

do all that despite the lack of a military solution to end the war. The longer we enable the conflict to continue, the more innocent men, women, and children will die.

Instead of facilitating endless fighting, we must push for reconciliation. I have personally urged Saudi and Iranian officials to meet to discuss their differences. To my great disappointment, they refuse to do so. I welcomed Secretary Mattis's announcement that the United States will no longer refuel the coalition's aircraft, but more must be done.

Until there is a congressional authorization, all U.S. forces supporting the coalition's war should be withdrawn. That is why I support the Sanders-Lee resolution. Voting to remove our forces will send a clear message that we will no longer be complicit in this conflict. Secretaries Mattis and Pompeo have publicly called for a ceasefire, which has been ignored.

By ending our participation in this brutal war, we will send an unambiguous message that we will not accept continued bloodshed.

I am voting for the Sanders-Lee resolution, and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

Thank you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, I rise to speak on the issue before us.

On every occasion, I too have done what is necessary to keep us from alienating our ally Saudi Arabia. I think I was the last man standing, during the Obama administration, in my trying to make sure that the JASTA bill, at the time, ended up being corrected in such a manner that it wouldn't have had unintended consequences. I did so unsuccessfully. Yet, on multiple occasions, I have stood with others to make sure that we have not blocked arms sales and that we have not done those things that might have undermined our relationship.

For those who are tuning in, let me walk through what the process is.

We have a vote, today, on discharging this piece of legislation out of the Foreign Relations Committee. That is all that is happening today. There is an Executive Calendar in which we have cloture votes pending on nominees. That will burn off. Then, sometime next week, after this is discharged today—if it is so successfully—there will be another vote to actually proceed to this bill. If we proceed to the bill, what will happen will be a series of amendments that will be voted upon. Then there will be another vote at the end of that as to whether people will actually support the product that will have been created.

I just want to make it clear that what I am not doing today is voting for the substance before us; yet I reserve the right to do so. I am voting on our ability to have a debate as it relates to our relationship with Saudi Arabia.

We had a briefing today, which was very unsatisfactory, by two people

whom I highly respect. Secretary Mattis and Secretary Pompeo are two people with whom I work closely and admire greatly. I found their briefing today to be lacking. I found, in substance, that we are not doing those things that we should be doing to appropriately balance our relationship with Saudi Arabia between our American interests and our American values.

There has been a lot of rhetoric that has come from the White House and from the State Department on this issue. The rhetoric that I have heard and the broadcast that we have made around the world as to who we are has been way out of balance as it relates to American interests and American values. As I said this morning in the SCIF, where we were having this briefing, I hope that in the ensuing few days—maybe this afternoon—the administration itself will take steps to rectify this balance in an appropriate way.

As to whether the Crown Prince was involved in this killing, it is my belief that he was. It is my belief that he ordered it, but I don't have a smoking gun. What I do know is that he is responsible for this agency that carried out the killing. He has done nothing to take ownership of what has happened, and that is an affront not just to the American people but to the world.

The administration, in its broadcast, in its referring to this issue, has been way out of balance as it relates to what is important to us—their buying arms from us but neglecting this other piece and not demarching the leadership of Saudi Arabia in an important way. So what I am doing today is voting to discharge this bill out of our committee. There will be another opportunity next week to decide whether we will proceed to it.

As I said to the administration again this morning, it is my hope that it will figure out a way to bring American interests and American values into balance so that it can cause the Saudi Arabian Government to take appropriate ownership over what has happened in the killing of this journalist. That, to me, would be the best solution. If not, we will have another decision to make, and that will occur next week when we will decide whether we want to proceed to that and then, after that, proceed to deal with the issue of Saudi Arabia. There will be another point in time at which we can decide whether we like the substance that may be created in an amendment process in our going through this.

I support discharging this piece of legislation so that this body can have a fulsome debate about our relationship with Saudi Arabia as to what has happened with the journalist, the important issue of the war in Yemen, and as to all of the things that we need to be doing as a country to counter what Iran is doing in the region.

I yield the floor.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I yield back all time.

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, out of respect for Senator INHOFE and a personal issue he has to deal with, we would hope to be able to vote early.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time is yielded back.

The question is on agreeing to the motion to discharge.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

The result was announced—yeas 63, nays 37, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 250 Leg.]

YEAS—63

Alexander	Gillibrand	Murray
Baldwin	Graham	Nelson
Bennet	Harris	Paul
Blumenthal	Hassan	Peters
Booker	Heinrich	Portman
Brown	Heitkamp	Reed
Cantwell	Hirono	Sanders
Cardin	Jones	Schatz
Carper	Kaine	Schumer
Casey	King	Shaheen
Cassidy	Klobuchar	Smith
Collins	Leahy	Stabenow
Coons	Lee	Tester
Corker	Manchin	Toomey
Cortez Masto	Markey	Udall
Daines	McCaskill	Van Hollen
Donnelly	Menendez	Warner
Duckworth	Merkley	Warren
Durbin	Moran	Whitehouse
Feinstein	Murkowski	Wyden
Flake	Murphy	Young

NAYS—37

Barrasso	Grassley	Risch
Blunt	Hatch	Roberts
Boozman	Heller	Rounds
Burr	Hoehn	Rubio
Capito	Hyde-Smith	Sasse
Cornyn	Inhofe	Scott
Cotton	Isakson	Shelby
Crapo	Johnson	Sullivan
Cruz	Kennedy	Thune
Enzi	Kyl	Tillis
Ernst	Lankford	Wicker
Fischer	McConnell	
Gardner	Perdue	

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GARDNER). On this vote, the yeas are 63, the nays are 37.

The motion is agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume executive session in consideration of the Farr nomination.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, I was happy to welcome back our colleagues this week from Thanksgiving and come back to work. A lot of stuff needs to be done and have some fresh energy and maybe some fresh ideas, but I hope my colleagues were able to get home for Thanksgiving and spend time with their families. I like to say the thing I like about Thanksgiving—it is my favorite holiday, and people ask why. It

has my six favorite F words: family, faith, friends, food, fun, football, among others. What is not to like about that—especially football that was played in Columbus, OH, on Saturday afternoon. I hope all Americans were able to enjoy some combination of those things over the holiday weekend.

You may be like me and many others across the country who took the long weekend to unplug a bit by turning off our phone, maybe turning off cable news, too, so we could reconnect with loved ones, but while many Americans were recharging—enjoying a good meal with family and friends, maybe watching a football game or doing some early Christmas shopping—some major news broke over the weekend.

Last Friday, on the day after Thanksgiving, 13 Federal agencies released a nearly 1,700-page report highlighting the devastating impacts climate change will have over the next 80 years if we do not change course now. The report was a dire warning to our Nation and to our planet but one we might have easily missed while celebrating the holiday with family and friends, and I am sure a lot of people did miss it.

I suspect the fact that this major report was released on Friday of a holiday weekend was not an accident. After all, the report, which was put together by experts from over a dozen agencies within the Trump administration, spells out the very real and very serious consequences of climate change—a global crisis that our President has repeatedly called a hoax. In fact, just yesterday the President said he is not among the so-called believers who see climate change as a pressing problem.

Luckily, we don't have to just blindly believe in climate change. We can look at the facts. Despite the Trump administration's best efforts to bury this report on a Friday afternoon, Friday evening, of a holiday weekend, those of us based in reality are going to make sure the clear facts in it are broadcast far and wide.

This particular report took not a year, not 2 years but 3 years to write. It was written by more than 300 Federal experts, non-Federal experts as well, who volunteered their time. It was only finalized after an extensive public outreach and interagency review process. This report wasn't thrown together to push any agenda. It is a scientific report, and its conclusions should be important to every person, not just living in my State or the 49 or 50 States but everybody who lives on this planet because it has implications for every single one of us.

I would like to take a few minutes this afternoon to go over some of the highlights of the report. Why don't we start with extreme weather. People ask: What do you mean by extreme weather? I mean, measuring rainfall by feet, not by inches. I am talking about fires in States on the west coast, espe-

cially where the amount of land being consumed by the fires is almost the size of my State of Delaware. I am talking about the number of 500-year floods that are occurring every other year or every year. I am talking about the number of category 5 hurricanes that we have now compared to what it was 10, 20, 30, 40, 50 years ago.

According to the latest report—which was, again, released by the Trump administration—climate change will continue to increase and intensify extreme weather events in the years to come. Over the last 3 years alone, extreme weather events have cost the United States nearly \$400 billion in damages due to storm surges, due to flooding, due to wildfires, and due to crop freezes and crop droughts. So it has cost the U.S. Treasury \$400 billion, and it comes at a time when our budget deficits are going up. The budget deficit picked up between the last administration and this administration, I think, somewhere—maybe \$500 billion—a huge amount of money. Last year's deficit on this administration was, as I recall, maybe \$750 billion. I am told the expectation for the budget deficit in this year is maybe as much as \$950 billion. It wasn't that long ago that the budget for our whole country was less than that.

Why is \$400 billion in damages from extreme weather important? We don't have the money. We are borrowing this money, and these young pages and their children will get to pay for that someday. That is not fair.

More powerful and more frequent extreme weather events will increase that figure exponentially and also have far-reaching impacts on people in every corner of this country and well beyond the borders of our country.

Say someone happens to live in the Southwest. In 2017, Phoenix, AZ, set a new record of nearly 200 days with temperatures of at least 90 degrees Fahrenheit. Think about that, Phoenix, AZ, 200 days with temperatures of at least 90 degrees Fahrenheit in 2017. By 2090, Phoenix could be dealing with an additional 45 days—another month and a half—every year, which would be about 245 days, which would be about 8 months out of the year where the temperature in Phoenix is 80 or well above 90. That is another 6 weeks of extreme heat in addition to the city's already recordbreaking temperatures.

Let's say somebody lives in the Southeast. Let's take Charleston, SC, for example. Charleston, SC, experiences 38 days of tidal flooding every year. By 2045, the city could experience 180 days of tidal flooding every year—nearly five times the flooding that occurs today.

Let's say maybe somebody lives out West. By 2050, wildfire seasons could burn up to six times more forest area every year. I will say that again. That is hard to believe. By 2050, wildfire seasons could burn up to six times more forest area every year. We have all seen the historic and horrific devastation

that fires in California have caused just this year alone—in fact, in the last several weeks alone, tragic fires.

California is a big State. I used to live there when I was in the Navy. Sometimes it is difficult to put into context just how big and destructive these wildfires are. We have a poster here that I want to refer to as a wildfire poster: This is Washington, DC, and the counties adjacent to Washington, DC. It gives a little bit of context. Here is the area that the recent Camp Fire in California burned in relation to a city that all of us who serve here are pretty familiar with, Washington, DC, and the suburbs of this city. The Camp Fire burned an area over three times greater than Washington, DC. That is how big it was. That is just one fire, in just one State, in 1 year. Imagine what we are going to be facing with up to six times more forest areas burning every single year.

Now, if the extreme weather conclusions don't make some of our colleagues jump to action, maybe the information about the health impacts of climate change will cause them to take some notice. This report makes clear that increases in ozone and particle pollution will result in an additional \$26 billion every year in healthcare costs across the country.

