

NOT VOTING—4

Bennet
Harris

Isakson
Sanders

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 55, the nays are 41.

The motion is agreed to.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Donald R. Tapia, of Arizona, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Jamaica.

Mitch McConnell, Martha McSally, Pat Roberts, Mike Crapo, James E. Risch, John Barrasso, Tom Cotton, Roger F. Wicker, John Cornyn, Jerry Moran, Shelley Moore Capito, Deb Fischer, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Richard Burr, Thom Tillis, John Boozman, Chuck Grassley.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Donald R. Tapia, of Arizona, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Jamaica, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON) and the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET), the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS), and the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) are necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COTTON). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 67, nays 28, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 215 Ex.]

YEAS—67

Alexander	Crapo	Kennedy
Barrasso	Cruz	King
Blackburn	Daines	Lankford
Blunt	Duckworth	Leahy
Boozman	Enzi	Lee
Braun	Ernst	Manchin
Burr	Fischer	McConnell
Capito	Gardner	McSally
Cardin	Graham	Menendez
Carper	Grassley	Moran
Cassidy	Hassan	Murkowski
Collins	Hawley	Murphy
Coons	Hoeben	Paul
Cornyn	Hyde-Smith	Perdue
Cortez Masto	Inhofe	Portman
Cotton	Johnson	Risch
Cramer	Jones	Roberts

Romney	Scott (SC)	Toomey
Rosen	Shaheen	Whitehouse
Rounds	Shelby	Wicker
Rubio	Sinema	Young
Sasse	Sullivan	
Scott (FL)	Thune	

NAYS—28

Baldwin	Hirono	Smith
Blumenthal	Kaine	Stabenow
Booker	Klobuchar	Tester
Brown	Markey	Udall
Cantwell	Merkley	Van Hollen
Casey	Murray	Warner
Durbin	Peters	Warren
Feinstein	Reed	Wyden
Gillibrand	Schatz	
Heinrich	Schumer	

NOT VOTING—5

Bennet
Harris

Isakson
Sanders

Tillis

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 67, the nays are 28.

The motion is agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Donald R. Tapia, of Arizona, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Jamaica.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF "APOLLO 11"

Ms. ERNST. Mr. President, July 20 marks the 50th anniversary of the first step man took on the Moon. For that brief moment, all mankind stood united, watching an awesome spectacle transpire few would have imagined possible just years earlier. It stands as one of the greatest achievements in the history of mankind, and it cemented the United States as the world leader in science, technology, and discovery.

In 1961, when President Kennedy boldly challenged the Nation to land a man on the Moon and return him safely to Earth by the end of the decade, the technology needed to do so, for the most part, didn't even exist.

That we accomplished this monumental goal is a testament to American ingenuity and innovation. In fact, some of the very technology developed for the Apollo missions is still having a positive impact on the lives of Iowans nearly half a century later. Our first responders wear fire-resistant textiles developed for the use in Apollo space suits. Our communities rely on water purification technology designed for the Apollo spacecraft. Our soldiers in the field depend on the MREs, Meals Ready to Eat, created to safely feed Neil Armstrong, Buzz Aldrin, and Michael Collins on their half-million-mile journey to the Moon and back. My daughter Libby, who is a cadet at West Point, was recently sharing some very strong opinions about these MREs, but maybe she will feel differently after I tell her this was actually food for astronauts.

Yet, in all seriousness, when the government makes wise and sound investments in the development of emerging technology, the benefits can be tremendous.

GPS is a great example of this, especially in Iowa. GPS has its roots in the military and has a strong Air Force stewardship, and its significance only continues to grow with the advancements of satellites and the development of drones. Yet GPS has evolved beyond just military use; it impacts the everyday lives of Iowans. From driving directions in rideshare services to the electric power grid, GPS is utilized by businesses and consumers across the country. This important technology supports new and emerging applications, including water quality, driverless vehicles, and precision agriculture. It is estimated that civilian and commercial access to GPS added \$90 billion in annual value to the U.S. economy in 2013.

Examples like these demonstrate why it is so important this body and our Nation as a whole continue to push the envelope when it comes to science, technology, and discovery, and that is exactly what Senate Republicans have been doing.

As chairman of the Senate Armed Services Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities, I have made it a priority to ensure that the United States remains the world's leader in the development of artificial intelligence, or AI. From novel defensive capabilities and data analysis to the predictive maintenance of military hardware, there is no overstating the value of AI to our national security.

I also fought to ensure the recent Defense bill prioritized the continued development of advanced manufacturing techniques, otherwise known as 3D printing. Look no further than Rock Island Arsenal, which employs so many of my fellow Iowans. They are doing some truly innovative work in this arena—work that has the potential to transform the way we supply our men and women in uniform. As a former company commander who oversaw supply convoys into a war zone, I know personally how important this is.

Of course, there is a consensus on both sides of the aisle that we can do more to get our students—especially young girls—excited about futures in STEM and STEAM. I hope we can work together to advance that effort in the near future. After all, the Moon landing could have never happened without the contributions of thousands of women from across the Nation. These unsung heroes did everything from developing Apollo's onboard software to weaving the copper wire for the spacecraft's guidance system.

As we mark the 50th anniversary of the *Apollo 11* Moon landing, there will be countless commemorations and tributes to this monumental event. We will look back on President Kennedy's bold call to action, the hundreds of thousands of hard-working American men and women who answered that call, and the three heroes who rode *Apollo 11* to the Moon and back. Then, in that same spirit, we will turn our gaze to the future—to the innovation, to the

technology, and to discovery. Be it here on Earth or out amongst the stars, the United States will continue to lead the way as we look to take that next great step for mankind.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

Mrs. HYDE-SMITH. Mr. President, I am pleased to join my colleagues in commemorating the 50th anniversary of American astronauts becoming the first humans to walk on the Moon.

It was 50 years ago that the United States met one of the biggest challenges it had ever set for itself. Through determination, hard work, invention, and innovation, the United States fulfilled President Kennedy's vision of reaching the Moon before the end of the 1960s.

