

effect, and the ice sheet on land can then accelerate, with that buttress effect diminished, more rapidly into the sea, causing a more rapid rise in sea level.

The effect of this is actually measurable, and we measure it. Observations from the NASA and German Aerospace Center's twin Gravity Recovery and Climate Experiment satellites measure these losses to be around 125 gigatons of ice per year. What is a gigaton of ice? A gigaton is 1 billion tons. Meredith Nettles of the Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory at Columbia University described a gigaton-sized piece of ice this way: "If you took the whole National Mall"—here we are in Washington—"and covered it up with ice to a height about four times as high as the [Washington] monument. . . ."

Imagine walking out onto the Capitol steps, looking out all the way down the National Mall to the Washington Monument and imagining that not only to the top of the Washington Monument but four times as high is a single, giant mass of ice—as she said, "all the way down from the Capitol steps to the Lincoln Memorial" and four times as high as the Washington Monument. Then imagine 125 times that—every year.

The destabilization of the ice shelves is most dire in West Antarctica, where research shows the massive Thwaites Glacier retreating at 300 to 400 meters per year along a 125-mile segment. Larger than Pennsylvania, the Thwaites Glacier has discharged more than 100 gigatons of ice per year in recent years. That is the flood of 100 of those blocks that are four times the height of the Washington Monument and running from here all the way to the Lincoln Memorial 100 times every 3 days—another one into the ocean, piling up, piling up. If we lost the Thwaites Glacier, that alone would contribute several meters to global sea level rise.

So far, in Rhode Island, remember, we are dealing with less than 1 foot of sea level rise that we have experienced—6 to 12 feet is predicted—but add this in and the situation of our coastal States become quite dire.

These images were created with NASA satellite data. They show changes in Antarctic ice mass just since 2002. This data does not measure the floating ice shelves which are shown here in gray. On the ice sheets, dark orange and red colors indicate losses of ice sheet mass and light-blue shades indicate gains. Climate deniers focus on the gains in actually a fraudulent abuse of the data and the public's trust, but that is what they do; but, overall, during the past 15 years, the West Antarctic ice sheet experienced major ice mass loss. The darkest red, representing the biggest loss, is at the Thwaites Glacier.

Of course, when glaciers melt, the seas rise. In April, a U.S. Geological Survey study, funded by the Pentagon, found that our military bases on low-

elevation islands may become uninhabitable within mere decades. The recommendation is, we have to start planning to relocate them because they will no longer be useful. Just 2 weeks ago, our National Park Service released a report showing sea level rise damaging park sites like Jamestown and Assateague Island in Virginia and Jean Lafitte National Historical Park in Louisiana. NASA is concerned enough about this Antarctic ice situation that it is launching new satellites to monitor it.

Fossil fuel industry front groups continue to deny and disparage the work of scientists at NOAA, NASA, and other Federal scientific agencies. The polluters have an obedient mouthpiece in the Wall Street Journal editorial page, which just last month ran climate denier Fred Singer denying that rising sea levels observed around the globe are the result of global warming, and of course saying it is not the result of carbon pollution or fossil fuels. The Journal page, of course, neglects to mention this denier's deep connections to the fossil fuel industry, the Heritage Foundation, the Heartland Institute, the CATO Institute, and other climate denial front groups bankrolled by ExxonMobil and the oil industry and the Koch political apparatus.

We even heard a Republican Congressman claim that erosion and rocks falling into the sea are what is driving sea level rise—anything but fossil fuel. He said, "Every time you have that soil or rock or whatever it is that is deposited into the seas, that forces the sea levels to rise, because now you have less space in those oceans, because the bottom is moving up."

It is laughable. Phil Duffy, president of the Woods Hole Research Center and former adviser to the U.S. Global Change Research Program responded: "On human time scales, those are miniscule effects."

Once again, anything for the fossil fuel industry. Complete subservience to the fossil fuel industry seems to be the rule around Congress.

About this sordid political equation, retired U.S. Navy RADM Dr. David Titley probably said it best. He said:

The ice doesn't care. The ice doesn't care who is in the White House. It doesn't care which party controls your Congress. It doesn't care which party controls your Parliament. It just melts.