Here is a particularly startling statistic: Extreme hot and cold temperatures in 49 U.S. cities are projected to result in more than 9,000 additional premature deaths per year. That is not in a far-off developing nation. That is 9,000 more people dying right here at home in the USA, but if our colleagues are still not swayed by this year's impacts to American health, maybe they will be moved by the impact that climate change will have on our country's already aging infrastructure.

I think this is probably highway transportation infrastructure, if I am not mistaken. If we do not act, we can expect up to \$26 billion in damages to our roadways and our railways every year due to climate change—\$26 billion in damages to our roadways and our railways every year due to climate change.

We have a poster here. There is a bridge. I am not sure where, but it is one of many bridges. We have thousands of bridges around this Nation. Increases in rainfall in inland areas—not on the coast but in the middle of our country, the heartland—will threaten up to 6,000 bridges by the year 2090.

Here is a statistic we will not be able to avoid. It deals with sea level rise. Since 1993, sea levels have risen by 3 inches. What we are looking at by 2100, according to folks who worked for the last 3 years on this Federal report from 13 Federal Agencies, we could be looking at as much as 6 feet in sea level rise. If we do nothing, by 2100, we could see sea levels rise by up to 6 feet. Those of us who lived through Superstorm Sandy saw the absolute destruction that can be caused by 3 inches of sea level rise. It is almost unimaginable to think about nearly 70 inches.

Maybe that is still not alarming enough to get some people's attention. Perhaps the impacts on our farmers and ranchers might sway my colleagues. Let me mention something in that regard. According to this report—the same Federal report—more frequent and intense rains, combined with rising temperatures, are likely to reduce agriculture production in the Midwest to 1980 levels. Roll back the clock to the levels of production in 1980 in the Midwest—that is where we were.

I have a corn and soybean poster here. When it comes to crops that agricultural communities depend on, such as corn and soybeans, which are big in my State, farmers could see reduced yields of up to 25 percent.

Maybe some of our colleagues don't come from States with a large agricultural sector, where it is important. Perhaps an economic impact might move them to action.

Climate change could mean up to \$500 billion in economic losses every year by 2090. Let me say that again. Climate change could mean up to \$500 billion in economic losses every year by 2090. Additionally, almost 2 billion labor hours are projected to be lost by 2090 due to the impacts of extreme temperatures. That alone would cost an additional \$160 billion in lost wages.

Here is a stark statistic: Climate change could slash up to 10 percent of our gross domestic product by 2100. Let's put that into context. Ten years ago, when we fell into the great recession—worst recession since the Great Depression—we had half of the losses in gross domestic product that we are looking at from climate change that goes unchecked. According to this report, climate change could slash up to 10 percent of our gross domestic product by 2100. That is more than double the losses of the great recession.

Many of our colleagues were here during the great recession. We saw what happened. Unemployment was over 10 percent. Banks basically stopped lending. Access to capital was greatly impeded. Trade slowed down dramatically. It was a miserable time. We fought very hard to get out of it. We are now in the ninth longest running economic expansion in the history of the country, and stuff like this is not going to help extend that recovery. To refuse to act would be to willingly usher in an economic calamity twice as painful as the great recession.

The numbers and facts don't lie. The reality of climate change is scary, especially for coastal States like mine—the lowest lying State in our country. Our State is sinking instead of rising.

The facts that this report so clearly lays out affect all of us. It doesn't matter whether you are from a coastal State, like some of us, or from a landlocked State, like our Presiding Officer—if you care about public health or the environment or if you care about our economy or national security, this report says that every sector of our economy and every person living in

this country will be affected by climate change if we do nothing.

As I see it, we have a couple of options. We can take up this fight and get serious about addressing and adapting to climate change, or we can stick our heads in the sand, as some would do, ignore the facts, and do nothing, dooming our children and our grandchildren to live in a world that is less healthy, less safe, less stable, and less economically vibrant. I say, let's fight. My hope is that our colleagues will join us and not fight against one another but fight against this threat we all face.

We have one planet. President Macron from France was down the hall about 2 years ago and spoke to a joint session of Congress. There is no plan B. We have the only planet. It is the one we have been given to take care of by our Heavenly Father, and we need to take that responsibility seriously.

All right. That is the bad news. That is a lot of bad news in 10 minutes. Before I yield to my friend from Florida, I will say this: There is some good news too. The good news is, there are ways to address these challenges—the economic challenges, the agricultural challenges, the flooding challenges, the temperature challenges. There is a way to do it. Among the smart ways to do it is to reduce the emission of carbon in this country.

The good news is, we can do that by adding and creating jobs. Two hundred million people went to work in this country today—roughly 200 million. Three million people went to work in jobs where they are involved in renewable energy, energy conservation—things that help save our planet and preserve the quality of life on our planet. There are a lot more jobs we can add in that kind of work, including building vehicles that run on batteries—and we are making great progress—and vehicles that run on hydrogen and fuel cells. The only waste product from those vehicles is water. You can drink it.

There are ways to address all these threats in a way that is economically viable. We don't have to choose between all this doom and gloom and a strong economy; we can address the doom and gloom and add a lot of jobs, and we ought to do this. It is going to be a win-win. We ought to seize the day.

I thank my colleague from Florida for his patience with me here today. I don't know if I will have a chance to stand here this close with him again before he prepares to head off into the sunset. He and I were privileged to serve together in the House. He was at one time treasurer and insurance commissioner of his State, and I was treasurer of Delaware. We walked the path together for a long time, and he has been a great servant of the people of Florida for many years. I have always been proud to stand next to him, and I am especially proud today.

I am happy to yield to my friend from Florida.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, the subject the Senator from Delaware speaks of—climate change especially—affects my State of Florida, as we are ground zero with so many of the consequences of climate change—the sea level rise. I will be addressing that topic within the next couple of days. I have addressed that problem over and over, but I want to give a concluding speech on that topic.

#### HEALTHCARE

Mr. President, this afternoon, I want to give a concluding speech on the topic of healthcare. I want to talk about the importance of ensuring that all Americans—and especially my State, all Floridians—have access to critical health services through the Affordable Care Act.

When the ACA passed, it stated that an insurance company cannot deny health insurance coverage because a person had a preexisting condition. In other words, that means you cannot be denied health coverage because you have something like asthma, cancer, heart trouble, diabetes, ALS, or, in some cases, even a rash. Before the Affordable Care Act, even being a woman was considered a preexisting condition.

Nearly everyone has a preexisting condition. In Florida alone, almost 8 million people have a preexisting condition. We think of our neighbors, our friends and family members, and we thought of them when we passed the ACA. We worked very hard to give them the healthcare protections they needed.

In these past few years, I have talked to folks all over our country. In Florida, I have talked to the very folks we fought so hard to ensure they have health insurance and healthcare. Last year, for example, I spoke with a well-known community leader from Hollywood, FL—Elaine Geller. Her daughter, Megan, was diagnosed with leukemia at the age of 26. At the time she was admitted to the hospital, Megan's blood count was 4. She had water on the heart. She had pneumonia. She went through one round of chemo, and it put the cancer in remission. She was initially hospitalized in New York, where she had been working as a special-ed teacher, but she returned to Florida to receive care at the University of Miami's Comprehensive Cancer Center—one of the finest cancer centers around the country.

As the story goes, Megan's doctor told Megan and her mom, Elaine, that she needed a transplant, which required a payment of \$150,000 upfront. From January until about the end of April, Megan lived at that Comprehensive Cancer Center at the university and received multiple rounds of chemo, biopsies, and various other treatments. Do you know what her mom said to me? She said that thanks to the Affordable Care Act, as a mom, she could focus all of her energy on her daughter. She didn't have to worry about all the

bills that were piling up, and ultimately she didn't have to write a check for the transplant. That is because Megan had health insurance despite a preexisting condition, and the Affordable Care Act created a transitional program to cover eligible individuals with preexisting conditions, like Megan.

After Megan left the Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center, her cancer went into remission, but then the cancer came back. The remission only lasted 63 days. They flew to Texas, to the MD Anderson Cancer Center. Why travel across the country to get cancer treatments? Because when you are dying—when a mom is watching her daughter die, there is nothing she as a parent would not do. You can't put a price on your child's life. It would do us a lot of good if we would remember that.

Sadly, Megan had a fall and hit her head. She died at the age of 28. Her total care during that battle with cancer could have cost Elaine, her mom, \$5 million. Thanks to the ACA, because she had health insurance, Megan's part of that treatment was \$70,000. That not only saved her from going bankrupt, it also gave her more time to spend with her daughter. Anyone who has lost someone knows that every second counts. We shouldn't take things for granted.

Elaine said that her daughter would be proud to know that her story of the Affordable Care Act matters. It matters to me as their Senator, and that is why I am telling it on the floor of the Senate.

And it should matter to every one of these Senators here.

Let me give you another person that I met along the trail. I met with one of the most courageous 14-year-olds whom I have ever seen, JJ Holmes, and his family, who are from Longwood, FL.

JJ has cerebral palsy and requires a wheelchair and constant attention to get around and to be taken care of. He can only communicate with his computer vocalization device. It is just amazing, since JJ can't directly communicate except by the sparkle in his eyes. He uses his left knee on a device on the wheelchair to hit it and it goes to a computer screen, and he can type out the words and the sounds in order to give him an ability to communicate with another ordinary person.

JJ has a preexisting condition—he has cerebral palsy—and all of the efforts to repeal and undermine the ACA are undermining his access to care and his ability to live. Each attempt to repeal the ACA was another threat to his very life.

His mom told me that there is so much of a daily struggle, worry, and heartache when you have a child who is severely disabled, and the ACA finally gave that family the much needed security, and it lifted a huge burden of how in the world were they going to cope with this medical condition of their child.

I will give you another example in Florida. Earlier this year, I was joined at a local roundtable on healthcare by Elizabeth Isom from St. Petersburg. Elizabeth told me that the ACA had saved her life and allowed her to purchase insurance for the very first time. She doesn't know how she is going to be able to afford coverage if the lifetime caps of the law are reinstated and if essential health benefits are not provided as the ACA provides.

Elizabeth was a productive member of society. She was a social worker, and then she developed a sinus tumor. She went without insurance for 3 years, during which her health was constantly deteriorating and it was to the point that she thought she was dying. She had vital organ damage and reached complete disability. The mass in her sinus had extended into her skull.

After the ACA became the law of the land, she purchased insurance through healthcare.gov. She said it is the best insurance she has ever had because it covered essential health benefits like the preventative services.

So let's think about this just in these three cases that I have given. The ACA protects people like Megan with preexisting conditions from being charged more simply because of their diagnosis. It protects people like JJ from being unable to afford care because they have hit annual or lifetime limits on coverage. It protects people like Elizabeth from being denied treatment because insurers are now required to cover essential health services—services and benefits like hospitalizations and prescription drugs.

These folks are not the only ones that I have talked to about how the ACA has changed their life. The American people—not just Floridians—have been writing to us, have been calling to us, have been showing up in our townhalls, have been showing up at our roundtables, have been approaching me on the street corner, at the airport, at events all over Florida to share how important the ACA is to them. The Affordable Care Act has given people healthcare they otherwise would never have had. Over and over, they have come to me and said: We want to see a bipartisan fix—a fix to the ACA, not a repeal. Why can't you just get together and fix the ACA?