I remember that time very well, for July 16, 1969, was my dad's 37th birthday. We were vacationing in Florida, at the Spyglass Inn on the beach. We were so excited to be close to Merritt Island, FL, where *Apollo 11* was being launched. We were in our hotel room, watching the television. That is one vacation I will never forget. As a young girl, I remember watching those first astronauts step foot on the Moon. It was with great awe that I watched *Apollo 11* lift off from the Earth and watched the lunar module land safely on the surface of the Moon. With a lot of amazement, I watched Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin as they announced "the Eagle has landed" and then as they took those first brave steps on the Moon. It was with great pride that I watched them plant the American flag on the Moon.

Those brave NASA astronauts of the Apollo program today continue to serve as an inspiration that we are capable of anything we set our minds to. Equally important is the reminder that those astronauts could not have reached the Moon without their having the support of the thousands of men and women who were both in NASA and in the aerospace industry. It is a reminder that we are at our best when we work together.

While NASA's mission has changed and evolved over the last 60 years, the aerospace industry continues to play a vital role in our quest for knowledge and America's national security mission.

In my home State of Mississippi, we are very proud of the conspicuous roles our citizens play in our Nation's space exploration and endeavors. Since the earliest days of America's space program, Mississippi has played an important role in the quest to explore the stars.

For more than 50 years, the John C. Stennis Space Center, in Hancock County, MS, has dutifully tested and approved NASA's largest rocket engines, including the Saturn V rockets that took our astronauts to the Moon and, later, the engines for the space shuttle program. Stennis is today testing engines and rocket stages for NASA's Space Launch System, which

will again take humans beyond low-Earth orbit. I am pleased, much like in the Apollo days, that Mississippi has an important role in the SLS program. As we are fond of reminding everyone, "The road to space goes through Mississippi."

However, Stennis isn't only known for its rocket testing to support NASA missions; it also proudly bears the title of the "Federal City" and is one of the Federal Government's best places to work. With a 13,800-acre area that is surrounded by a 125,000-acre buffer zone, it has allowed dozens of our Federal and private sector tenants to take advantage of its unique isolation and security to serve our Nation's interest across many sectors, perhaps most notably in the field of oceanography and meteorology.

The meteorological and oceanographic modeling and forecasting capabilities at Stennis provide naval commanders with the information they need to make good decisions that affect the safety of ships and sailors around the world every single day. The Navy's largest supercomputer is located at Stennis.

The unique Federal city of Stennis Space Center covers exploration from the bottom of the ocean to the far reaches of the universe. It is America's largest rocket test complex—an impressive tsunami and weather buoy production site—and is a place where elite Naval Special Warfare personnel conduct highly advanced riverine and jungle training by using cutting-edge unmanned systems technology. Stennis also houses several private initiatives, such as Aerojet Rocketdyne's engine assembly facility, Lockheed Martin's Mississippi Space & Technology Center, a Rolls Royce test facility, and Relativity Space. The national and international scope of work that takes place at Stennis every day creates a local, direct economic impact of nearly \$600 million and has nearly \$1 billion in its global impact.

As we mark this 50th anniversary, I am pleased that Stennis Space Center is helping to inspire, encourage, and prepare students to pursue science, technology, engineering, and math-related careers—the talents we will need to get to Mars and beyond.

Since its inception more than 60 years ago, NASA has pioneered scientific discovery and captivated the Nation. These capabilities are especially important in today's world, where innovation and fostering an interest among our youth in the science, technology, mathematics, and engineering fields are vital to the United States' continuing to be a success in this world.

I am proud that Mississippi plays a vital role in our Nation's work to meet the technological challenges of today and tomorrow. This work occurs not only at Stennis Space Center but also at so many other related businesses across the State of Mississippi.

The people of Mississippi look with pride at our role in the United States'

having reached the Moon 50 years ago, and we look forward to the decades ahead when the testing, technology, and innovation taking place in our State helps the American space program reach new, monumental achievements. I believe the 50th anniversary of the *Apollo 11* Moon landing can and should inspire generations of people around the world to explore and push the boundaries of what they believe to be possible.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. CRAMER. Mr. President, I am honored to join my colleagues today to commemorate this anniversary of an incredible event.

Fifty-eight years ago in May of 1961—the year in which I was born—President John F. Kennedy appeared before Congress and boldly declared the United States would send an American to the Moon before the end of the decade. This was no small task, obviously, as programs had to be funded, as scientific advancements had to be made, and as foreign adversaries had to be kept at bay. As the head of NASA's Space Task Group said, "Flying a man to the Moon required an enormous advance in the science of flight in a very short time." Yet President Kennedy was not deterred. In his ignoring conventional wisdom and the ever-present naysayers, he pressed on, and so did the patriotic Americans who were charged with making this happen.

A few years later, NASA began its Apollo missions, and the necessary scientific advancements became a reality. In October of 1968, *Apollo 7* was the first Apollo mission in space, and it conducted the very first live TV program of a U.S. spacecraft. *Apollo 8* launched 2 months later and successfully orbited the Moon. *Apollo 9* carried the first lunar module into orbit in March of 1969. We were getting closer. *Apollo 10* launched in May. It was a full dress rehearsal for the *Apollo 11* mission. It was successful. We were ready.

Fifty years ago yesterday, Neil Armstrong, Buzz Aldrin, and Michael Collins launched the *Apollo 11* mission to fulfill President Kennedy's promise of landing on the Moon. That week, my 8-year-old self and an estimated 650 million of my closest friends from around the world watched Neil Armstrong land on the Moon and plant our Nation's flag. He offered the famous phrase: "That's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind."

That giant leap was a monumental moment in history, for sure, and it didn't happen in the abstract. It was really the result of hundreds of years of scientific discovery and decades of work from countless public servants who devoted their lives to this cause. *Apollo 10* gave *Apollo 11* the confidence that the operation would be successful. *Apollo 7* gave us the opportunity to see its success with our own eyes. The astronauts of *Apollo 1*, in a fatal 1967 tragedy, gave their lives to this mission. That giant leap happened because

of the small steps that had been taken before it, and those who took that giant leap are pressing on even today.