Of course, in addition to the melt, a warming ocean expands, following the law of thermal expansion, and our coasts, as a result, face new and serious dangers.

Republicans in Congress can continue to ignore all of the evidence, but that doesn't change what our carbon pollution does in the atmosphere and the oceans. Our carbon pollution will still trap heat in the atmosphere. It will still acidify the oceans. The laws of chemistry don't suspend because we can't pass sensible laws to solve this problem. The chemistry and the physics of these effects of our carbon pollu-

tion don't care what we do. The polar icecaps melting don't care that fossil fuel flunkies deny it. Denial of these facts doesn't protect our coasts and doesn't protect our coastal communities from looming danger. One day soon, we are going to have to wake up. Fossil fuel influence or no fossil fuel influence, we are going to have to wake up.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding the provisions of rule XXII, the confirmation vote on the Axon nomination occur at 11 a.m. on Wednesday, June 6; that if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

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

## LEGISLATIVE SESSION

### MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate resume legislative session for a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

### VOTE EXPLANATION

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, I was necessarily absent for the June 4, 2018, vote on the motion to invoke cloture on Executive Calendar No. 542, the nomination of Robert Earl Wier, of Kentucky, to be United States district judge for the Eastern District of Kentucky. I would have voted yea.

### VOTE EXPLANATION

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I was unavailable for rollcall vote No. 112, on the motion to invoke cloture on the nomination of Robert Earl Wier, of Kentucky, to be United States district judge for the Eastern District of Kentucky. Had I been present, I would have voted yea.

Mr. President, I was unavailable for rollcall vote No. 113, on the nomination of Robert Earl Wier, of Kentucky, to be United States district judge for the Eastern District of Kentucky. Had I been present, I would have voted yea.

Mr. President, I was unavailable for rollcall vote No. 114, on the motion to

invoke cloture on the nomination of Fernando Rodriguez, Jr., of Texas, to be United States district judge for the Southern District of Texas. Had I been present, I would have voted yea.

#### ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

##### TRIBUTE TO WILLIAM P. GETTY

• Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize the retirement of William P. Getty as president of the Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation. Since 1999, Pat has served as president of the foundation, and during his tenure, the region has been blessed with significant opportunities to grow and diversify the economy.

Established in 1944, the Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation issues grants primarily in West Virginia and southwestern Pennsylvania. The region served by the foundation is a tribute to the founder Michael Benedum's native home of West Virginia and his strong connection to Pittsburgh, PA, where he built a successful oil and gas exploration business. The foundation administers grants that support education, economic development, health and human services, and community development.

Pat's leadership as president has focused on regional collaboration to capture economic opportunity. First and foremost, the discovery of the Marcellus, Utica, and Rogersville shale deposits have created tremendous opportunity for West Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Ohio to not only explore these natural resources but to also capture more downstream value in affiliated sectors of the economy. Pat's leadership in fostering a regional approach and cooperation between leaders in the three States has been instrumental to creating initiatives like the "Power of 32" site development fund and the tristate shale agreement that will help the region maximize the benefit of this opportunity. In addition, he has been an invaluable partner and ambassador for the Appalachian Storage and Trading Hub project, participating in meetings with private sector leaders and government leaders to stress the importance of this project to the region. By working together, we can truly realize the potential for thousands of new jobs and billions in private sector investment.

Pat's contributions as president extends well beyond the energy sector. Under his leadership, the foundation has been a leader in focusing on the importance of STEM education, advanced manufacturing, and transitioning the region to a more technology based economy. Each of these areas is a significant growth opportunity for the region, while at the same time is a tribute to the region's history as a leader in manufacturing and developing natural resources. Pat has also been instrumental in working with community, State, and Federal leaders to

maximize Federal resources and partnerships to spur economic growth.