How many times have I made that plea on the floor of the Senate? And they are right. There is a lot of work to be done to bring down the cost of healthcare, to make insurance more affordable, and to increase coverage for people who still don't have it. But in the meantime, the Trump administration is doing everything in its power to undermine and undo the existing law that has helped so many so much.

We have seen an Executive order of President Trump's stating that the policy of his administration was to "seek the prompt repeal" of the ACA. We have seen rules coming out of the Trump administration cutting in half

the length of time that people had to enroll in plans on healthcare.gov, eliminating low-income subsidies, and cutting outreach and advertising for enrollment by 90 percent.

Why would you make it harder for people to sign up for health insurance if your intention wasn't to undermine the Affordable Care Act, which is exactly what the Trump administration's intention is?

We have seen the implementation of expanding short-term health plans. These are plans that are less than a year or, as they really are designed, junk plans, and that is just what they are. They don't offer essential health benefits. They offer extremely limited coverage so that people don't have the coverage and they don't have the coverage of preexisting conditions. They remove protections for people with those preexisting conditions. They do not cover that list of 10 or 12 things called essential health benefits, like maternity care and prescription drug costs.

We have seen multiple Republican repeal-and-replace bills that have come before the House and before this Senate. We have seen this Trump administration claim that they do care about those with preexisting conditions. Just last month President Trump tweeted that "Republicans will protect people with preexisting conditions far better than the Dems!" But that is not what they are doing, nor is that what they have done.

Well, Mr. President, if that is the case, then why is your administration supporting the lawsuit *Texas vs. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services*—that very lawsuit that was brought forward by Republican attorneys general, including Florida's attorney general, urging a Federal court to strike down preexisting conditions and patient protections as unconstitutional, and it would cause a chaos in our healthcare system.

You are not protecting 133 million Americans with preexisting conditions. No, what you are doing is eliminating their healthcare, and that includes 17 million children.

The administration should better look at their situation and do the opposite of what they have been doing. I ask the American people to demand that the Trump administration stop undermining the ACA, get to work as an administration, do its job, and implement all parts of the existing law, the Affordable Care Act. We should be looking for ways to help people like Elaine, JJ, Megan, and Elizabeth. We should be looking for ways to help them get through the tough times. We should be working together in a bipartisan way to make the ACA work better, not try to kill it.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CRUZ). The Senator from Hawaii.

NOMINATION OF THOMAS FARR

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. President, I thank my friend, the Senator from Florida,

for speaking out on the critical importance of the Affordable Care Act for millions of people in our country and for calling upon this administration to support healthcare for all instead of what they are doing to the healthcare of millions of people in our country.

Turning to another matter, nearly 12 years ago, on December 7, 2006, President George W. Bush nominated Thomas Farr to be a U.S. District Court Judge for the Eastern District of North Carolina. Today, 12 years and three nominations later, his name is again before us for confirmation to the very same vacancy, which has remained unfilled all this time.

When Mr. Farr was nominated for this vacancy in 2006 and 2007, his nomination did not receive a vote in the Judiciary Committee. It was known at that time that Mr. Farr had spent his professional life engaged in restricting minority voting rights and defending companies alleged to have discriminated against African Americans, women, and others.

In the 1980s and in 1990, Mr. Farr represented Senator Jesse Helms, notorious for his opposition to civil rights, voting rights, women's rights, workers' rights, and LGBTQ rights—in other words, individual rights.

Mr. Farr also helped corporations fight off their employees' discrimination claims. In 2003, Mr. Farr defended Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Carolina against claims by a female employee who alleged that the company had compelled her to resign because of her sex and age. To win this case, Mr. Farr convinced the North Carolina Supreme Court to strike down the county's antidiscrimination law.

Given this history of restricting minority voting rights and defending companies in discrimination claims, Mr. Farr's nomination did not proceed at that time, and rightly so.

In the 12 years since his first nomination, Mr. Farr has become notorious for his defense of the North Carolina legislature's attempts to disenfranchise African-American voters.

His current nomination is opposed by nearly every civil rights group in North Carolina and nationally, and the Congressional Black Caucus, or the CBC, has fought Mr. Farr's nomination.

In a 2017 letter to the Judiciary Committee, the CBC wrote: "It is no exaggeration to say that had the White House deliberately sought to identify an attorney in North Carolina with a more hostile record on African-American voting rights and workers' rights than Thomas Farr, it could hardly have done so."

This district court vacancy was not filled by President Obama in his two terms, but not for lack of trying. President Obama nominated two different African-American women for this vacancy, one an assistant U.S. Attorney and another a State court judge. Neither nomination moved forward because the Republican home State Senators withheld their blue slips. Judiciary Committee Chairman LEAHY and,

later, Chairman GRASSLEY both, at that time, abided by the blue-slip process during that period, as I said, and no hearings were ever held for these two Obama nominees.

At the same time, both of my colleagues from North Carolina persisted in their desire to confirm Mr. Farr to the Federal bench. Of course, now, the return of a blue slip is no longer a barrier to pushing nominees through the Judiciary Committee.

So, on the recommendation of my Senate colleagues from North Carolina, Donald Trump nominated Mr. Farr yet again to the seat that had been kept open in the Eastern District of North Carolina. In fact, when Mr. Farr's nomination was returned at the end of a session of Congress last year, the White House decided to renominate him this year.

The history regarding this judicial vacancy and Mr. Farr is key to understanding why I and so many of my colleagues will vote no. We will be accused of obstruction and wanting to deprive the people of North Carolina of a judge in the Eastern District. We will hear how this is the longest open vacancy on the entire Federal bench, but, in fact, this vacancy has remained open so long because of Republicans' refusal to confirm qualified minority women and their insistence on filling this vacancy with a man whose career is filled with examples of his using the law to advance a racist, obstructionist, plainly un-American agenda.

Had the Republicans not blocked the nominations of qualified minority women in 2013 and 2016, this district, which is about 27 percent African American, would have had its first African-American judge.

By contrast Mr. Farr has spent decades opposing the rights of African Americans, women, and workers. Let me highlight a few examples.

When Mr. Farr was working as legal counsel for the 1990 campaign for Senator Jesse Helms of North Carolina, the Justice Department filed a Federal lawsuit against the campaign for trying to intimidate thousands of African Americans from voting. How did they do this? The Helms campaign staff sent postcards suggesting that the voters were ineligible to vote and warning that they could be prosecuted if they voted. Although Mr. Farr denied any involvement in these racist voter intimidation efforts, the Justice Department attorney who investigated the matter confirmed that Mr. Farr "was certainly involved in the scheme as it was being developed."

That is not the only time Mr. Farr has opposed the rights of African-American voters. When the North Carolina legislature decided to restrict or dilute the votes of African Americans over the past 10 years, Mr. Farr fiercely defended these efforts as a private attorney.

In 2013, for example, he defended the North Carolina legislature's voter suppression efforts that a court found were enacted with racially discriminatory intent—racially discriminatory intent.

In other words, the North Carolina legislature was totally upfront about what they were up to.

After the Supreme Court effectively struck down the part of the Voting Rights Act that required North Carolina to preclear any changes to their voting laws, the North Carolina State legislature passed a law that eliminated or cut back on voter mechanisms that African Americans disproportionately used. This is the law that Mr. Farr defended. The Fourth Circuit in that case determined that these voting changes "target[ed] African Americans with almost surgical precision." In other words, blatantly discriminatory intent was found by the Fourth Circuit.

Between his efforts to support suppression of voters, Mr. Farr has helped companies avoid accountability for discrimination against African Americans, women, and minority groups. In 2003, Mr. Farr argued that female employees at Pfizer were not protected under Federal civil rights law from condescending, sexist, and sexual comments from their manager because they were not "severe" or "pervasive" enough.

He even tried to undermine the plaintiff's claim by arguing that she failed to point out that her manager "harassed her because of her gender on a daily or weekly basis." That was the standard he applied: You have to have been harassed on a daily or weekly basis. Mr. Farr ultimately convinced the court to dismiss the employee's claim as untimely.

A person who has devoted decades of his legal career to furthering oppression and injustices against minorities and women has no business being confirmed to a lifetime position as a judge, where his ideological agenda will certainly be reflected in his decision.

I will not vote for Mr. Farr's nomination, and I urge my colleagues to do likewise.

#### NOMINATION OF JONATHAN KOBES

Mr. President, I would also like to explain my opposition to another nominee being considered this week: Jonathan Kobes for the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals from South Dakota.

Mr. Kobes received a "not qualified" vote from a substantial majority of the ABA's Standing Committee on the Federal Judiciary. They reported that Kobes has "neither the requisite experience nor evidence of his ability to fulfill the scholarly writing required of a United States Circuit Court Judge."

They continued, saying: "The Standing Committee had difficulty analyzing Mr. Kobes' professional competence because he was unable to provide sufficient writing samples of the caliber required to satisfy Committee members that he was capable of doing the work of a United States Circuit Court judge"; hence, their "not qualified" vote for him.

In normal times, this sort of negative evaluation from the ABA would be given to the White House before the White House decided to nominate someone, and the person would never be nominated. But these are not normal times.

Instead of following normal procedure, the White House has nominated someone not fit to serve for a lifetime on the circuit court, but nevertheless will be confirmed on a party-line vote.

Mr. Kobes has demonstrated a hostility toward women's reproductive rights. His anti-choice activism is on par with so many other Trump nominees who are relatively young, as he is, and profoundly inexperienced.

In 2005, Mr. Kobes represented, as a volunteer, so-called crisis pregnancy centers, which were seeking to uphold the South Dakota law requiring doctors to inform women seeking abortions that "the pregnant woman has an existing relationship with that unborn human being and that the relationship enjoys protection under the United States Constitution and under the laws of South Dakota." That is not the state of the law, by the way.

Mr. Farr and Mr. Kobes are two of the worst of President Trump's judicial nominees, and that is saying a lot. They are two more examples of President Trump's relentless pursuit to pack the Federal courts with ideologues who will rule in favor of conservative causes. Clearly, Donald Trump does not believe in the independent judiciary envisioned by the Framers of our Constitution and respected by every President until now.

We see in his single-minded efforts to pack the courts that he is nominating judges who he believes will be his political allies. He tells us as much. He believes the judges he appoints are "Trump judges" and that they will be loyal to him, protect him and his policies when the time comes.

Chief Justice John Roberts could not have been clearer in his response last week to Donald Trump's criticism of judges who don't rule his way. The Chief Justice told the AP:

We do not have Obama judges or Trump judges, Bush judges or Clinton judges. What we have is an extraordinary group of dedicated judges doing their very best to do equal right to those appearing before them. That independent judiciary is something we should all be thankful for.

The independence of the judiciary is not something Donald Trump acknowledges, values, or even believes in. What he wants are Trump judges who will rule in favor of his policies and decisions and who will satisfy his ideologically conservative base. It is no wonder that Chief Justice Roberts felt it necessary to take the extraordinary step of reminding the President and the country that the judiciary must be independent.