The scientific discovery and space exploration that were made possible because of those missions continue to this day, including in my great State of North Dakota. Just a few years after the Moon landing, the University of North Dakota's John Odegard asked Buzz Aldrin to come to our State to help him start a space education program within the University of North Dakota, and Buzz Aldrin said yes.

He left the State, of course, ultimately, but the program stayed, and it grew.

Today, students from across the globe enroll in the University of North Dakota to learn about the cutting-edge technologies and scientific breakthroughs in space exploration. Some of their recent endeavors provide vital insights for future space exploration, including for a mission to Mars.

North Dakotans don't just learn; they get involved. Some even become astronauts. New Rockford's own James Buchli joined NASA in 1979 and 6 years later became the first North Dakotan to go to space, and he is now in the U.S. Astronaut Hall of Fame.

Shortly after Buchli's space flight came West Fargo's Tony England, who launched into space 6 months later. England's career is marked by his work 15 years earlier at Mission Control, where he and others heard the chilling words, "Houston, we have a problem." England's team helped save the lives of those on the *Apollo 13* mission that day.

Then Jamestown's Rick Hieb launched into space three times starting in 1991. The University of North Dakota's 1994 graduate Karen Nyberg was the 50th woman ever to launch into space. She did it first in 2008. She also spent 6 months on the *International Space Station* in 2013 and now serves on the board of the University of North Dakota School of Aerospace Sciences' foundation, giving back to her alma mater.

North Dakotans leave an outsized mark in the world of space exploration, and they are just getting started. The University of North Dakota touts over 100 students taking graduate classes in the Department of Space Studies, and they have handed out nearly 800 master of science degrees in space studies since the program began.

I am optimistic about the roles these leaders will play in the future, following the leads of giants like Buzz Aldrin and Karen Nyberg.

I was only 8 years old during the *Apollo 11* mission. Like most Americans, I found it to be an exhilarating experience, even watching it on my parents' black and white television. But I know I didn't fully grasp the importance of what I was watching that day. I worry sometimes that many people still don't. Space was, is, and will be integral to our way of life, and we must continue to maintain our commercial, technological, and military edge in this important domain.

I hope we will use this anniversary as an opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to space exploration and to remind ourselves of the impact investments made today can have on our future, and along the way, perhaps we can renew that unifying American spirit that was so prevalent on that day 50 years ago and perhaps even give inspiration to aspiration once again.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, if the Senator from North Dakota was here to speak about *Apollo 11* and got here a moment or two before me, I am happy to yield.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. HOEVEN. Mr. President, I thank the good Senator from Mississippi.

This weekend, our Nation will mark the 50th anniversary of the *Apollo 11* Moon landing. This was a tremendous feat for our country.

In recognition of this true American triumph, I am cosponsoring a Senate resolution celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Moon landing. Our resolution recognizes the vision of President Kennedy and the hard work and the ingenuity of the men and women of NASA who made it possible for our Nation to achieve what seemed to be an impossible goal at the time.

Like many Americans, I can still remember the excitement of seeing the American flag planted on the Moon and hearing Neil Armstrong say the famous line, "That's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind."

Truly it was a giant leap. NASA not only helped develop technologies to put astronauts on the Moon, but these technologies have benefited industries, including our military, the medical field, energy, and many others.

We all know NASA is a premiere center for scientific research and technological advancement, but it is important to remember that NASA's mission includes not only space but also aeronautics.

As our Nation did during the space race, we are now working to stay at the forefront of new technologies, including unmanned aerial systems. In particular, I want to highlight the research NASA is doing right now in support of unmanned aviation. NASA is designing an unmanned air traffic management system that will provide air traffic control for unmanned aircraft operations. This traffic management project is critical to unlocking the potential of unmanned aviation, from package delivery to pipeline inspections.

NASA is at the forefront of this effort to make unmanned flights safe and efficient for a multitude of operators. North Dakota works right along with NASA toward this goal, with a UAS test site that is helping advance all aspects of unmanned aviation. In fact, they were recently selected by the FAA to host an unmanned traffic pilot pro-

gram and have developed a strong partnership with NASA to research, develop, and demonstrate this technology.

I continue to support funding for unmanned traffic management research because I am confident that NASA, with the help of its industry partners, as well as our test site in North Dakota, will meet this complex technological challenge. By making a relatively small investment in unmanned traffic management research today, NASA is going to help unlock billions of dollars in economic activity in the not-too-distant future.

We have worked hard to ensure that North Dakota is an important part of exploring this new NASA frontier, and we are thrilled to help realize the wide variety of benefits that unmanned aviation will bring, making our Nation more prosperous and secure, and we can only imagine where we will be 50 years from today.

I yield the floor to the great Senator from the great State of Mississippi.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, I thank my friend from North Dakota, and I thank all of the people who have arranged for this special recognition.

Mr. INHOFE. Will the Senator yield for a unanimous consent request?

Mr. WICKER. I am delighted to yield to my friend from Oklahoma.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at the conclusion of the remarks of the Senator from Mississippi, I be recognized for such time as I may consume.

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

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, it is really hard to believe that the first Moon landing was 50 years ago, but, in fact, 50 years ago today, three Americans were on their way to the Moon—Neil Armstrong, Buzz Aldrin, and Michael Collins.

I had the honor of actually meeting with Buzz Aldrin just the other day, shaking his hand, and being able to listen to his perspectives about what has happened in the last 50 years. What a great American.

At this moment, I would also honor the names of Neil Armstrong and Michael Collins. While Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin got to step foot on the Moon, Michael Collins' assignment was to stay in the vehicle and orbit solo above. It was not at all guaranteed that his two colleagues would get back. We certainly thought we had the technology; we thought we could do it, and indeed we did, but it was not a given.

Michael Collins wrote during that lonely flight while his two colleagues were walking on the face of the Moon:

I am . . . absolutely isolated from any known life. I am it. If a count were taken, the score would be three billion plus two over on the other side of the Moon, and one plus God knows what on this side.

Those are the words of American hero Michael Collins.

