

something else or the Presiding Officer. That is because Republicans in the Senate have no plan at all as it relates to climate change.

We have trillions of dollars in infrastructure that needs to be addressed over the next couple of decades. We could make those investments in ways that also address climate. We could offer tax breaks for clean energy. We should reenter the Paris accord, but they are pulling the same play they always do, to make this so partisan, to mock the issue itself so they can continue to do nothing. They are whistling past the graveyard.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, how do we make our communities, our States, our Nation, and our planet better for our children? How do we make it better for our children's children and their children? Isn't that the task we have in the U.S. Senate, to make things work better, not worse?

We have this question before us: Do we have a carbon pollution problem? What is the answer, yes or no? I ask each of my colleagues, yes or no?

Presiding today is a new Member of the Senate from Florida. I have been down to Florida. I will tell you that I heard about the rising seawater polluting the aquifers and creating freshwater supply problems for communities in Florida. I heard about coastal erosion. I heard about coral reefs being damaged and the fish offshore. I heard about the toxic red algae on the gulf side—so toxic it is killing fish and dolphins and turtles and manatees, and they are washing up on the shore of Florida on the gulf side.

The people have two problems. The toxic algae is creating breathing problems, and then there is a stench arising from the dying sea life. People on the gulf side of Florida say: We have to take inland vacations.

I know my colleague presiding today knows about these issues in his State because we see the impacts of carbon pollution and climate chaos in every single State. We certainly see it in my State. We see it through the more powerful forest fires—hotter, more acreage, and more destruction. We see it in the smoke affecting the communities and the economies throughout Oregon. Of course, we saw the devastating forest fires in California, wiping out the town of Paradise and afflicting so many other communities.

It is not just the impact on the natural world; it is the impact on the people. When you affect the fisheries, you affect the fishermen. When you affect the forests, you affect the timber industry. When you proceed to produce conditions of more floods and more droughts, you affect the farmers and ranchers of America. It is the people of America.

How about the Panhandle of Florida. It was wiped out by a more powerful hurricane, driven by those warmer

ocean temperatures. What does one say to them—that there is not an issue; that we don't have a problem?

The entire scientific community of the world has said you can see the facts on the ground, but we don't need them to see the facts on the ground. We see it through the everyday impacts on Americans, on our farmers, our ranchers, and on our communities plagued by smoke or wiped out by hurricanes.

So we do have a problem. The answer is, yes, we do have a problem. If you say there is no problem, then your head is stuck in the tar sands, and you are failing your responsibility not just as a U.S. Senator, you are failing your responsibility as a human being. You are failing your constituents if you think there is no problem, while their lives and their economy are being so dramatically impacted by this issue.

I ask my colleagues, did you come here to fail your constituents, to fail as a Senator, to fail as a human being to address this issue? Did you come to fail, or did you come to take on the issues that face us and build a better world for your children?

If you believe there is a significant challenge, what are you doing about it? What actions are you planning? Because if you believe there is a problem and you are not putting forward a plan to address it, then your leadership is a failure.

So we have a choice on the Republican side of the aisle. Is it that you are too obsessed with the power of the Koch Brothers to address the needs of the citizens of the United States of America, that you have your heads stuck in the tar sands? Is that the issue, or is it that you want to sit on the sidelines? You know there is a problem, but you want to sit on the sidelines and do nothing, in which case you are a failed leader.

So how about reject ignorance, and how about reject failed leadership and come together to make a better world for our children. That is what we need to do, all of us, together, because the impacts we see from carbon pollution and climate chaos—those are not impacts affecting blue America or red America; they touch the lives of every citizen, no matter which political party they belong to. It is going to affect every child we have now and every child born in the future, whether they register as a Democrat or a Republican. We have already wasted decades in getting at this issue. Let's waste no more time.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Pursuant to the order of February 13 with respect to the Barr nomination, I ask the Chair to put the question on the nomination of William Barr to be Attorney General at 12:30 p.m. today.

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

The Senator from West Virginia.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. President, before I begin with my remarks, I would like to take a moment, as I think everybody here in the country should, to remember and honor all the lives lost 1 year ago today during the shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, FL. It was a horrible act, as the Presiding Officer of the Senate is well aware, and its reverberations are still felt deeply today, especially among those who lost friends and loved ones, many of whom work day in and day out to keep their memory alive.

We have before us on the floor today a bipartisan government funding measure, and as the chairman of the Homeland Security Appropriations Subcommittee, I rise in support of the conference agreement to secure our border and fund our government and end any possibility of a shutdown at the same time. This agreement is a compromise between Republicans and Democrats, between the House and the Senate, and because it is a compromise, none of us really got everything we wanted.

When you are working to reach an agreement, whether you are in government or in a family, it is important to understand the difference between compromising on details and compromising on your principles. While this agreement may compromise on some of the specifics, it does not compromise on our commitment to our Nation and to secure our Nation. That commitment is also shared by our President, who has been unwavering in his promise to strengthen our border. It is a goal we must achieve in a smart and informed way to address the real and ever-changing challenges we face as a nation.

On the border itself, I have been very clear that our agreement had to include three critical elements, three legs of the stool: physical barriers, technology, and personnel.

There were a few sticking points with our Democratic colleagues. We did hear from the Speaker of the House that there would be no wall or there would not be \$1 for the wall. Instead, this agreement provides almost triple the money for new wall construction that we appropriated last year. In fact, we will pay for 55 new miles of wall in the Rio Grande Valley where Customs and Border Protection has told us it is desperately needed. This agreement will build twice as many miles of new wall as last year's appropriations, despite the fact that we were negotiating with those who didn't want to have any wall.

Would I have preferred more money for the wall? Of course. But this bill provides the most money ever in a single appropriations bill for a barrier. I drafted legislation—passed by the Senate Appropriations Committee last June—that would have fully funded the President's budget request for the wall. I would have voted for higher amounts—and did, actually, in committee—of funding for the wall. That is