I urge my colleagues to vote against the nomination of Mr. Farr and Mr. Kobes.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 20 minutes as in morning business; further, that at the conclusion of my remarks, the Senator from Massachu-

setts, Mr. MARKEY, be recognized; that we have permission to engage in a colloquy; and that at the conclusion of Senator MARKEY's remarks, Senator SHAHEEN of New Hampshire be recognized.

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

#### CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, a persistent argument of my climate talks is how corrupt climate denial is. The premise of that argument is that the fossil fuel industry denial apparatus is wrong about climate change and knows it is wrong. That is my case. The fossil fuel industry denial apparatus knows it is wrong about climate change.

Well, it is a beautiful world, and every once in a while, along comes something that proves my case. Last week, on the afternoon of Black Friday, the Trump administration released its National Climate Assessment by 13 Federal agencies describing the monumental damage the United States is facing from climate change. In more than 1,000 pages, the report contradicted nearly every fake assertion Trump and his fossil fuel flunky Cabinet have made about climate change.

Trump's pro-polluter policies are predicated on the lies and nonsense of this fossil fuel industry denial apparatus, and this report is devastating to those policies and to those lies.

So how did the fossil fuel apparatus respond? What did they do to rebut the National Climate Assessment? They did nothing. They did nothing. There was all that big talk from Scott Pruitt about how they were going to "red team" climate science. Well here comes the climate science. Where is your red team? Nothing. Instead of engaging with this devastating report by the U.S. Government's leading scientists, they tried to bury it, timing its release for a day of the year when it would be least likely to get public attention.

Consider for a moment the environment in which they backed down from this challenge—no red team, no nothing. They just whimpered and ran away and tried to bury the report on Black Friday. At a time when their industry populates the Trump administration, at a time when the President is in their pocket, at a time when both Houses of Congress are under fossil fuel industry control, their phony climate denial front groups wield more influence than ever. This should have been their moment.

The tell here is that even in this environment, the fossil fuel industry and its bevy of stooges in the Trump administration got this report and did nothing. Why? Why nothing? There is only one answer. Because they know they are wrong. They know the real science is right. They know their science denial campaign is phony, so they backed down. They folded like a cardboard suitcase in a rainstorm.

That, my friends, is an admission. It is an admission by inaction. It is an ad-

mission that even the fossil fuel industry knows the climate science is irrefutable.

Interestingly, "irrefutable" is just what President Trump and his family said about climate science in this full-page advertisement they signed in the New York Times in 2009, saying that science of climate was "irrefutable" and that there will be "catastrophic and irreversible" consequences of climate change.

The new National Climate Assessment plus the recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report are both very clear. The irrefutable science that these two reports disclose couldn't be more clear: Damage from climate change is already occurring; there is no credible natural explanation for it; human activity is the dominant cause; future damage from further warming will be worse than we previously thought; economies will suffer; and we are almost out of time to prevent the worst consequences of climate change.

The Bank of England report on this—they are the biggest financial regulator in the UK, and they said: The financial risks are far-reaching in their breadth and magnitude, have uncertain and extended time horizons, are foreseeable, but these risk factors will be minimized if there is an orderly transition to a carbon economy, but the window for an orderly transition is finite and closing. We are almost out of time.

These two reports are tough stuff. As the Trump administration summary states, the "Earth's climate is now changing faster than at any point in the history of modern civilization, primarily as a result of human activities. The impacts of global climate change are already being felt in the United States and are projected to intensify in the future," which makes sense, since in the history of human civilization, the Earth has never seen atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> concentrations like we have today.

Many scientists have said warming of around 3 degrees centigrade is now likely. What does that mean? Heating the planet well beyond 2 degrees centigrade would create a "totally different world," says Michael Oppenheimer, a climate scientist at Princeton University. He says:

It would be indescribable, it would turn the world upside down in terms of its climate. There would be nothing like it in the history of civilization.

Here is what the Trump climate assessment chronicles: From our Ocean State, we are concerned about sea levels, ocean acidification, and warming. We note sea levels are rising, as oceans warm and upland ice melts. If fossil fuels are not constrained, the reports says, "many coastal communities will be transformed by the latter part of this century." For my coastal State, that is a pretty ominous warning. Along coasts, fisheries, tourism, human health, even public safety are being "transformed, degraded or lost due in part to climate change impacts,

particularly sea level rise and higher numbers of extreme weather events.”

You get the sea level coming up, and that extreme weather event—which is stronger to begin with now—has a lot more ocean to throw at our shores.

Out West, “more frequent and larger wildfires, combined with increasing development at the wildland-urban interface portend increasing risks to property and human life,” the report says. By the way, from 2000 to 2016, wildfires have burned at least 3.7 million acres of the United States in every single year except for 3. From 2000 to 2016, more than 3.7 million acres burned in all years but 3. California still smolders as I speak.

More than 100 million people in the United States live with poor air quality, and climate change will “worsen existing air pollution levels.” Increased wildfire smoke heightens respiratory and cardiovascular problems. With higher temperatures from global warming, asthma and hay fever rise.

Groundwater supplies have declined over the last century, and the decrease is accelerating. “Significant changes in water quantity and quality are evident across the country,” the report finds.

Midwest farmers take a big hit: warmer, wetter, and more humid conditions from climate change; greater incidence of crop disease and more pests; worsened conditions for stored grain. During the growing season, the Midwest will see temperatures climb more than any other region of the United States, the report says. Crop yields will suffer—a warning that is echoed by grain giants like Cargill.

To sum it all up, the report says climate change will “disrupt many areas of life,” hurting the U.S. economy, affecting trade, exacerbating overseas conflicts for our military. Costs will be high: “With continued growth in emissions at historic rates, annual losses in some economic sectors are projected to reach hundreds of billions of dollars by the end of the century—more than the current gross domestic product of many U.S. States.”

Danger warnings already flash in some economic sectors. Freddie Mac has warned of a coastal property value crash, saying: “The economic losses and social disruption may happen gradually, but they are likely to be greater in total than those experienced in the housing crisis and Great Recession.” From a coastal State, that is an ominous warning.

The insurance industry agrees. Trade publication Risk and Insurance has warned: “Continually rising seas will damage coastal residential and commercial property values to the point that property owners will flee those markets in droves, thus precipitating a mortgage value collapse that could equal or exceed the mortgage crisis that rocked the global economy in 2008.” By the way, the leading edge of this may already be upon us as coastal property values are beginning to lag inland property values, as reported by the Wall Street Journal.

Separate from the coastal property values threat is another warning about a carbon bubble in fossil fuel markets. Fossil fuel reserves, now claimed as assets, that are not developable in a 2-degrees-Centigrade world become what they call stranded assets. A recent economic publication estimated that collapse of the “carbon bubble” would wipe out “around 82 percent of global coal reserves, 49 percent of global gas reserves, and 33 percent of global oil reserves.” A separate economic review warns that \$12 trillion of fossil fuel industry financial value “could vanish off their balance sheets globally in the form of stranded assets.” Twelve trillion dollars is over 15 percent of global GDP, which is why the Bank of England—which I quoted earlier as a financial regulator—is warning of this carbon asset bubble as a systemic economic risk. That may be the blandest set of words in the English language that convey the worst threat. If you were to graph “blandness of language” and “seriousness of threat,” you would probably come up with systemic economic risk. It basically means economic meltdown. Well, that is what we are looking at.

This level of collapse could cascade beyond the fossil fuel companies. It is not just a question of their shareholders getting wiped out. It is such a crash that it cascades out into the global economy—a crash like that, unfortunately, hits the United States particularly hard because lower cost producers can hold on and unload fossil fuel reserves into the collapsing market at fire sale prices. When they do, the economists warn, “regions with higher marginal costs”—like the United States—“lose almost their entire oil and gas industry.”

The solution is to decarbonize, to invest in more renewables, to broaden our energy portfolio away from this asset collapse risk. One paper concludes that “the United States is worse off if it continues to promote fossil fuel production and consumption.” Another paper concludes—this is the good news:

If climate policies are implemented early on and in a stable and credible framework, market participants are able to smoothly anticipate the effects. In this case there would not be any large shock in asset prices and there would be no systemic risk.

So how do we get to eliminating this hazard of no systemic risk? How do we get to no systemic risk? We do what works for us anyway: move to renewables. As this graph shows, we have to make a big move to avoid this hazard. A carbon price—which is the remedy the fossil fuel industry pretends to support, while sending its political forces out to oppose exactly the laws it pretends to support—would allow this big move to happen, all while generating revenues that could be cycled back to States and citizens and help the hardest hit areas of transition.

The smart move we need to take to make this happen does not have to be painful. We avoid a lot of pain if we

make the move, but that doesn’t mean the move itself has to be painful. Nobel Prize winner Joseph Stiglitz says it is a win economically. He has testified:

Retrofitting the global economy for climate change would help to restore aggregate demand and growth. Climate policies, if well designed and implemented, are consistent with growth, development, and poverty reduction. The transition to a low-carbon economy is potentially a powerful, attractive, and sustainable growth story, marked by higher resilience, more innovation, more livable cities, robust agriculture, and stronger ecosystems.

We could do it the hard way—do nothing; get hit with those dire economic consequences because the status quo is not safe.

Fortune magazine summed up the Trump administration’s climate report quite beautifully, so I will quote them at some length: “The report catalogs the observed damage and accelerating financial losses projected from a climate now unmoored from a 12,000-year period of relative stability.”

What a phrase that is. The Earth’s climate, which we inhabit, is unmoored from a 12,000-year period of relative stability.

It goes on:

The result is that much of what humans have built, and many of the things they are building now, are unsuited to the world as it exists. And as time goes on, the added cost of living in that world could total hundreds of billions of dollars—annually.

Which way we now go depends on the Congress of the United States—on whether Congress can put the interests of our people ahead of the interests of the fossil fuel industry.

The record is not good. I will concede that. Since the Citizens United decision, the politics of climate change have turned into a tale of industry capture and control. So far, despite the fossil fuel industry’s obvious conflict of interest, could there be a more obvious conflict of interest, indeed? Despite their provable pattern of deception and despite clear warnings from, well, virtually everywhere now, the Republican Party has proven itself incapable of telling the fossil fuel industry: No, we tried our best for you. We held in for you as long as we could, and we did everything we could think of, but we are not going to wreck our economy, our climate, our oceans, our country for you.

So it doesn’t look good, but the climate report does say we still have time if we act fast.

I ask unanimous consent that an article by Max Boot, titled, “I was wrong on climate change. Why can’t other conservatives admit it, too?” be printed in the RECORD at the conclusion of my remarks.

It concludes: Why haven’t other Conservatives owned up to this danger?

They are captives, first and foremost, of the fossil fuel industry. . . . It is a tragedy for the entire planet that the United States’ governing party is impervious to science and reason.

I will close with a reference to “The Gathering Storm,” which is Winston

Churchill's legendary book about a previous failure to heed warnings. Churchill quoted a poem of a train bound for destruction, rushing through the night, with the engineer asleep at the controls as disaster looms:

Who is in charge of the clattering train?  
The axles creak, and the couplings strain.  
. . . the pace is hot, and the points are near,

[but] Sleep hath deadened the driver's ear;  
And signals flash through the night in vain.

Death is in charge of the clattering train!