These three men were separated from the rest of humanity, but they certainly were not alone. Hundreds of millions of people watched and prayed and gave them their best wishes.

It is hard to believe—and I still have to pinch myself—that I was a freshman in college for this Moon walk, and that was 50 years ago. How could 50 years have passed by so quickly?

Men and women have always looked up at the night sky and seen their heroes in the constellations. Now we still look up at the sky, and we see our heroes, but among them are astronauts who go to the stars and return and will go to the Moon and to Mars and return.

I want to salute the people who have done it before and the people who are making plans to put a man and woman on the face of the Moon within 5 years.

I was so honored to chair a hearing just this morning featuring NASA Administrator Bridenstine, who has put forward a bold proposal from the Trump administration, which has moved the deadline up from 10 years to 5 years. Indeed, I can tell you, it is the goal of NASA and it is the goal of this Member of the U.S. Senate and the committee that I chair to facilitate making this go and actually putting a man and a woman back on the face of the Moon in 5 years and then, beyond that, on Mars.

These are ambitious goals, which match and rival the ambition of President Kennedy, who announced this plan in 1961. Credit goes to President Johnson, who took up the cause after the assassination of President Kennedy, and President Nixon, a Republican succeeding two Democrats, who saw it to fruition in 1969.

I am proud to salute all of the people—some nameless, faceless people who are not famous—for their role in this magnificent accomplishment.

I am proud to say that Mississippians were among the first to answer President Kennedy's call. After all, the Saturn V rocket used for the Apollo Program was tested at Stennis Space Center in Hancock County in Mississippi, where we still do almost all of the rocket testing in the United States of America.

As Wernher von Braun, one of the leaders of U.S. early space efforts once said, "I don't know yet what method we will use to get to the Moon, but I do know that we [will] have to go through Mississippi to get there." That was true back in the sixties, and it is true today as we approach the one-fifth mark of the 21st century.

We owe so much to the pioneers. Humankind owes so much to the people who answered President Kennedy's charge not only to win the space race—our country against those cosmonauts of the Soviet Union—but also for all of the peaceful results that have come from this.

Technologies behind CT scans came from the space program. Intensive care

monitoring equipment, which saves lives every day around the globe, came from the scientific discoveries that were accomplished during our race to the Moon. GPS and smart phones all have their origins in Apollo.

The commercial space sector is now valued at more than \$400 billion, and it is reminding us all of the power of free enterprise to open up new frontiers. Clearly, that \$400 billion will grow over the next decade, perhaps to trillions and trillions of dollars.

Certainly the writers of Newsweek were correct when they called the Moonshot "the best return on investment since Leonardo da Vinci bought himself a sketch pad." They were exactly right, and this next shot should give us an opportunity also to get our money's worth.

We will go back to the Moon; we will go on to Mars. So as we celebrate the 50th anniversary, we look toward the future to all the missions that will come and go, and we remind ourselves of this country's common purpose and potential. The Moon landing was not the end of an age of discovery; it was only the beginning.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COTTON). The Senator from Oklahoma.

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I am looking forward to joining in on this discussion that is taking place right now on what is happening with these people and Oklahoma's role in this. Jim Bridenstine is a fairly recent Director of NASA, and he is committed to reestablishing our position of leadership. We haven't really lost it, but it hasn't been as prominent as it has been in the past.

We have people like Tom Stafford. I talk to Tom Stafford almost on a daily basis. He is still around. He is still active. He still rejoices in the fact that we are reestablishing our position, and I am very excited about that.

I wasn't going to talk about that today. I think that is going to be tomorrow.

There is another area in which President Trump and the Republican Senate have had great success, and that is in remaking the Federal judiciary. As of this week, we have confirmed 43 appellate judges. That is more at this 2½-year point than in any other President's term in the history of this country. That is what is going on, and it goes unnoticed. These judicial confirmations have real impact.

Here is a great example. This week, the Ninth Circuit—the notoriously liberal appellate court in California—ruled that portions of President Trump's "Project Life" rule can—not can't, can—go into effect. This is a commonsense rule.

All it says is that in States that receive title X funding, it cannot be used by clinics to provide abortions. We calculate that this would have the result of defunding Planned Parenthood by about an initial \$60 million annually. It

is a great start to defunding the abortion-on-demand culture, and it is possible only because President Trump and Leader MCCONNELL have rightly made remaking the Federal judiciary a top priority.

What I want to talk about is something we need to talk about now because it has not been called to the attention of the American people, and that is about the great work being done in this administration to better our environment.

When you say that perhaps it can be argued the Trump administration may go down as one of the truly great environmental administrations, nobody will believe that. In my lifetime and in my history, I have never seen a President so detested by members of the media. So people, consequently, don't know, with the exception of a few tweets. I admit that I cringe a little bit when I hear a new tweet coming out. But, look, if that is the only way you can get the truth out, it is something that has worked, and it has been very effective.

We have a White House dedicated to clean air, land, and water by cutting excessive, duplicative regulations. Based on what you see in the media, you would think this President turned his back on the environment, but it has been just the opposite. We are seeing significant progress in environmental protection that we have not seen in any other administration. Americans should know the truth about how this administration is leading the world in environmental gains, all the while growing the economy.

People say: Well, you can't do that. That can't be done. You can't increase economic activity at the same time as making environmental gains.

But that is actually happening.

Look at the chart behind me. There are a couple facts most Americans really don't know. They had no way of knowing, until now. Since 1970, combined emissions of the six common pollutants—we are talking about the recognized six common pollutants out there—dropped by 74 percent while the U.S. economy grew by 275 percent.

Is it possible that could happen? It did happen because there it is right there—all this economic activity, all this growth. The bottom line is the aggregate emissions of the six common pollutants. There they are, going down. That is because this administration knows what it is doing and has the commitment that other people are not aware of.

Now look at CO₂. We have had debates over the years about whether or not CO₂ is one of the pollutants. It is not one of the six common pollutants, but nonetheless it is one that people seem to be looking at.