I wish Pat the best in his retirement and hope that he enjoys this special time with his wife, children, and grandchildren. I know that he will remain engaged as an ambassador for West Virginia and the region.●

##### TRIBUTE TO THE DALTON BROTHERS

• Mr. PERDUE. Mr. President, May 8 of this year marked the 73rd anniversary of the end of War II in Europe. It was a time to remember the sacrifice of over 400,000 Americans who were killed and over 650,000 Americans who were wounded while fighting to defend our freedoms. In that spirit, I would like to call attention to the story of one of my constituents, James Dalton, and his three brothers: Robert, Rufus, and Harry. These four brothers served in the U.S. military during World War II at the same time, which was extremely rare. Their story is remarkable.

The Dalton brothers, who I am happy to say are still with us today, were born in Charlotte, NC, along with their sister Sally. While three of the Dalton brothers still live in Carolina, James Dalton ultimately settled in Atlanta, GA.

Robert Dalton, Jr., the eldest brother, was deployed in 1944. He landed in France and served as platoon leader in Company I, 3rd Battalion, 121st Regiment of the 8th Division. On September 2, 1944, he was wounded in action. After recovering from his wounds, he spent the remainder of his time in Europe with the 29th Infantry Regiment and advanced to the rank of captain. After returning to the United States, he was discharged with the rank of major. Because of his service, he received a Purple Heart Medal, the Bronze Star, the EAME Service Medal with five Bronze Stars, and the World War II Victory Medal.

James Dalton entered military service in 1943 at the age of 20 and sailed for Europe in November 1944. He served behind the lines in the Rhineland and Central Europe campaigns. He achieved the rank of technical sergeant and was decorated with the American Theater Service Medal, EAME Service Medal with two Bronze Stars, Good Conduct Medal, and World War II Victory Medal.

Rufus Dalton was deployed in October 1944, landing in Marseilles, France. His unit entered the line in the Vosges Mountains in November 1944. They were in constant contact with the German Army until April 1945. At one point, Rufus was injured with a shrapnel wound to the head; yet he still returned to his unit the next day. Rufus was awarded the Purple Heart and Bronze star for his service.

The youngest of the four brothers, Harry, entered into military service the day before his 18th birthday in 1945. Harry entered the Naval Radio School

and served at the Shelton Naval Station in Norfolk, Virginia. He also received the World War II Victory Medal and achieved the rank of yeoman third class.

The sacrifice and service of these four brothers is laudable and so is their work in their communities after the war. Between them, the four brothers went on to hold leadership positions in business, the arts, charitable organizations, and their churches over the course of long and successful careers.

I am proud to take this opportunity to honor the life and military service of one of my constituents and his family. The story of the Dalton brothers is an inspiration to us all. I join the entire country in thanking them for their service in one of our country's darkest yet most heroic hours.

Thank you.●

##### TRIBUTE TO KYLE DENCKER

• Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, today I am honored to recognize Kyle Dencker, the Orange County Teacher of the Year from Timber Creek High School in Orlando, FL.

Kyle thanked colleagues, mentors, and administrators for receiving this award and challenged educators to make computer science available at all of the county's public schools. He believes every student should have the opportunity to take computer science.

Colleagues say Kyle recruits students who traditionally avoided computer science, sometimes just by walking around campus, introducing himself and explaining why they might want to learn to code. He has earned national awards for his efforts to recruit young women into computer science and help them succeed in those classes.

Many students have found success in his classroom, in State competitions, and in securing internships. He had 186 students take advanced placement computer science principles last school year, and nearly 77 percent passed the AP exam, exceeding the national rate.

Kyle has been a computer science teacher at Timber Creek High School for 9 years. In that time, enrollment in the school's computer science classes has grown from about 30 students to nearly 400, making it the largest such program in the Orange school district. He has spent nearly a decade getting students to see past the stereotypes regarding computer classes.

I thank Kyle for his dedication to expanding computer science to students that were previously uninterested in this important subject. I express my sincere gratitude to Kyle and look forward to hearing of his continued success in the years to come.●

##### TRIBUTE TO JASON POOLE

• Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, today I recognize Jason Poole, the Clay County Teacher of the Year from Fleming Island High School in Fleming Island, FL.