I contend that we are now that sleeping driver, that the signals are flashing at us, so far, in vain, and that it is decidedly time to wake up.

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

[From The Washington Post]

I WAS WRONG ON CLIMATE CHANGE. WHY CAN'T OTHER CONSERVATIVES ADMIT IT, TOO?  
(By Max Boot)

I admit it. I used to be a climate-change skeptic. I was one of those conservatives who thought that the science was inconclusive, that fears of global warming were as overblown as fears of a new ice age in the 1970s, that climate change was natural and cyclical, and that there was no need to incur any economic costs to deal with this speculative threat. I no longer think any of that, because the scientific consensus is so clear and convincing.

The Fourth National Climate Assessment, released Friday by the U.S. government, puts it starkly: "Observations collected around the world provide significant, clear, and compelling evidence that global average temperature is much higher, and is rising more rapidly, than anything modern civilization has experienced, with widespread and growing impacts." The report notes that "annual average temperatures have increased by 1.8 °F across the contiguous United States since the beginning of the 20th century" and that "annual median sea level along the U.S. coast . . . has increased by about 9 inches since the early 20th century as oceans have warmed and land ice has melted."

The report attributes these changes to man-made greenhouse gases and warns: "High temperature extremes, heavy precipitation events, high tide flooding events along the U.S. coastline, ocean acidification and warming, and forest fires in the western United States and Alaska are all projected to continue to increase, while land and sea ice cover, snowpack, and surface soil moisture are expected to continue to decline in the coming decades."

The U.S. government warnings echo the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. In October, it released a report that represented the work of 91 scientists from 60 countries. It describes, in the words of the New York Times, "a world of worsening food shortages and wildfires, and a mass die-off of coral reefs as soon as 2040."

The wildfires are already here. The Camp Fire blaze this month is the most destructive in California history, charring 153,000 acres, destroying nearly 19,000 structures, and killing at least 85 people. The second-most destructive fire in California history was the one last year in Napa and Sonoma counties.

The Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies notes that climate change has contributed to these conflagrations by shortening the rainy season, drying out vegetation and whipping up Santa Ana winds. Massive hurricanes are increasing

along with wildfires—and they too are influenced by climate change.

It is time to sound the planetary alarm. This is likely to be the fourth-hottest year on record. The record-holder is 2016, followed by 2015 and 2017. A climate change website notes that "the five warmest years in the global record have all come in the 2010s" and "the 10 warmest years on record have all come since 1998."

Imagine if these figures reflected a rise in terrorism—or illegal immigration. Republicans would be freaking out. Yet they are oddly blasé about this climate code red. President Trump, whose minions buried the climate-change report on the day after Thanksgiving, told Axios: "Is there climate change? Yeah. Will it go back like this, I mean will it change back? Probably." And, amid a recent cold snap, he tweeted: "Brutal and Extended Cold Blast could shatter ALL RECORDS—Whatever happened to Global Warming?"

By this point, no one should be surprised that the president can't tell the difference between short-term weather fluctuations and long-term climate trends. At least he didn't repeat his crazy suggestion that climate change is a Chinese hoax. Yet his denialism is echoed by other Republicans who should know better. Sen. Joni Ernst (R-Iowa) told CNN on Sunday: "Our climate always changes and we see those ebb and flows through time. . . . We need to always consider the impact to American industry and jobs."

We do need to consider the impact on U.S. jobs—but that's an argument for action rather than, as Ernst suggests, inaction. The National Climate Assessment warns that global warming could cause a 10 percent decline in gross domestic product and that the "potential for losses in some sectors could reach hundreds of billions of dollars per year by the end of this century." Iowa and other farm states will be particularly hard hit as crops wilt and livestock die.

Compared with the crushing costs of climate change, the action needed to curb greenhouse-gas emissions is modest and manageable—if we act now. Jerry Taylor, president of the libertarian Niskanen Center, estimates that a carbon tax would increase average electricity rates from 17 cents to 18 cents per kilowatt-hour. The average household, he writes, would see spending on energy rise "only about \$35 per month." That's not nothing—but it's better than allowing climate change to continue unabated.

I've owned up to the danger. Why haven't other conservatives? They are captives, first and foremost, of the fossil fuel industry, which outspent green groups 10 to 1 in lobbying on climate change from 2000 to 2016. But they are also captives of their own rigid ideology. It is a tragedy for the entire planet that the United States' governing party is impervious to science and reason.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. I note that my distinguished colleague from Massachusetts has arrived. We have an order in place in which the Senator from Massachusetts is to be recognized at the conclusion of my remarks and that the distinguished Senator from New Hampshire, Mrs. SHAHEEN, is to be recognized at the conclusion of Senator MARKEY's remarks.

With that, I yield the floor to the co-author of the Waxman-Markey legislation, the person who had done the most successful work to try to solve this climate problem at a time when the situation was slightly less desperate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ROUNDS). The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, I thank Senator WHITEHOUSE, who has been out here on the floor, week after week after week, sounding the warning, like Churchill, that there is danger ahead, that there is a gathering storm. Yet it is not metaphorical as it was for Churchill. It is real. There is a gathering storm. What Senator WHITEHOUSE has been doing, year after year after year, is coming out on the floor to document this gathering storm and to warn that we have to take action.

I thank Senator WHITEHOUSE for his incredible, historic leadership because, between the U.N. and the U.S. scientists, all of the evidence is now there. My belief is, the failure that he talked about to heed the dire warnings on climate change is much more now than that figurative gathering storm; it is literally gathering much fiercer energy in super-charged storms that will bear down on our shores as a result of our warming crisis.

Scientists have shot off the warning flare. In the last 2 months, we have received two of the most alarming reports to date on the threat that climate change poses to our country, our economy, our security, and to our planet. It questions the morality of our country because ultimately that is what it is. It is a moral issue of whether we are going to leave this planet better than we found it.

Are we going to be the stewards of this planet and pass it on to future generations better than we found it? Right now, the gathering evidence from the United Nations and from our own U.S. Government's scientists is that we are not.

The Federal Government's National Climate Assessment that was released last week as well as the recent United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report are clarion calls. The science in these reports is clear. If we fail to act now, storms will grow more frequent and more powerful. Extreme weather events, like Hurricane Michael, which grew more quickly this October than any storm we have seen, will continue to cost the United States hundreds of billions of dollars in damage. The National Climate Assessment—the congressionally mandated report issued by 13 Federal agencies—underscores the specific impacts we are facing now and will continue to face in the future.

In our home region of the Northeast, which Senator SHAHEEN and Senator WHITEHOUSE and I have the privilege to represent, the impacts are going to be truly devastating. The Northeast region will surpass 2 degrees centigrade of warming beyond preindustrial levels by as soon as 2035—not 2050, not 2100 but by the year 2035—if emissions continue at their current pace. That would be the quickest warming in the contiguous United States and would occur as much as two decades before global average temperatures reach a similar point.

The real-world effects of this warming trajectory are shocking. Sea levels

in the Northeast could rise upward of 11 feet by the end of the century. Almost one-third of the sandy shorelines along the Atlantic coast could erode inland at rates of at least 3.3 feet per year. We will feel the impact on our economy, which is so strongly tied to fishing, to our beaches and tourism, and to our natural environmental resources.

In 2012, a 2-degree centigrade water temperature increase boosted lobster landings to high summer levels a month earlier than usual. The result was an early supply glut and a collapse in prices to the lowest level in almost two decades. This type of negative impact on our fishing industries will become more commonplace as the climate continues to warm and our marine life is forced to move to new areas.

Outdoor recreation in the Northeast, which will suffer the consequences of climate change, contributes nearly \$150 billion in consumer spending and supports more than 1 million jobs across our region. Climate impacts, like beach erosion, are an imminent threat to this economic powerhouse. Yet perhaps most devastating will be the impacts on the public's health. According to estimates, up to 10,000 people in Massachusetts could, by the end of the century, visit the emergency room annually due to the rising heat.

Despite these generational warnings from both the United Nations and the scientists in our own country, President Trump has continued to dismiss the impending disaster from our dangerously warming planet.

How did President Trump respond when asked about the conclusion that climate change could devastate the American economy?

His answer: "I don't believe it."

Well, it doesn't matter, Mr. President, if you don't believe it because the world's leading scientists have shown it to be true, and 70 percent of Americans believe it. They believe global warming is happening.

President Trump may deny climate science, but there is no denying the consequences of climate change. Yet the Trump administration will not stop at climate denial. It has a much more insidious scheme to block action on climate—deny, delay, and defund. The list of its climate sins is long, with each action more egregious than the last one.

First came the appointment of an all-star Big Oil Cabinet—Scott Pruitt at the EPA, former Exxon CEO Rex Tillerson at the State Department, and former Texas Governor Rick Perry at the Department of Energy.

Since Mr. Pruitt's ouster after numerous ethics violations, the Trump administration has nominated king coal's favorite son, Andrew Wheeler, to head the EPA. Mr. Wheeler is a former coal industry lobbyist and has downplayed the recent science on the devastating impacts to come from climate change. After these reports came out, he said: "I have some questions

about the assumptions." These are assumptions that have been vetted by 300 leading scientists in the United States and across the planet.

The only question, I believe, is why someone like Andrew Wheeler was put in charge at the EPA. A coal lobbyist is now the head of the EPA. The EPA just turned into every polluter's ally. That is the net result of what Donald Trump has done at the Agency.

The Trump administration is also moving to freeze fuel economy standards rather than pushing for the historic and technically achievable goal of 54.5 miles per gallon by the year 2025. I am the author of the 2007 law that required the first fuel economy increase in 32 years. Increasing our fuel economy standard to 54.5 miles per gallon is the single largest action that any nation has ever taken on climate—that one law. Yet the Trump administration is trying to make a U-turn on those standards that are saving customers money at the pump and reducing the emissions we pump into the air.

The Trump administration is also trying to repeal President Obama's Clean Power Plan. Turning our back on this roadmap for reducing pollution in the electricity sector will result in at least 12 times more carbon dioxide emissions over the next decade.

Why is the Trump administration taking us backward on climate in the face of these dire warnings? Just follow the money.

Yesterday, during the weekly Senate Climate Change Task Force meeting, Senator WHITEHOUSE, Senator CARDIN, other colleagues, and I heard about the complex funding behind the climate countermovement, which the fossil fuel industry has funded and used to mislead the American people and to hold this administration hostage.

The "web of climate denial" is nothing more than dirty energy corporations and their shady front groups spending over a quarter of a billion dollars each year to deceive Americans about climate change. These corporations distort scientific consensus and turn it into an artificial political debate. They produce sham scientific documents, such as "Why Scientists Disagree About Global Warming," a report published by the Heartland Institute and sent to over 300,000 science teachers across the country. Funding 300,000 documents to be sent to every science teacher in America over science that is patently untrue—that is how much money the fossil fuel industry has. That is how high they try to send up a smoke screen around this issue to terrify teachers that they might be getting in trouble if they actually teach accurate science rather than the bogus documents that are sent to them by the fossil fuel industry, by their handmaidens, the Heartland Institute.