Since 2005 the United States' energy-related CO₂ emissions fell by 14 percent, while global energy-related CO₂ emissions increased by over 20 percent. We are talking about all the emissions increased, and still we had a reduction.

Despite this drop in emissions, in 2018 the United States became the world's leading producer of oil and natural gas and a net exporter of oil and natural gas fossil fuels for the first time in 75 years. I am particularly proud of this. I am from an oil State, the State of Oklahoma. I know how many jobs are tied to it. I know what has happened to our economy, and a lot of that can be attributed to using the proper energy sources that we have available to us.

This administration has proven that we don't have to impose massive tax increases or regulatory burdens on American families in order to reduce pollution. We are reducing pollution, clearly. Democrats often say the United States is failing to properly reduce carbon emissions, and this just isn't true.

Look at chart No. 2. The reality is our CO₂ emissions have been falling. In 2017 the United States led the world in CO₂ emission reductions while, notably, China led in emissions.

You have to look at this. The top line is the United States. That is reduction. We are leading the world in reductions of CO₂ emissions. All the way across, at the very bottom of the page, China has the largest increase of CO₂ emissions. What a contrast that is. It defies everything else we read about, and yet there it is. That is the truth.

A lot of people are not aware that there is a big party which takes place every December. It has happened now for about 21 or maybe 22 years. That is where 180 countries get together and talk about what they are going to do to reduce CO₂ emissions. We see who is and who is not reducing CO₂ emissions with this chart.

They talk about the great Paris accord, which this President wisely took us out of. What that did was to have these countries line up, and between India and China, they are responsible for one-fourth of all CO₂ emissions. At that time, their obligation was to continue doing what they were doing with coal-fired plants until 2025. Then, they will consider reducing their emissions. What kind of a commitment is that?

Meanwhile, our President at that time was President Obama, and President Obama made commitments that could not be kept by our country. Yet, stop to think. We don't need to. We are already doing it. Just look at what we are doing right now. People don't know that. China and India represent almost half of all the global carbon emissions. We just don't hear this in the news, and that is why we need to be talking about it.

Another thing I bet most people don't know is that in the early 1970s, more than 40 percent of America's drinking water systems failed basic health standards, but today 93 percent of the systems meet all health standards all the time. In fact, the United States is ranked No. 1 in the world for clean drinking water.

Clearly, this President's environmental policies are working. We would

think environmentalists and Democrats would be praising our President, given these undeniable successes, but instead they are pushing for the Green New Deal. We have all heard about the Green New Deal and what it is going to be doing. It is about a \$93 trillion program being promoted by a lot of the liberals around this environment here in Washington. The authors of this Green New Deal spent four pages painting the scary and inaccurate picture of our environment. Then, they spent the next nine pages outlining their socialist agenda, aimed at ensuring the government dictates life in America—from the car you drive to the energy you consume.

In the Green New Deal, they talk about eliminating air traffic. That is very nice. I don't know how people will get around.

They also want to eliminate beef. I happen to be from a beef State. We like beef, but, apparently, there are things that cows do. They make noise and don't smell good. So they want to eliminate beef.

They want to eliminate oil and gas altogether. You can't eliminate oil and gas. Right now, 80 percent of our energy that we use to enjoy life in America comes from oil and gas, and that is going to continue. I don't see it changing in the near future.

Scientists like MIT's Richard Lindzen have been calling out climate alarmists for years on this conspiracy to control our lives. This flawed plan doesn't take into account that over 80 percent of the United States' energy comes from fossil fuels—80 percent. If you eliminate fossil fuels, how do you run this machine called America? The answer is, you can't. Our Nation runs on American coal, oil, and gas, and that isn't going to change any time soon.

We had a vote in the Senate on this radical Green New Deal plan, but not a single Democrat was willing to vote for it. A lot of them voted present. They didn't want to get on record voting for it, and yet that is what they are promoting over in the House. They know their plan will not work and is extremely unpopular. So they weren't going to join it. Anytime you don't want to vote for or against something, what do you do? You vote present.

I didn't think Democrats could be more radical than they were under the Obama administration, but I was wrong. At least I give the Obama administration credit for being honest about its radical war on fossil fuels. For 8 years, President Obama targeted oil and gas producers in States like my State of Oklahoma, but President Obama lost that fight, and Oklahoma energy producers continue to create thousands of jobs to fuel this machine called America.

I think back to 1990. I was here in 1990, and that is when we passed a landmark piece of legislation called the Clean Air Act. I cosponsored that act, and that succeeded in reducing acid

rain, air pollution, and harm to our ozone layer. It has gone down in history as one of the true great successes that has happened in this country in terms of the environment. We are all a part of this, and we have been successful.

Many of today's Democrats are virtually unrecognizable compared to those back in 1990. I urge my Democratic colleagues to reject radical socialist environmental policies, come back to reality, and support our President's very effective approach.

I am proud of President Trump and his administration's record on improving our Nation's environment while streamlining government overreach. It is possible to have a thriving economy while safeguarding our air and water.

Again, I ask you to look at this chart. Just look and see what we have done and where we are. In spite of what you hear, we are leading the country, under this administration, which is going to go down and be recognized as one of the truly great environmental administrations. I am very proud of that. I think it is time that people know it.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. BLACKBURN). The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

AMERICAN MINERS ACT

Mr. MANCHIN. Madam President, once again I am here to announce a looming deadline hanging over the heads of our hard-working and patriotic coal miners. It is a shame that we have to do this again, and the reason is that we didn't fix it the first time.

If we don't pass the American Miners Act, there will be 1,200 retired coal miners who will lose their healthcare by the end of this year. Those 1,200 coal miners spent a lifetime underground, in part, digging the coal that we needed to become the strongest and greatest Nation the world has ever seen. They have always done the heavy lifting. They gave up raises and bonuses year after year in exchange for the promise of economic security when they retired. So they paid for this. They held up their end of the bargain, and it is time that we held up ours.

