

bill we are voting on today has 224 Democratic sponsors and not a single Republican sponsor.

Instead of working with Republicans on our four-part approach to addressing climate change through innovation, conservation, adaptation, and preparation, we are sending a partisan bill to die in the Senate.

I attempted to work with my colleagues on this bill. I offered a good-faith amendment that would increase transparency and competition by comparing emissions produced by all the countries in the Paris Agreement. This amendment wasn't even allowed a vote by the Democratic leadership, although there was no problem allowing votes from their Democratic friends' amendments.

In fact, only three Republican amendments will be considered, and 26 Democratic amendments will be offered for debate.

It is as if my colleagues on the other side are afraid of hurting the feelings of China and Russia by pointing out that they are not pulling their weight.

I have long been a proponent for the environment, and I was proud to receive the Utah Clean Air Partnership Person of the Year award in 2017. I have championed hundreds of thousands of acres of bipartisan conservation in Utah.

I, like all Utahns, care deeply about conserving our planet and our way of life for future generations, but I cannot vote for H.R. 9 because I believe it further divides us apart, reinforcing the false narrative that all Republicans don't care about the environment because they are unwilling to get on board with an all-or-nothing, unrealistic approach to addressing climate change.

H.R. 9 completely ignores the serious and legitimate concerns about the cost and effectiveness of the Paris Agreement.

H.R. 9 ignores that President Obama's pledge to the Paris Agreement could cost the United States \$250 billion and nearly 3 million jobs in this next 6 years; and it ignores that, in the next 20 years, this commitment could cost us \$3 trillion and 6.5 million American jobs.

H.R. 9 also ignores that, because of innovation and technological improvement, the United States is already leading the world in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Since 2000, the United States has decreased annual carbon dioxide emissions by nearly 800 million tons, the largest absolute decline among all countries since 2000.

H.R. 9 ignores the fact that, if the United States cut CO₂ emissions to zero, it would not even come close to offsetting the emissions coming from the rest of the world.

H.R. 9 even ignores that the Paris Agreement allows China, the Earth's largest greenhouse gas polluter, to increase their emissions through 2030 with little evidence to show that they plan to comply in the future.

I have heard over and over that the U.S. must remain in the Paris Agreement to show leadership. And I ask you: What kind of leadership leads to double-digit unemployment in rural America but lets China off the hook?

I agree that America must continue to show leadership, but let's focus on leadership that goes back to the core principles of innovation, conservation, adaptation, and preparation. This bill fails to do any of that.

Let's continue leading the world and bettering our environment, but let's not pretend that H.R. 9 is a silver bullet to our evolving world.

I hope that we can stop with the easy, cheap rhetoric that offers false promises and divides our country even further and focus on those things that make meaningful change.

HONORING RALPH VANNI

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

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor my friend Ralph Vanni, the senior House audio technician who retired earlier this month.

For 34 years, Ralph has been the man behind this microphone and every microphone in this Chamber. When he took his job as the House technician in 1985, Ralph was no stranger to Capitol Hill. At the age of 16, he landed an internship with the then-Senate majority leader.

After two more internships and graduating college, Ralph had a hand in nearly every corner of the Capitol building, from doorkeeper for the Sergeant at Arms to working in the Senate Cloakroom.

In his most recent role, Ralph saw six Presidents give their State of the Union speeches, but the day he has said he will never forget is running audio from that perch right up there for Pope Francis' address to this Chamber in 2015.

I remember meeting Ralph on my first day as a newly elected Member of Congress during orientation in 2013. With the Speaker's permission, we could take photos on the House floor that day, and I took a minute to take one with Ralph and some of his team and the many folks who do a wonderful job guarding this Chamber every day.

Ralph became my friend that day and has been my friend for the last 6½ years I have had the chance to serve in this great institution. I wish him the best in his retirement. And I want to thank him personally, on behalf of every Member of Congress who stands behind any microphone in this institution.

Ralph made us sound better, and we appreciate him for doing that. I wish him good luck in his retirement and thank him for all his years of service.

I am going to miss Ralph, looking up in that perch, but I am going to get to

know the folks who have replaced him so well. He has led a great generation into that seat to replace him now.

I thank Ralph Vanni.

SOLITO, SOLITA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SPEIER) for 5 minutes.

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Speaker, innocent children shouldn't pay the price for the President's cruel immigration agenda. Steamrolling the facts and the law, he has implemented policy after failed policy, playing catch and release with his own cabinet.

As the President ratchets up his threats to close the border and cut aid to Central America, thousands of migrants are fleeing their home countries to seek refuge in the United States.

I recently met with the editors of the book "Solito, Solita"—Alone, Alone—a collection of oral histories that tells the stories of young refugees in their own words. I rise today to read excerpts from one of them, Gabriel Mendez.

His story begins in a poor, dangerous neighborhood in the capital of Honduras. He says:

When I was just a boy of 7, my cousins raped me for a long time—for a year. They raped me at the river, where they collected water—and in my own home.

... Some of my fellow students who belonged to the maras took weapons to school. I told the mareros that I didn't want to bring weapons to school. I was afraid of them. They also wanted me to bring drugs into school. I didn't want to do it, so I left that school. ... Now the maras were looking for me—to kill me. They were asking my neighbors if they knew me.

When Gabriel was 14, he convinced his mother, who was living in San Francisco, to pay a coyote \$6,000 to bring him to the United States. Gabriel recounted the horrors he encountered along the way.

... they kept us locked in a house with eight other people for a week. We kept moving. Many days passed without eating or drinking water.

We were taken to the river, where there was a raft. We crossed the river into the United States and moved to a safe house. We spent 4 nights in the desert, including the night of my 15th birthday.

... We came upon another group of people who'd been traveling 2 days ahead of us. A young man, under 18, had perished from exposure and lack of water and food. I got stuck in some barbed wire in the desert. The coyote kicked me, ripping my flesh to set me free.

... We got to Los Angeles on December 17, 2013. If we didn't pay more money, they threatened to cut off our heads and all kinds of horrible things. My mom said she'd give them another \$50, and they piled another 8 people in a van and brought us to San Francisco.

In San Francisco, Gabriel feared for years he would be sent back to Honduras. With the support of his mother and an attorney, he was eventually granted asylum.

Now he is a student at the University of California at Berkeley, with dreams of becoming a lawyer himself.