These fossil fuel phonies are on a mission to sow doubt, and their efforts seem to be bearing fruit in this administration. The web of denial messaging

strategy is highly sophisticated, disciplined, and politically controlled. Conferences, advertisements, websites, talking heads—this fossil fuel-funded farce may be a well-oiled machine and well funded, but they are wrong.

What do we do in the face of this web of denial? We need to look at the dollars and cents of it all—not the Big Oil and King Coal greenbacks but the success of green energy.

We are ushering our power sector into a clean energy future that is good for our environment and good for our economy. Coal cannot compete against wind, solar, and other renewables and natural gas in the free market. By the early 2020s, it could be cheaper to build new renewables from scratch than to continue operating old, dirty, coal-fired powerplants. That is not a conspiracy; that is called competition. Adam Smith is smiling in his grave, watching this market force begin to take over. And that is why this renewable revolution has become unstoppable. It is because the cost of renewables is plummeting. The cost of solar has fallen 50 to 60 percent over the last 5 to 6 years. In fact, wind and solar are generally cheaper than coal and nuclear energy right now. Coal is losing the war against wind and solar in the free market. That is what we call it—the free market. The War on Coal is a war that has been declared by the free market on coal, and it lost that war.

It is not just happening here in the United States; it is happening all around the globe. Mexico had a power auction at the end of November 2017 where the average price for solar was 1.9 cents per kilowatt hour. In 2017, solar in Saudi Arabia came in at 1.8 cents a kilowatt hour. In Dubai, it is 2.4 cents a kilowatt hour.

Half of all electricity installed around the world last year was renewable. Let me say that again. Half of all new electrical generation capacity in the world that was installed last year was renewable. So it is not just the United States; this is happening globally. The revolution is on.

Renewable energy deployment around the world has increased by 8 percent a year for 7 years in a row. Globally, more than \$330 billion was invested in clean energy last year. This is a global clean energy race. It is a global job-creation race. It is a global clean energy investment race. We are going to save all of creation by engaging in massive job creation, as we have all of these people who are hired in order to install these new technologies.

Right now, we have more than 50,000 megawatts of solar installed here in the United States. By 2020, we are projected to have more than 90,000 megawatts of solar. Solar is projected to add another 35,000 megawatts combined in 2021 and 2022. That means that by the end of 2022—4 years from now—we are going to have 250,000 megawatts of wind and solar in the United States.

If you think of a nuclear powerplant having 1,000 megawatts—the Seabrook

nuclear powerplant, the Diablo Canyon nuclear powerplant—think of 250 solar and wind facilities. That would be the equivalent of each one of those nuclear powerplants. That is what we are talking about.

By the year 2020, we will have 500,000 people employed in the wind and solar industry. Contrast that with the 50,000 people in the coal industry. By 2020, there will be 500,000 in wind and solar. Who are they? They are roofers. They are electricians. They are engineers. They are people who are working with their hands to install all of this equipment.

The President doesn't seem to really care about those blue-collar workers—upwards of 500,000 by the year 2020—but they are working hard, they are working for good wages, and they are also not running the risk of inhaling dangerous air that can be dangerous to their health. That is where we are. We have this incredible opportunity that is before us. It is already happening. The President is in denial.

The climate change fight is not just a question of job creation or economic imperative; it is about the moral imperative we have to act. We know climate change will get worse. We know lives will be lost. We cannot sit back and do nothing.

In 2015, Pope Francis came to Capitol Hill, and he delivered his environmental “Sermon on the Mount.” He told us that mankind created this problem of climate change and now mankind must fix it. With the world's poorest and most vulnerable suffering the worst consequences of climate change—extreme poverty, famine, disease, and displacement—we have a moral obligation to act.

I agree with Pope Francis that the United States and the Congress have an important role to play. We have a responsibility to help those less fortunate amongst us who will be harmed the most by rising seas, a warming planet, and more pollutions spewing into our air and water. That is why, right now and in the next Congress, I am standing here with my colleagues in this fight to ensure that we take climate action, for a price on carbon, for investment in clean energy, for resilient infrastructure, for 100 percent renewable energy in our country.

If there is a tax extenders bill, we will be fighting for clean energy tax credits and for extenders to help reduce our carbon emissions, including for offshore wind, for storage of electricity, and for clean vehicles. We will be standing side by side in that fight in 2019 on the Senate floor so that we continue this revolution.

If there is an infrastructure package, we will be fighting for aggressive renewable energy standards for utilities and the Federal Government and for coastal infrastructure needs.

As we work on appropriations, we will fight for more funding for energy efficiency and programs that protect the health of children and families from climate change.

The climate challenges facing our Nation and the entire world are indeed great, but the United States has the technological imperative to lead on solutions. We have the economic imperative to create opportunities and jobs for all people, and we have the moral imperative to protect our planet for future generations.

The rest the world will not listen to us and follow us if we do not, in fact, take these actions. You cannot preach temperance from a barstool. You cannot ask other countries to act when we ourselves are walking away from the responsibility. That is the moment we are in.

By January 1, 2019, this battle is going to be on. We have been given the warning, and we are heeding it. We are going to have mighty battles up here on the floor to make sure that future generations do not look back at us and wonder why we didn't heed all of those warnings that were given to us by the smartest scientists on the planet.

Now I would like to yield to my great colleague from the State of New Hampshire, a woman who has dedicated her career to the issues of clean energy up in her home State. I give you the great Senator from New Hampshire, JEANNE SHAHEEN.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. TILLIS). The Senator from New Hampshire.

#### CLIMATE CHANGE

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Thank you, Mr. President.

Thank you to my colleagues Senator MARKEY and Senator WHITEHOUSE. I am pleased to join both of you, who have done such a tremendous job in leading on this issue of trying to get everyone to wake up to the challenges that we face in climate change and what that is going to mean, not just for us in New England but for people across this country and across the globe.

Maybe the reason we feel so passionate about this is because we see it. We already see it happening in New England, as my colleagues detailed so well. We are on the cutting edge of these changes. You don't have to have lived in New Hampshire for very long to have seen what is happening as a result of climate change.

Last week, the U.S. Global Change Research Program released its fourth National Climate Assessment, and that details the profound effect climate change is having and is going to continue to have on the environment, on the economy, and on our public health. The report makes it abundantly clear that every American—every American—is affected by climate change and that the threat it poses will get worse unless we take action.

As I said, people in my State of New Hampshire have no doubt about the reality of climate change because we have been seeing it for years now. We have been experiencing it.

The steady increase in temperatures and the rise in annual precipitation are already affecting New Hampshire's

tourism and outdoor recreation economy. Each year, hundreds of thousands of sportsmen and wildlife watchers come to New Hampshire to enjoy our mountains, our lakes, and all of our beautiful natural resources. The outdoor economy—hunting, fishing, and outdoor recreation—contributes more than \$4 billion to New Hampshire's economy each year, but this is threatened now because rising temperatures are shortening our fall foliage season, and they are negatively affecting our snow- and ice-related winter recreation activities. That includes skiing, snowboarding, and snowmobiling. The New Hampshire ski industry employs 17,000 Granite Staters, and the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services warns that these jobs are threatened by climate change.

New Hampshire's—in fact, all of New England's fall foliage is at risk. This is climate modeling by the Union of Concerned Scientists that shows that by the end of this century, New Hampshire's summers will feel like present-day summers in North Carolina, 700 miles to our south. While the Presiding Officer certainly understands that this works great for North Carolina, it changes dramatically what happens in New Hampshire.

What this shows is that—this red color, which are the maple and beech and birch trees—the maple trees in particular that produce our maple syrup—that make such a difference in our fall foliage—those are going to be gone by 2070—by the end of this century. All of this red that we are seeing throughout—from Pennsylvania, New York, across Northern New Hampshire, Vermont, and Maine—that will all be gone by the end of this century.

Again, this underscores that if we fail to act on climate change, we are going to see a steep loss of jobs and revenue. That is going to affect our outdoor recreation industry, and it is going to affect our traditional maple syrup industry.

New Hampshire produces more than 100,000 gallons of maple syrup annually. That makes it the third largest maple syrup producer in the United States. Maple syrup is entirely dependent on weather conditions. We are already seeing the impact these changes are having because as we get into spring, the temperatures are not getting cold enough at night to make the sap run in the maple trees, and during the day, we are not seeing the fluctuation in temperatures that allows maple syrup to be produced.

The National Climate Assessment notes that the changing climate is putting more and more stress on sugar maples. If we fail to act on climate change, this could destroy New Hampshire's multimillion-dollar maple syrup industry.

Now, it is also affecting our wildlife. It is affecting their habitats.

Probably one of the most iconic symbols of New Hampshire is our moose. Yet they are being threatened. Because

of milder winters due to climate change, ticks and other insects aren't dying off, which leads to infestation on our wildlife and on our trees. According to the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department, the estimated moose population in New Hampshire has decreased by more than 50 percent since the mid-1990s.

That story is even worse for moose calves. A recent study by researchers at the University of New Hampshire found that winter ticks are the primary cause of an unprecedented 70-percent death rate of calves over a 3-year period. On average—and we can see this dramatically in these photos—47,000 ticks were found on each calf that was monitored during this study.

To quote Dr. Peter Pekins, a professor at UNH who is a lead author on the study, “the iconic moose is rapidly becoming the new poster child for climate change in parts of the Northeast.”

We are going to see moose totally disappearing from the Northeast—in fact, from all of the northern part of the United States, if we don't take action.

As my colleagues have said, global warming is also impacting our fishing industry. New Hampshire may have a small coast—18 miles of coastline—but we have an important commercial fishing industry that contributes \$106 million to the State and supports 5,000 jobs. Unfortunately, because of climate change, the average annual temperatures in the waters off of southern New England have increased by about 2.2 degrees Fahrenheit since the 1970s. This change in temperature is driving some of New England's most iconic fisheries northward and further out to sea.

Lobsters, for example, have migrated 40 miles northward to the Gulf of Maine in the last decade. As we can see from this illustration, it shows the red areas where we used to have lobster until the 1970s. They have totally disappeared, and those lobsters have moved north of Cape Cod. They are moving into northern Maine and up into Canada. They are totally gone from the New England Sound. That is devastating to Southern New Hampshire fishing communities where lobster is their livelihood.

Ironically, as I think Senator MARKEY said so well, the lobster migration has contributed to an overabundance in the Gulf of Maine, and that has caused price volatility in the lobster market. So we have seen dramatic fluctuations which have also affected our fishermen.

Of course, the impacts on human health have been dramatic because people are suffering from the impacts of climate change. Rising temperatures increase the number of air pollution action days. They increase pollen and mold levels, and they increase allergies. All of these things are dangerous to some of our most vulnerable populations, including children. In New Hampshire we have one of the highest childhood asthma rates in the country

because of air pollution that has been moving primarily from the Midwest but now is being exacerbated by climate change.

The elderly are affected, as well as those with allergies and those with chronic respiratory conditions.

Rising temperatures also facilitate the spread of insectborne illnesses, such as Lyme disease, which have been a huge factor for people in New Hampshire and across New England.

Now, because New Hampshire and the Northeastern States and New England have been experiencing major negative impacts from climate change, we have been working to reduce carbon emissions to try and transition to a more energy-efficient and clean-energy economy. New Hampshire is one of nine Northeastern States that participates in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, or RGGI, since the program launched in 2009. Massachusetts and Rhode Island are also participants. But carbon emissions in RGGI States have fallen by 51 percent. So in less than a decade, because of RGGI, we have seen a 51-percent reduction in carbon emissions.