Why is the healthcare of retired coal miners once again on the chopping block? We have gone through this before. It is because of the courts. Our court system has again allowed coal companies to break their promises to their workers. Through bankruptcy, they were able to shed their obligations to pay for these hard-earned healthcare and pension benefits, and then they were able to reemerge from bankruptcy as a profitable company once all the money was basically taken

from them. This time around, it was Westmoreland Coal Company and Mission Coal Company that both declared bankruptcy approximately at the same time in 2018.

For those of you who think this is another big government program, let me share a little history with you.

In 1946, due to the horrendous working conditions our miners faced every day, there was a nationwide strike. It brought our Nation's economy to its knees. President Truman dispatched the Secretary of the Interior, Julius Krug, to meet with the president of the United Mine Workers of America, John L. Lewis. They ended that strike by signing the Krug-Lewis Agreement, which created a retirement fund and healthcare benefits for our Nation's miners and their families that had the full backing of the U.S. Government.

It was not coming from government tax dollars. It did not come from the people of the United States paying for this retirement and pension plan and healthcare. It came from every ton of coal that was sold. From that time forward, there would be a certain amount of that set aside. So they worked for it, and they paid for it. It was part of their compensation. Unfortunately, over 70 years later, we are still fighting to make good on that promise.

Then, in the 1980s, with the bankruptcy laws changing the way they did, people were basically walking away. This money was there. Somebody got it. Usually, through the bankruptcy, it was dispersed to the creditors and not to the miners who had earned it. That is what we are really talking about.

We have the chance today to pass my bill, the American Miners Act, along with all of my colleagues who worked so hard with us on that, to ensure that once and for all these coal miners and their wives and children will not lose their healthcare and pension benefits and will get them back. It is fully offset and will not cost the taxpayers a dime. We are using money that we are not only borrowing, but basically it is from abandoned mine land money, of which we have excesses, which can still take care of the obligations we have to use it for those who mine the coal.

The entire Democratic caucus co-sponsored this bill when it was filed on the National Defense Authorization Act last month. Everybody signed off. If our colleague here, the Senator from Kentucky, would just put it on the agenda, it would pass. It came out of the Finance Committee last year in a bipartisan vote—a very strong bipartisan vote. We all know we have made a commitment to the people who work so hard.

I am asking all of us to keep our promise the way we did when we passed the Miners Protection Act, which saved the healthcare of 22,600 miners. We need to finish the job, but guess what. We still have 87,000 miners who are going to lose their pensions by no later than 2022 if we don't do something. This adds another 1,200 who are going

to lose their healthcare by the end of the year. So the crunch time is here. These people have worked hard.

Let me tell you about the pensions. The people who would receive the pensions are mostly widows. Do you know what the average pension is? Less than \$600 a month—less than \$600 a month for the people who have worked for 20, 30, 40 years underground and have provided the energy to keep the lights on in the country and have kept our country strong enough to help us win every war.

I am happy that my colleagues have joined me here today. I am happy that my neighboring Senator from the great State of Virginia is right here beside me.

Senator Kaine has been a champion working very hard for the coal miners in Southwest Virginia who have contributed so much to our country and basically worked very closely with the miners in West Virginia. We are proud to have him here.

So without further conversation from me, I am going to now turn it over to my good friend and colleague Senator TIM Kaine from Virginia.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. Kaine. Madam President, I thank my colleague from West Virginia because this is a matter of the heart for him. He has worked so hard on this as a Governor of West Virginia and as a U.S. Senator. It has been my honor to work together with him on this and so many other issues.

I will begin with a little bit of history. We are right in the midst of Virginia's 30th anniversary of the Pittston Coal strike. It began on April 5, 1989, in Southwest Virginia. The Pittston Coal Company, which was headquartered in Pennsylvania, terminated all healthcare benefits for approximately 1,500 retirees, widows, and disabled miners. That anniversary is being celebrated right now. When these healthcare benefits were terminated, it led to a strike. It lasted from April of 1989 until February 20 of 1990—nearly 10 months.

Then-president of the United Mine Workers Union, Rich Trumka, who is now the president of AFL-CIO, was asked during this time period as the miners and their families and the retirees made great sacrifices for striking: How long can you hold out? They were seeing the benefits they were getting as strikers—instead of a \$600-a-week strike benefit, which was the original plan, the funds had dwindled down, and they were getting \$200 a week. That was all they were getting during the strike, and when Rich Trumka was asked "How long can the miners hold out?" he said: We can hold out one day longer than the Pittston Coal Company.

That is, in fact, what happened. In February, they reached an agreement. It was a historic labor strike that was because of healthcare benefits and be-

cause of the need of the people who do one of the toughest jobs in this country—a job that will rack its pain on your body in a physical way, unlike any other kind of work. Losing healthcare is tough for anybody, but for somebody working underground in a mine, it is absolutely catastrophic.

As my colleague mentioned, we are here to talk about the American Miners Act, which he is leading and I am proud to cosponsor. The UMWA Pension Plan is projected, right now, to become insolvent by 2022, and this could be advanced and come even sooner if there is another major bankruptcy.

My colleague talked about the history of this pension plan. During the Presidency of President Truman and in the aftermath of that strike, there was an agreement that there would be employer contributions into the pension plan based on every ton of coal that was sold.

The employer contributions have declined significantly in recent years as coal companies have gone out of business and other companies have creatively used the bankruptcy laws, as my colleague indicated, to skate out of their obligations to these hard-working miners and their families and retirees.

If we do not intervene, if we do not pass the American Miners Act or something essentially identical, 87,000—87,000—current beneficiaries and an additional 20,000 vested retirees could lose all or part of their pension benefits.

The insolvency of the mine workers' pension would put further pressure on the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, which is already facing other shortfalls. And it is not just pensions; it is also healthcare. Because of a recent bankruptcy of the Westmoreland Coal Company, as my colleague mentioned, 1,200 miners and their families, largely widows and others, are slated to potentially lose healthcare coverage very soon. That would include 800 Virginians who could lose health coverage by the end of the year.

I remember when my colleague was leading the successful effort in 2017. To fix one of the issues with healthcare benefits for these families, I attended a roundtable session with many of them in Castlewood, VA, at the UMWA field office there. I went in at a midweek, midafternoon time when you wouldn't normally expect a lot of people to attend a meeting, and the room was absolutely packed with people who were so very, very frightened. They were slated, at that point, to lose health coverage.

