wish him and Barbara well.

MARY LANDRIEU

Mr. President, Senator MARY LANDRIEU started a career of public service in the Louisiana State Legislature and then as State treasurer. She was elected to the U.S. Senate in 1996 becoming her State's first female Senator. Senator LANDRIEU has always fought for her State, a fact never more apparent than in the aftermath of Hurricanes