

fuel and the denial industry. There are a bunch of them who are out there. They turn up at all the usual denial conferences. They write in the denial journals. They take money from the denial organizations that all have fossil fuel industry funding behind them. Go to someplace neutral.

For instance, go to your own State university, like the University of Arizona or the University of Oklahoma. The dean of the relevant department at the University of Oklahoma signed the IPCC report and started Climate Central. Ask your own university. Ask any major scientific organization. All the major recognized scientific organizations in the United States of America are on board, agree that this is real, agree that this is important, agree that it is vital, and believe that we are actually near the tipping point that may make the damage irrecoverable.

If you don't want to go to your home State university and if you don't want to go to America's major scientific societies, try NOAA and NASA.

Think about NASA for a moment. As I give this speech, there is a Rover that is the size of an SUV being driven around on the surface of Mars. We built a Rover, shot it to Mars, landed it safely, and are now driving it around. Do we think those scientists might actually know something? Do we think they might know what they are talking about? Do we think they might merit our confidence? So ask them and see what they say.

Or, if you want, ask some of America's leading corporations. If you are from Arkansas, go and ask Walmart. They will tell you. If you are from Georgia, go and ask Coca-Cola. They will tell you. This is not hard to discover once you get away from that little stable of denial scientists who are so closely affiliated with the fossil fuel industry.

I do this every week because we have the arrogance so often here to think how much our laws—the laws that we pass—matter. But the laws that we pass are passing things. They come and they go. They have their time. They are repealed, they are replaced, they fall into desuetude.

But some laws last, and those are the laws that God laid down upon this Earth that guide its operations. Those are the laws of physics, the laws of chemistry, the laws of biology, the law of gravity. We cannot repeal those laws. We must face their consequences. And we know the consequences of continuing to emit gigatons of carbon dioxide into our planet is going to launch us into an environment in which the habitability of Earth as we have known it will be put into question.

History makes its judgments about every generation. If we do not take calm and reasonable and sensible precautions about this obvious known and admitted risk, then when that risk comes home to roost, we will be duly shamed.

So let us avoid that. Let us get to work. Let us take advantage of the

opening that the distinguished senior Senator from Alaska and the distinguished senior Senator from South Carolina have opened for us, and let us do what is right by our country and by the judgment that we can anticipate from history.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

#### MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. HOEVEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

#### TRIBUTE TO BEN RICHMOND

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I rise to pay tribute to a great Kentuckian and a man who has dedicated his entire career to promoting civil rights and helping people. My good friend Ben Richmond, the longtime president and CEO of the Louisville Urban League, recently announced his impending retirement from that position. Mr. Richmond has served as president and CEO of the Louisville Urban League for nearly 30 years—since 1987.

Mr. Richmond is a civil rights champion who has led a venerable civil rights institution such as the Louisville Urban League to new heights. Under his tenure, the Louisville Urban League has promoted job training and education for many in Louisville's African-American community. His body of work is so outstanding that in 2007 he received from the city the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Freedom Award, a recognition for a local activist who is dedicated to King's principles and who has promoted peace, equality, and justice.

Since Mr. Richmond took over the Louisville Urban League, the staff has grown from around 20 to 30 and the annual budget grown from under \$1 million to around \$3.3 million. Mr. Richmond is the driving force for fundraising for the budget.

The Louisville Urban League placed more than 200 people in jobs last year with a combined annual income of nearly \$5 million. It helped about 1,000 prepare for finding employment through career expos, job training, referrals, and career counseling. It also has many programs to help youth and seniors.

The Louisville Urban League is nearly halfway towards realizing their goal of seeing 15,000 local African Americans earn college degrees between 2012 and

2020. Mr. Richmond oversaw the Louisville Urban League's move to a new headquarters in 1990. And under Mr. Richmond's tenure, the Louisville Urban League was just one of 13 Urban League affiliates nationwide to receive a top score in a self-audit required by the National Urban League.

I should add my interest in the Urban League is personal—my father once served on the board of the Louisville Urban League. I believe he knew Ben Richmond. We are lucky, that after his retirement, Mr. Richmond plans on staying in Louisville. Our city can continue to benefit from his wisdom and experience.

I want to wish my good friend Mr. Ben Richmond all the best in retirement, and I ask my Senate colleagues to join me in congratulating Ben for his successful tenure at the helm of the Louisville Urban League. The city of Louisville and the State of Kentucky have certainly benefitted immeasurably by his many efforts over the decades.

The Louisville Courier-Journal newspaper recently published an article extolling Mr. Ben Richmond's many accomplishments. I ask unanimous consent that said article be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Courier-Journal, Jan. 21, 2015]  
URBAN LEAGUE CEO RICHMOND RETIRING

(By Sheldon S. Shafer)

Ben Richmond, a cornerstone of local social activism for more than a quarter century and a major advocate of economic equality, is retiring as president and CEO of the Louisville Urban League.

Richmond announced his impending retirement at an Urban League board meeting Tuesday, after serving as head of the civil rights organization since 1987.

Under the leadership of Richmond, a mainstay in the push to improve economic development in western Louisville, the Urban League has long been dedicated to promoting job training and education, primarily for Louisville's poorer citizens.

Richmond "has been one of the anchors for diversity and for stability in not only the African-American community but the overall Louisville community," said Raoul Cunningham, Louisville NAACP president. "I am going to miss Ben, his counsel and his cooperative spirit."

Richmond "has become known around the country for innovative and groundbreaking approaches to helping residents improve their quality of life," said Dan Hall, a University of Louisville vice president and the Urban League board chairman. "He is intensely passionate about helping individuals find a pathway to success."

Richmond received Louisville Metro's Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Freedom Award in 2007, an annual recognition given by the city to a local activist dedicated to King's principles and who has promoted peace, equality and justice.

Then-Mayor Jerry Abramson said at the time that "over his decades of leadership, countless lives have been improved through Ben's tireless efforts in workforce development, housing and youth programs."

The national Urban League was founded in 1910, and the Louisville agency in 1921. The