

people. Now, Coloradans will be able to grow and manufacture hemp without a cloud of uncertainty hanging over them.

This bill also helps farmers and ranchers hand more opportunities to the next generation. It increases funding for conservation easements and makes it easier for people to secure them.

It invests in America's farm economy to drive innovation in agriculture and to keep up our competitiveness in the 21st century. It doubles funding to help communities in places like my State to deal with forest health, and it protects our watersheds better.

Working with the Presiding Officer, we increased funding for wildlife habitat and provided more opportunities for hunting and fishing on private lands.

We worked with Senator BOOZMAN of Arkansas to give rural communities new ways to improve housing and infrastructure.

The bill also provides new resources to help farmers and ranchers adapt to major challenges like climate change. For example, it creates tools for farmers and ranchers to sequester carbon, improve soil health, and become more resilient to drought.

We increased resources in this bill for renewable energy and energy efficiency for rural businesses.

All in all, this 2018 farm bill is an excellent piece of legislation, and a lot of credit lies in the approach we took on the Agriculture Committee. It should be like this for all of our committees. It is a committee on which we don't have partisan differences. If we have differences, we have regional differences, and we work them out. That is why that committee, which I am proud to serve on, is one of the only functioning committees in the Senate. We passed a 5-year farm bill the last time there was a farm bill, not a 6-month one, not a 6-day one, but a 5-year farm bill. This is another one because Republicans and Democrats both know we have to support our farmers and ranchers, not create even more uncertainty for them.

The other privilege of being on that committee is that I spend a lot of time in my State in counties where it is unlikely that I am ever going to win 10 or 20 percent of the vote, but I keep going back and back, not because I think I will win but because I think, as a country, we have to find a way to bring ourselves together and solve problems.

Our farmers and ranchers are a model for that. They are applying their ingenuity to things like climate and drought every single day. They don't have the luxury—and I would say we don't have the luxury—of pretending that politics is the only thing that matters. They are focused on delivering their farms or ranches to the next generations and handing more opportunity, not less, to them. That is all that matters, and that is the ethic we should be applying to our national politics.

BLUE WATER NAVY VIETNAM VETERANS ACT

Mr. President, I want to take a few minutes to call on the Senate to pass the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act.

The bill extends critical VA benefits to veterans who were exposed to toxic chemicals while they served in the waters off Vietnam.

There is no reason the Senate shouldn't pass this. Our country already provides these benefits to veterans who served on land, and it is well past time we extended care to those who served at sea.

This bill is the result of a lot of good bipartisan work in the Senate, and the House has already passed it. To get this across the finish line, we should look to the example our veterans set for how to come together and fight until the job is done.

In Colorado, the United Veterans Committee has advocated strongly for this bill, and veterans from across our State have spoken out on behalf of their colleague veterans who deserve justice with the passage of this bill. Their example reminds us that there is no obstacle we cannot overcome to provide every veteran who has served in the United States of America with the greatest healthcare in the world as a reflection of their service. In this moment, we should rededicate ourselves to that goal by passing this significant bill.

Let me end by thanking Senator GILLIBRAND and the Presiding Officer for their leadership, along with Chairman ISAKSON and Ranking Member TESTER for getting it to this point.

We need to pass this bill in the Senate before we go home. It is the right thing to do.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

MORNING BUSINESS

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

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

TRIBUTE TO JOE DONNELLY

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I want to join my colleagues in thanking our friend, Senator JOE DONNELLY, for his service to his State and our Nation.

When he was about 30 years old, while he was practicing law in South Bend, JOE DONNELLY sought the Democratic nomination for attorney general in Indiana. Two years later, he ran for State senate. Both times, he lost.

Then he did something truly astonishing: He walked away from politics. For 10 years, he practiced law and ran a small stamp-and-ink business.

In 2003, local party officials asked him to run for Congress. They didn't expect him to win—just be a respectable sacrificial lamb.

He came closer to winning than anyone but he expected.

Two years later, he was elected, in a rematch, to the U.S. House.

As someone who also ran and lost three times before winning an election, I feel a natural camaraderie with my friend from Indiana.

I think I may also have some insight into why he was willing to try one more time.

You see, JOE DONNELLY grew up in New York. He moved to South Bend for college, and he is a Hoosier, through-and-through, but he is also a member of the great White Sox Nation.

In 2005, the Chicago White Sox won the World Series for the first time in 88 years—proof, some would say, that anything is possible if you persevere and work hard.

The next year, it was JOE DONNELLY's turn to score the upset victory by winning election to Congress from a red district in a deep-red State.

In his 6 years in the House, he voted to create the Affordable Care Act.

During the financial crisis of 2009, he voted for the American Recovery Act, to stop America's slide into a second great depression that could have brought down the entire global economy.

When free market hardliners said, "Save Wall Street but let the American auto industry die," Barack Obama said no—and so did JOE.

In November 2012, Hoosier voters sent JOE DONNELLY to the U.S. Senate, the first Democrat to hold his seat since 1977.

In a political era that often seems often to reward snark over substance, JOE DONNELLY is a soft-spoken throwback to an earlier era, when working across the aisle was viewed as a talent, not as treason.

JOE is decent, honest, and direct. You may disagree with him on an issue, but you will never doubt his motives.

His values are classic Hoosier: hard work, common sense, bipartisan compromise, and a disdain for grandstanding.

As a Senator, he has done what he believes is needed to level the playing field for "regular Joes," for farmers and factory workers and, as he says, "the people who go to work in the dark and come home in the dark."

I particularly want to thank him for his work to improve mental health care for military members and veterans. That work will save lives and families.

Like all nations, the White Sox Nation has some laws. One of my favorites is: "Respect the past . . . people that are shoeless . . . and anyone named Joe."