Remember, this was at the end of April. It was about April 20 when I was there with them. They were looking at me with fear in their eyes, asking what they should do: Should I go out and buy insurance on my own? But who is going to cover me? Look at my age. Look at my physical condition. Look at the conditions my wife is dealing with.

It wasn't uncommon to be dealing with a working or recently retired

miner with a spouse who had cancer, and the threat of losing health insurance in that circumstance was existential. I could look him in the eye, and I couldn't really promise him anything except that we would try.

We were able to get a fix at that point that saved healthcare for thousands and thousands of miners, and we did that with our colleagues in this body—Democratic and Republican—and in the House as well. Well, it is time for us to step up again.

Here is what the American Miners Act would do. It would shore up the pension plan to ensure that workers receive the benefits they have earned. The bill would also safeguard healthcare coverage for workers who are projected to lose their coverage because of the Westmoreland Coal Bankruptcy. It builds on the bill that we passed in a bipartisan way in 2017.

Lastly—and this is really important. I am so happy that in working on the bill, Senator MANCHIN and I decided to do this. The bill is going to ensure financing for medical treatment and basic expenses for workers suffering from black lung because we are extending the Black Lung Disability Trust Fund. Right now, that is also—because of a revenue source that was sort of sunset—scheduled to be stopped, and then the trust fund will dwindle down, and those suffering from black lung will also lose the protections that they have. This American Miners Act not only protects pensions and not only protects folks who are having their healthcare bankrupted by Westmoreland but would extend the Black Lung Disability Trust Fund that is so very, very important.

The best news is that the bill is fully paid for. We are not asking to increase the deficit. We are not asking to increase tax rates. The bill is fully paid for. We would simply extend an existing tax to protect the Black Lung Disability Trust Fund, and then we would utilize an existing source of revenue that we used before—mine reclamation funds that are currently oversubscribed and are not being used to help backstop healthcare needs.

So this is a bill that would do an awful lot of good for an awful lot of people, and we are not coming here just asking without paying for it. We have a solution on the table so that we can pay for it.

My hope is that the body will come together the same way we did in 2017 to protect these hard-working people and their families and their widows who have done the hardest work that just about anybody does in this country and whose bodies have suffered as a result, and they need to have us having their back.

With that, I yield the floor.

Mr. MANCHIN. Madam President, if I could, first of all, thank my colleague from Virginia, my dear friend Senator KAINE. I just want to touch on one thing before we have Senator CASEY speak on behalf of all the coal miners

he represents in the State of Pennsylvania.

On the Black Lung Fund, a lot of people don't know, the House of Representatives basically, 2 years ago, passed a bill reducing the fund from \$1.10 to 55 cents. I called over to my friends and colleagues in the House, and I said: You would think we don't need the money anymore because we have cured black lung—but it is just the contrary. We have more diseases and more younger people getting black lung, and I will tell you the reason why.

When mining coal, you are cutting through a lot of rock, and you get silica coming out from that. We are cutting into more rock than ever before. We have even more younger miners contracting black lung. We need to fund more now than ever before, and this is not the time to cut it. That 55 cents a ton makes a difference between solvency or not, curing people or the Federal Government having to step in.

The coal miners have been proud to pay their own way. They paid for their pension. They paid for their healthcare. They didn't take money home because when they negotiated, this is how much stayed in the fund. Basically, somebody received that money, the benefit, but not the people who worked for it. Now they are willing to try to fix that with the coal they mined from the abandoned mine land money. That is all we are asking for. We will take care of our own problems.

We are begging the majority leader of this respected body to please put this bill on the floor and let the body vote on it because we have had good bipartisan support. Everybody respects the person providing the energy who protected this country, and that is all we are asking for.

There is no one who has fought harder and worked harder on this than Senator CASEY from Pennsylvania, and that is another State that borders West Virginia that we are proud of and are very close with, and they have given so much.

With that, I yield the floor to Senator CASEY.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. CASEY. Madam President, I rise to discuss this urgent issue of pensions and our legislative proposal to address this looming crisis.

I commend and salute the work of Senator MANCHIN, my colleague from West Virginia, for his indefatigable work on this. There are probably a few other words I could use for his determination over time, and not just over months but literally now over years, as well as Senator KAINE's, from Virginia, and Senator BROWN's, who will follow me. We are grateful for this combination of States coming together to stand up for workers.

We know this discussion on the floor of the Senate takes place at a significant time. The House Ways and Means Committee just passed the bipartisan

Butch Lewis Act, H.R. 397, on the 10th of July. The House is taking much needed action, and it is long past time that the U.S. Senate does the same.

In my home State, there is a whole group of workers. Obviously, miners are a big part of this, the Teamsters, Bakery and Confectionery Workers, all of whom, through no fault of their own, are seeing their hard-earned pensions threatened. Failure to act could result in devastating economic consequences to communities across both the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as well as throughout the Nation. Tens of thousands of pensions of Pennsylvanians could be at risk, including—and these are just some of the numbers—11,831 coal miners and 21,460 Teamsters.

Despite the challenges ahead, the good news is, we have bipartisan legislation to deal with this pension crisis through the legislation known as the Butch Lewis Act. The bill creates a loan program for troubled pensions. It is a commonsense solution that brings the public and private sectors together to address this crisis.

We must also pass legislation so we can address coal miner health and pension benefits. Senator MANCHIN, as I referred to earlier, has shown great leadership throughout this process. We want to thank all the Senators who are with us today and others who are not with us on the floor, necessarily, but are with us by way of supporting this legislation.

We have a long way to go and a mountain to climb for several reasons. There are a number of Senators around this Chamber who, on a regular basis, when a multinational corporation needs help, will pull out all the stops. They will overturn any stone. They will surmount any barrier. They will fight through any wall of opposition or resistance. That is the same kind of persistence and determination and resolve we need for workers—in my case, whether it is a coal miner or a teamster or a bakery and confectionery worker.