In addition, customers in RGGI States have saved an estimated \$773 million on their energy bills, and billions more are expected. That is thanks not just to renewables but to energy efficiency. I am a big believer that energy efficiency is also one of the most important ways we can reduce our carbon emissions. Also, the wholesale price of energy has fallen. So we can see on average 6.4 percent and \$773 million in energy savings.

So climate change—as everyone who has spoken about this evening has pointed out—is probably the greatest environmental challenge the world has ever faced, but we can do something about it if we take action. Through smart energy policies and through thoughtful conservation measures, we can stop climate change from reaching dangerous, irreversible levels, but we have to act now.

So I urge my colleagues and I urge this administration to recognize the economic and environmental imperative of addressing climate change before it is too late.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

#### OPIOID EPIDEMIC

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I wish to speak tonight about the opioid crisis that has gripped my State of Ohio and our country and talk about some lessons learned.

There was an article in the New York Times that some might have seen on

Sunday about a town in Ohio—Dayton, OH—and the progress they have made in combating this opioid crisis, including a reduction in overdose deaths, which is really significant. Dayton is a city that has had some of the highest overdose death rates in our entire State of Ohio, and Ohio is No. 3 or No. 4 in the country in terms of overdose deaths. They have seen in Dayton, OH, over the last year, about a 50-percent decrease in overdose deaths. It is still totally unacceptable. Unfortunately, there are still hundreds of people who are dying every year. But from this high-water mark, progress has been made. Why is that happening?

Well, I am going to talk a little bit about that tonight and talk about some of the things that are actually working back in our communities and perhaps give us a little sense of optimism about what might be able to happen over the next couple of years as we try to turn the tide on this epidemic.

For a little context, last year we had the highest rate of overdose deaths in the history of our country. Some 72,000 Americans—72,000—lost their lives to overdoses from drugs. In my State of Ohio, that number is particularly high, to the point that it is the No. 1 cause of death now in our State.

I met with the director of the CDC, or the Centers for Disease Control, today and talked about the opioid epidemic and talked about the tragedy he is seeing in places like southwest Ohio, Dayton, and Cincinnati, my hometown, where we see incidences of hepatitis C increasing and even hepatitis A. These are diseases that are primarily increasing because of the sharing of needles and the opioid epidemic.

So we have our work cut out for us, don't we?

In Dayton, OH, by the way, over the last few years, the death rate had gotten so high that the coroner's office was literally running out of space. There wasn't enough room to put all the bodies.

I have held roundtable discussions in Dayton and Montgomery County, which is the county around Dayton, over the past several years and heard the bad news. I have often been with Montgomery County then-Sheriff Phil Plummer, who has been tireless in trying to focus law enforcement, the social workers, the treatment community, the business community, and other community leaders on how to respond to this problem. Our first responders, of course, are as desperate as anybody to address this.

It has been tough. Again, I have been in Dayton, OH, and had to talk about the fact that we had the worst rates in the country of deaths and, therefore, one of the worst in the entire country.

So what has happened? How has Dayton made this progress, this 50 percent reduction?

Well, the New York Times highlights a number of reasons for it. They talk about greater community involvement, the ability for more Medicaid recipients to get treatment, and more

Narcan being distributed throughout the community. Narcan, of course, is this miracle drug that reverses the effects of an overdose.

They talked about helping to deal with the stigma. In other words, by reducing the stigma that is associated with addiction, more people will step forward to get treatment for it, and their families will be more willing to push them forward. That helps to unite communities against what is the biggest public health crisis we face in Ohio and around the country.

I would like to highlight tonight some of the things we have done here in this body just in the last couple of years that contribute to some of the success that we are seeing.

Again, are we there yet? No, we are not. Last year was worse than the year before, but I do believe that we are going to begin to make progress, and, frankly, I think we would already have seen some of these efforts at the Federal level, State level, and local level, which are taking root, make a bigger difference but for one thing, and that is this big influx of synthetic opioids—fentanyl, Fentanyl, carfentanil, and other synthetics have taken over.

I remember being in Dayton, OH, the city we are talking about tonight, about 4 years ago when, for the first time, I heard from a law enforcement official that fentanyl was pushing out heroin. At that time, the big issue was heroin. It wasn't fentanyl. In fact, very few people knew about fentanyl. Fentanyl has hit my State and our country so hard over the past several years—the last 3, 4, 5 years—that it has sort of overwhelmed the system. So as we have begun to make progress on better education, better treatment, better recovery options, and more Narcan, we have also had this big influx of this incredibly powerful drug that is 50 times more powerful than heroin on average—an inexpensive drug.

We will talk in a minute about what we are doing about fentanyl, but, again, I think if we had not seen that influx, we would already be seeing more progress because of some of the things that we will talk about that are happening in Dayton, OH.

Back in 2016, this body, after 4 years of work, passed legislation called the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act. I was proud to coauthor that with my colleague SHELDON WHITEHOUSE. It was bipartisan. It was non-partisan. It was based on evidence. It was based on four conferences we had here in DC. We brought in people from all over the country to talk about this: What is the best treatment option? What is the best way to ensure somebody gets through treatment successfully? How can we do a better job with our veterans? How can we ensure that we are bringing our first responders into this, working with them, and helping them to be able to deal with this crisis? All of that led to this Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act legislation.

The first thing the legislation did, actually, was it said: Let's look at this like a disease. That may be—of all the things that are in that legislation, including significant new funding for our communities—maybe the most important thing, and it is beginning to change the paradigm, so that we don't look at this as a moral failing but rather look at it as something that is a disease. Something changes in your brain when you become addicted.

I can't tell you the number of people I have met in my home State of Ohio who because of an accident or an injury took an opioid, became addicted—physically addicted—shifted to heroin or fentanyl because the prescription drugs were hard to find or too expensive, and then overdosed, and, in some cases, overdosed and died.

But having said that, this legislation—this Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act legislation—focusing on prevention, focusing on treatment, focusing on recovery, focusing on providing Narcan to our communities, has made a difference. There will be \$608 million spent this year on these CARA programs. Our first year it was about \$182 million. It has gone up every year since. Why? Because it is working. It was based on good evidence, and it is helping to offer innovative solutions to this stubborn addiction challenge we face in our country.

Dayton, OH, and Montgomery County have received \$3.5 million in CARA funding. So part of the reason they have had some success is that they have taken this funding and used it in innovative ways. It includes \$2 million for first responders and about \$500,000 for the city of Dayton to develop partnerships between first responders and treatment providers responding to overdoses as a team.

Somebody overdoses, Narcan is applied, and their lives are saved. Unfortunately, still in America in most cases, the person goes back to the community, to the old team, the old gang, and often there is no followup.

In Dayton, what they have said is this: Do you know what? If somebody overdoses and Narcan is applied, we are going to follow up with them, and the team will include law enforcement, but it also will include treatment providers and maybe social workers. This funding has allowed them to pursue that.

Also, there is \$1 million from Montgomery County Public Health to analyze substance abuse issues and identify potential solutions to come up with more innovative and creative ways to deal with this.

Also, in 2016, this Congress passed another piece of legislation. The Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act, remember, is funding that goes straight to programs to help on prevention, education, and innovative solutions. The second one was called the 21st Century Cures Act, and this provides funding directly back to the States, and the States then decide how it is spent. That funding is also making a big difference.

In each of the last 2 years, Ohio has received \$26 million in Cures funding to affect the opioid crisis. All of your States have received funding too. The funding is based on the degree to which you have a problem. So the States like my State of Ohio, West Virginia, and Kentucky have gotten significant amounts of money from this because we need it.

Again, the Montgomery County Alcohol, Drug Addiction, and Mental Health Services Board, or the ADAMHS Board, has received about \$2 million in Cures funding over the last 2 years in Dayton, OH. I have seen and heard about how that funding is being put to good use.

Just a couple months ago, I was in Dayton. I took part in a roundtable discussion with the Montgomery County ADAMHS Board and discussed how they are using their Cures money and their CARA money. They are using their Cures money to fund a community-based treatment team. They are partnering with Dayton and Montgomery County Public Health Addiction Services to provide 24/7 ambulance withdrawal support—a community treatment team to help people gripped by addiction get treatment in their own homes and primary care for high-risk addicts, including pregnant women and more.

They are finding that is working. It is working not just to have people be saved from an overdose by Narcan but getting these people directed into treatment to actually help them with their addiction problem longer term.

They are implementing impressive programs to help with some of the most vulnerable groups that are affected by this crisis, and that is mothers who are addicted and their babies, who are too often being born with what is called neonatal abstinence syndrome. Because the mom is addicted, the baby is born with this syndrome which requires the baby—tiny innocent babies—to go through withdrawal. It is a very sad situation. It is happening in hospitals all over our country. Go to your neonatal unit in your hospital, and you will find out that, unfortunately, the numbers of these babies has increased dramatically.

We don't know the impact longer term on these babies who are born to moms who are addicted, but there is a great risk there. What we do know is that hospitals across the country are being filled up with these innocent babies, and they need our help.

After these babies get out of the hospital, by the way, often they can't go back to their moms or their dads because they are addicted, nor should they.

The moms and dads sometimes are in treatment. They can't take their babies with them. What happens to these kids? Well, there are some groups that have started. Community volunteers have stepped up in Dayton, OH, as an example, and started a group called Brigid's Path. Brigid's Path is a shining example of an organization that is

dedicated to helping newborns who are dependent on drugs be able to recover longer term. As these innocent babies are taken through the withdrawal, they also need to be surrounded by love and support.

Earlier this year, I had the opportunity to visit Brigid's Path. It provides short-term inpatient care in a home-like setting for these newborns who are suffering from prenatal drug exposure.

A lot of volunteers are involved. Some of the volunteers do something really important and really simple. You know what it is? They hold the babies. Literally, it is the human contact. Based on all of the psychological studies and looking at how you create a healthy, well-adjusted baby, you have got to have that human contact. For these babies who can't be with their parents because their parents are addicted or maybe the dad isn't around and the mom is addicted, volunteers come in and literally hold the babies, love these babies, and support these babies. We need to provide as much care and treatment as possible to help these kids so that they can achieve their God-given potential in life.

By the way, the opioid legislation that the President signed into law just last month, which this Congress passed, provides for the first time that organizations like Brigid's Path in Dayton, OH—entirely funded up to this point with volunteers, with money from the community, but, frankly, they don't have the resources they need to take care of all the babies who need the help—for these babies whose families qualify for Medicaid, will now be able to get Medicaid reimbursement under what is called the CRIB Act, which the President just signed into law.

It provides \$60 million in funding for babies and recognizes residential pediatric recovery facilities like Brigid's Path as providers under Medicaid. This is a huge difference. It is going to enable not just Brigid's Path but other organizations like this to pop up around our State.

So that may not be affecting the overdose rate per se, but that is affecting something really important, which is the ability for these infants—these babies—to be able to have a normal life and to be able to achieve whatever God has in mind for them in their life, which is not to be growing up in a family with addiction but rather to be able to escape the grips of addiction.

