

There is a political cost as well. A colleague from South Carolina summed it up in the documentary "Immigration Battle" on PBS Frontline, which I also appeared in. Addressing a group of Republican voters in his district, Congressman MICK MULVANEY said, "At some point, we are going to have to figure out that if you take the entire African American community and write them off, take the entire Hispanic community and write them off, take the entire Libertarian community and write them off, take the entire gay community and write them off, what is left? About 38 percent of the country." The Congressman concludes by saying, "You cannot win with 38 percent of the country." You want to know something? He is right.

We know from the environment, from the fight for marriage equality, the fight for civil rights, the fight to modernize our immigration system, that taking no action is precisely the problem.

I think the new Speaker understands this, and someday I hope my colleagues on the other side of the aisle agree with him and let the majority rule in the people's House.

THE AMERICAN CHESTNUT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania). The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize the efforts in Pennsylvania and Pennsylvania's Fifth Congressional District to reintroduce the American chestnut tree.

Before the 1900s, the American chestnut was the dominant tree in the eastern United States. In fact, in my home State of Pennsylvania, it comprised roughly 25 percent of all hardwoods. Blight struck these trees beginning in 1904, and by 1950, the American chestnut was nearly wiped out of our forests.

Mr. Speaker, efforts over the past several years have focused on reintroducing this hardwood, the American chestnut, by making it more resilient to blight. I am proud to say that reintroduction efforts are taking place at several sites in Pennsylvania's Fifth Congressional District in Centre County, Clinton County, and Elk County.

This past week, the Pennsylvania State University's chapter of the American Chestnut Foundation held its annual meeting, highlighting the work of researchers, along with the contributions of volunteers, to the reintroduction of the American chestnut.

As chairman of the House Agriculture Subcommittee on Conservation and Forestry, I commend those advocates for their dedication, their research, their efforts to the reintroduction of this species; and I look forward to lending my support for bringing the American chestnut back.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND BIODIVERSITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. QUIGLEY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. QUIGLEY. Mr. Speaker, John Muir, a naturalist, author, and environmental philosopher, once said, "When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the universe." This couldn't be truer when it comes to the effect climate change is having on the biodiversity of our planet.

We can't solve the climate change crisis without realizing how interconnected its impacts truly are. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has predicted, assuming that current trends in burning fossil fuel continue, by the year 2100, the surface of the Earth will warm on an average of 6 degrees Celsius. That kind of potential for rapid and lasting climate warming poses a significant challenge for biodiversity conservation.

It may seem obvious, but the places that plants and animals can exist are limited by factors such as sunlight, precipitation, and temperature. A polar bear can't exist in Brazil, just as a lion can't exist in Antarctica. You won't find palm trees in Greenland, just like you won't find pine trees in Argentina.

So, as climate changes, the abundance and distribution of plants and animals will also change. Climate change alone is expected to threaten approximately one-quarter, possibly more, of all species on land with extinction by the year 2050. That means climate change will surpass habitat loss as the biggest threat to life on land.

Because of climate change, birds lay eggs earlier in the year, plants bloom earlier, and mammals come out of hibernation sooner. These changes may sound insignificant, but they drastically impact the life cycle of each population and, therefore, any species that rely on it. We are literally altering the timeline of nature.

The need to protect plant and animals species might not be a top priority for some of my colleagues, but I urge them to consider the other impacts. Twelve plant species provide approximately 75 percent of our total food supply. What is not generally appreciated is that these relatively few species depend on hundreds and thousands of other species for their productivity.

Our food supply is not only based on the food we eat, but insects and birds that pollinate crop flowers and feed on crop pests. For example, more than 80 percent of the 264 crops grown in the European Union depend on insect pollinators.

A lack of biodiversity can lead to a decreased ability to produce medicine, as key plants are lost to extinction. And without specific plants, such as grasses and trees that have evolved to resist the spread of wildfires or mitigate the impacts of flooding, we are

losing a key shield in protecting against natural disasters. These are nature's defenders, and we are losing them.

In my own backyard, these climate changes are expected to impact regional biodiversity in a variety of direct and indirect ways. The Chicago wilderness, which expands across Illinois, Indiana, Wisconsin, and Michigan, will likely experience changes in the timing of natural events, such as blooming, migration, and the onset of hibernation. It could also cause a loss of suitable habitat and a disruption of ecological communities due to different responses to climate change.

These impacts are not limited to our land, plants, and animals. Changes in biodiversity will have significant impacts on our waterways as well. In the Great Lakes, native plant and animal species will differ wildly in their responses to changing stream temperature and hydrology. Wetland plant communities are continually adapting to changing water levels. However, the extreme changes we see as a result of climate changes, such as droughts and flooding, create more unstable environments for species.

Protecting our biodiversity does more than save plants and animals. It protects agriculture, medicine, and the overall safety of our communities.

From the beginning of time, nature has fed us, cured us and protected us. Now it is our turn. If we let one piece fail, we are putting the entire system at risk. We need to protect plant and animal species from an ever-changing climate if we want to secure a healthy and prosperous future for our children.

I urge my colleagues to stop ignoring the science and support Federal legislation that acts on climate change and addresses these grave biological threats.

PERSONAL FAITH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. FORBES) for 5 minutes.

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, today as I stand on this great floor, a place that we call the people's House, I look across and there is a plaque of Moses, the great law-giver. While he may not be staring me in the eye, he stares at every Speaker, who stands where you stand today, directly in the eye. Right above you, there is our national motto that is even above the flag of the United States that says, "In God we trust."

I come here this morning because in the State of Washington in Bremerton School District, they take a different interpretation of that motto. You see, they believe there that you can trust in God as long as you don't trust too much; that you can be grateful to that God as long as you are not too grateful.

Last week, they put on administrative leave a young football coach, Coach Joe Kennedy, not because he molested a child, not because he wasn't