I believe, perhaps most importantly, that the legislation we just passed in Congress recently—adding to Cures, CARA and the CRIB Act—is dealing with fentanyl and will help in Dayton, OH, and around our country.

I mentioned fentanyl earlier, a synthetic opioid 50 times more powerful than heroin and inexpensive. Sadly, while, again, Dayton has made progress, fentanyl remains the No. 1 killer in Dayton.

They told me when I was there a couple months ago that cocaine and meth

deaths—crystal meth—are rising in the Dayton area. That is deaths from cocaine and crystal meth. Why is that?

Typically, you don't hear about people overdosing on cocaine, but you certainly do when fentanyl is mixed in with cocaine, and that is what law enforcement is telling me around Ohio is happening.

These drugs, often mixed with fentanyl, are now deadlier than ever. Fentanyl was involved in more than 70 percent of Ohio's overdose deaths last year. From January until April of this year, despite the overall reduction in overdose deaths, about 77 percent of the overdose deaths in Montgomery County, in Dayton, OH, involved fentanyl.

So, again, we are making progress, but not nearly as much as we all want to make, and a major reason for this is this influx of this deadly synthetic substance. Unbelievably, we know that fentanyl is mostly manufactured in China, and mostly comes to our country through our own United States mail system. Up to now, up until last month when the President signed this legislation, we did not have a way to screen these packages coming in from overseas, specifically from China, coming in through the mail system into our communities, causing all of these deaths and destruction. Now we have in place something that closes the loophole in the international mail screening. It requires the post office to do what the other carriers have had to do since 9/11, which is to provide law enforcement with advanced electronic data to be able to identify these suspect packages and get them offline. I think that is going to make a huge difference, not just because it is going to stop drugs from coming into our country but because, by reducing the supply, you are going to see the costs go up on the street, which has been one of our great challenges.

That is not the ultimate answer. The answer is prevention and education, reducing the demand for these drugs, better treatment and longer term recovery options—all of those things we talked about in terms of taking care of those moms and babies. But we also have to do everything we can to reduce the supply of these drugs, and that legislation that the President just signed is going to help.

We are also going to be helped by a new law that the President just signed last month which says that with regard to residential treatment programs, they are no longer going to be capped by an arbitrary limit of 16 beds. This is a vestige of the 1960s and 1970s, when we wanted to deinstitutionalize these people, and we said: You can't get reimbursement from Medicaid unless you have less than 16 beds for mental health and substance abuse treatment.

Then the opioid crisis hits us, and suddenly we find ourselves with no room at the inn. Literally, people are being turned away at treatment centers and, in the period they are waiting

to get in, overdosing and dying. I have heard these stories. I have heard the moms and dads talk about the pain of a child who finally says: I am ready.

In one case, a dad takes his daughter to a treatment center. This was in a tele-townhall meeting I had. We have them every month, and I hear these stories. These are people who aren't calling to tell these stories, but they end up telling it because we are talking about this issue. In this case, the dad's heart was heavy. He said: We took her. She was ready. There was no room. They couldn't accept her in the treatment center. So we took her back home.

In the 4 weeks that she was waiting to get a slot in the treatment center, what happened? She succumbed, once again, to shooting up—in her case, heroin—and an overdose in her own bedroom.

So this arbitrary limit doesn't make any sense. If the treatment center is doing a good job, don't limit it to 16 beds. If it is not doing a good job, by the way, it shouldn't be getting any reimbursement. But if it is doing a good job and successfully helping people to get beyond their addiction and into recovery, we shouldn't be limiting it. This legislation does that. It actually takes off the cap. It has a 5-year life because it has a cost to it, and I am convinced it is going to work well. Five years from now, we will extend that even further, but this is something some of us have been working on for many years, and it is now done. So, again, progress is being made incrementally. Some of this legislation we talked about tonight is contributing to that.

We need to ensure that if we implement this, we cannot at this point take our eye off the ball. I think when we look back at this year, 2018—and we are coming to the end of the calendar year now—we will see for the first time in the last dozen years a reduction in overdose deaths. I predict that is going to happen. I say that in part because I spoke to the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

I also say that because back in Ohio I am seeing these programs work. I am seeing us finally beginning to turn the tide, despite the influx of fentanyl. But I would just state tonight, if that is true, and if we begin to see some progress—and I see it on the ground and see it in reports from coroners and medical directors around Ohio—if that happens, let's not take our eye off the ball. We succeeded. Let's move on.

We did that back in the 1990s with regard to cocaine; we had solved the problem. We never solved the problem. It is like the tide. It keeps coming in. We have to be vigilant. We have to maintain the support we have provided here in the U.S. Congress to push back against this terrible addiction, this disease, and we have to ensure that we are not just pushing down on one drug and having another drug pop up.

As we make progress on fentanyl or make progress on heroin, let's also be

mindful of the disastrous impact of cocaine, crystal meth, and drugs we haven't even heard of yet—the new synthetic drugs that are coming our way.

I believe that Federal programs like CARA and Cures are making a difference. We are working with our States that are passing their own legislation and helping in many ways. Our local communities are jumping in and figuring out innovative and creative ways of taking that Federal dollar and leveraging it with private sector money and with State and local money.

I believe we are going to make progress with the STOP Act in reducing the supply and therefore raising the cost of the drug on the streets. I think what you have seen in Dayton, OH, which was reported in the New York Times, can continue—and not just in Dayton, but in Toledo, Columbus, Akron, Cincinnati, and St. Clairsville—all over our State and all over our country.

We have a role to play here, and that is to continue to be better partners, as we have been over the last 2½ years here in Congress—better partners with our States and with our local communities and with our families because, ultimately, this is an issue of the heart, isn't it? This is about the future.

We have some pages with us tonight. They are young people who are 16, 17 years old who come to this town because they are selected as bright, young people. They are listening—at least they are acting as though they are listening tonight; thank you. It is about you. It is about what kind of future you are going to have and what kind of future we are going to have, having safe and healthy communities.

Thank you.

I yield back my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

#### ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding rule XXII, all postcloture time on the Farr nomination expire at 12 noon on Thursday, November 29; that if the nomination is confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action; further, that notwithstanding rule XXII, the cloture vote on the Kraninger nomination occur at 1:45 p.m., Thursday, November 29; and that if cloture is invoked on the Kobes or the Kraninger nomination, all postcloture time be yielded back and the Senate vote on the nominations at a time to be determined by the majority leader, in consultation with the Democratic leader, but not before December 4.

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

#### LEGISLATIVE SESSION

#### MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session for 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.

#### ARMS SALES NOTIFICATION

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, section 36(b) of the Arms Export Control Act requires that Congress receive prior notification of certain proposed arms sales as defined by that statute. Upon such notification, the Congress has 30 calendar days during which the sale may be reviewed. The provision stipulates that, in the Senate, the notification of proposed sales shall be sent to the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

In keeping with the committee's intention to see that relevant information is available to the full Senate, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the notifications which have been received. If the cover letter references a classified annex, then such annex is available to all Senators in the office of the Foreign Relations Committee, room SD-423.

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

DEFENSE SECURITY  
COOPERATION AGENCY,  
Arlington, VA.

Hon. BOB CORKER,  
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Relations,  
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Pursuant to the reporting requirements of Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, as amended, we are forwarding herewith Transmittal No. 18-43, concerning the Air Force's proposed Letter(s) of Offer and Acceptance to the Government of Qatar for defense articles and services estimated to cost \$215 million. After this letter is delivered to your office, we plan to issue a news release to notify the public of this proposed sale.

Sincerely,

CHARLES W. HOOPER,  
Lieutenant General, USA, Director.

Enclosures.

TRANSMITTAL NO. 18-43

Notice of Proposed Issuance of Letter of Offer Pursuant to Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, as amended

- (i) Prospective Purchaser: Qatar.
- (ii) Total Estimated Value:  
Major Defense Equipment \* \$95 million.  
Other \$120 million.  
Total \$215 million.
- (iii) Description and Quantity or Quantities of Articles or Services under Consideration for Purchase: The Government of Qatar has requested to buy defense articles and services from the U.S. Government in support of a Direct Commercial Sales of the National Advanced Surface to Air Missile System (NASAMS).

Major Defense Equipment (MDE): Forty (40) AIM-120C-7 Advanced Medium Range Air-to-Air Missiles (AMRAAM).

One (1) spare AIM-120C-7 AMRAAM Guidance Section.

Non-MDE: Also included are one (1) spare AIM-120C-7 control section, eight (8) AMRAAM Captive Air Training Missile (CATM-120C), missile containers, classified software for the AN/MPQ-64F1 Sentinel Radar, spare and repair parts, cryptographic and communication security devices, precision navigation equipment, other software, site surveys, weapons system equipment and computer software support, publications and technical documentation, common munitions and test equipment, repair and return services and equipment, personnel training and training equipment, integration support and test equipment, and U.S. Government and contractor, engineering, technical and logistics support services, and other related elements of logistical and program support.

(iv) Military Department: Air Force (QA-D-YAE); Army (QA-B-UAS).

(v) Prior Related Cases, if any: N/A.

(vi) Sales Commission, Fee, etc., Paid, Offered, or Agreed to be Paid: None.

(vii) Sensitivity of Technology Contained in the Defense Article or Defense Services Proposed to be Sold: See Attached Annex.

(viii) Date Report Delivered to Congress: November 27, 2018.

\* As defined in Section 47(6) of the Arms Export Control Act.

#### POLICY JUSTIFICATION

Qatar—Advanced Medium Range Air-to-Air Missiles (AMRAAM) and Related Equipment and Support for NASAMS

The Government of Qatar has requested to buy defense articles and services from the U.S. Government in support of a Direct Commercial Sale of the National Advanced Surface to Air Missile System (NASAMS). The items Qatar requests include the following: forty (40) AIM 120C-7 AMRAAM missiles, one (1) spare AIM 120C-7 AMRAAM guidance section, one (1) spare AIM-120C-7 control section, eight (8) AMRAAM Captive Air Training Missile (CATM-120C), missile containers, classified software for the AN/MPQ-64F1 Sentinel Radar, spare and repair parts, cryptographic and communication security devices, precision navigation equipment, other software, site surveys, weapons system equipment and computer software support, publications and technical documentation, common munitions and test equipment, repair and return services and equipment, personnel training and training equipment, integration support and test equipment, and U.S. Government and contractor, engineering, technical and logistics support services, and other related elements of logistical and program support. The estimated cost is \$215 million.

This proposed sale supports the foreign policy and national security objectives of the United States by helping improve the security of a key partner which has been, and continues to be, a significant host and member of coalition forces in the Middle East.

This proposed sale improves Qatar's defense capability to deter regional threats and strengthen its homeland defense. The NASAMS capability would provide a full range of protection from imminent hostile cruise missile, unmanned aerial vehicle, rotary wing, and fixed wing threats. Qatar will have no difficulty in absorbing this equipment.

The proposed sale will not alter the basic military balance in the region.

The principal contractor and integrator will be Raytheon Missiles Systems of Tucson, Arizona. There are no known offset agreements proposed in connection with this potential sale.

Implementation of this proposed sale will not require the assignment of additional U.S.