It is long past due that we bring the same sense of urgency to the issues that involve workers as some here brought to corporate taxes. Just by way of one example, we were debating the 2017—November 2017 and December 2017 tax bill. My God, there were lobbyists all over town and people scurrying back and forth to make sure the corporate tax rate came down, to make sure the rate a corporation was paying was lowered substantially. In the end, they got more than they asked for, in my judgment. What was supposed to flow from that was an abundance of jobs, a rushing current of jobs, and wage growth was supposed to come from that legislation. Of course, it didn't. Some of us are right about our prediction—a prediction that we would not want to be right about, but we were.

So if that kind of determination and concerted action and then the legislative result that flowed from that can

be undertaken to help huge, multinational corporations, I think the same effort should be undertaken on behalf of workers who earned these pension benefits.

This isn't something extra. This isn't something new. This isn't something other than an earned benefit, and for some of them, they earned it in the most difficult way possible, by going underneath the ground to mine coal year after year and, in some cases, decade after decade.

Stephen Crane, the great novelist, wrote an essay in the early 1900s or just around the turn of the century, I should say, about a coal mine in my hometown of Scranton. He described all of the horrors, all of the darkness. He described the ways a miner could die. He referred to it as the "hundred perils"—life-threatening. He described the mine in a very moving way. He talked about the mine being a place of inscrutable darkness, a soundless place of tangible loneliness—loneliness because you can't see your hand in front of your face and loneliness, of course, if you were injured on the job, or if you had an injury that debilitated you, or if you, in fact, lost your life. Tens of thousands of people lost their lives in mines.

I know that is a long time ago. I know we have made advancements, but it is still hard work just as it is to do the other jobs I mentioned, whether you are a teamster or a bakery and confectionery worker. Just pick your particular work area or union.

So we have some work to do here, and we are going to have to fight through a lot, but we are grateful we have some momentum and some sense of urgency that may not have been there only weeks ago.

With that, I will yield the floor to my colleague from the State of Ohio.

Mr. BROWN. I thank Senator CASEY for his work on behalf of workers during his whole 13 years in the Senate and his work especially for mine workers and teamsters with the Butch Lewis Act and with pension and healthcare. That is so important.

Senator KAINE has been stalwart for these retirees and particularly in southwest Virginia, where he has worked as Governor, and also Senator MANCHIN who was speaking earlier.

We need to remind this body that 86,000 miners are facing a looming threat of massive cuts to the pension they have earned. What people in this body don't often understand is these miners and their widows aren't getting rich from these pensions. These pensions are \$500 or \$600 a month. Also 1,200 miners and their families can lose their healthcare by the end of the year because of the Westmoreland and Mission Coal bankruptcies.

The bankruptcy court can allow these corporations to shed their liabilities. That sounds familiar. So often big companies go to court, and these lawyers and judges don't really understand what collective bargaining is and

don't understand the sacrifices these workers made to earn these pensions. Shedding their liabilities is a fancy way of saying walk away from paying miners the healthcare benefits they earned.

Two years ago, we worked to save the miners' healthcare. We have to do it again. We can't leave these workers behind just because of the date their company filed for bankruptcy. We have to make sure they don't lose retirement security on top of that.

All 86,000 UMW union mine workers are facing crippling pension cuts. They aren't alone. The retirement security of hundreds of thousands of teamsters in Virginia and Ohio and Pennsylvania and ironworkers in Cleveland and carpenters in Dayton and Cincinnati—so many retirees and so many workers' pensions are at risk.

Congress tried to ignore these retirees, but they fought back. Workers rallied. They called, they wrote letters, and they rallied outside the Capitol on 90-degree days in July. They rallied outside the Capitol in 15-degree days in February.

We have seen those Camo UMW T-shirts around the Capitol. They are persistent. They don't give up. Many of them are veterans. They left the mines to serve their country. They went back into the mines. Now, as they fought for us, we need to fight for them.

It comes back to the dignity of work. When work has dignity, we honor the retirement and security people earn. We honor work. We respect work. The dignity of work is about their wages, about their retirement, about their healthcare. It is about safety in the workplace. This is why I wear this pin. It is a depiction of a canary in a birdcage. The mineworker took the canary into the mines. The mineworker did not always have a government that stood with them to protect their safety. That is what the union did so many times.

People in this town too often don't understand the collective bargaining process. This town is overrun with lobbyists up and down the hall and in Senator MCCONNELL's office. Lobbyists line up and get favors from the Republican leader. Never ever does organized labor, never do workers get these same kinds of favors when it comes to support like this.

With regard to collective bargaining, what people don't understand is that the people give up their wages today to put money aside for their future pensions. We made progress with the bipartisan pensions committee. I thank Senators PORTMAN and MANCHIN and all the Members—Senator KAINE and CASEY—all the Members of both parties who put in months of work in good faith on this.

I am committed to these miners. I know my friend TIM KAINE is committed to these miners, to these workers, to these small businesses. For their success and their livelihood, they depend on getting these pensions they have earned.

We will continue to work for a bipartisan solution. If you love this country, you will fight for the people who make it work—people like these mineworkers.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. KAINE. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CRAMER). Without objection, it is so ordered.

FACEBOOK CRYPTOCURRENCY

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, yesterday the Banking Committee heard from one of Facebook's executives about, if we can believe this—it almost doesn't seem possible—how Facebook wants to create its own monopoly money. That is right, after scandal after scandal with Facebook, where they betrayed the public trust, with the damage they have done to journalism and the damage they have done to democracy, the compromising and betrayal of people's privacy.

Again, believe it or not, even the United Nations said what Facebook did to contribute to the humanitarian disaster in what we know as Burma, Myanmar, where literally hundreds of people died—the United Nations said Facebook contributed to the genocide. That almost doesn't sound believable, but they contributed to the genocide, a U.N. report said, in that part of the world.

Now, after scandal after scandal, Facebook expects Americans to trust them with their hard-earned paychecks. It is pretty breathtaking.

When you think about it, in this body, you know what happens when corporations want something. They always get it. With the leadership in this body and with the White House looking like a retreat for Wall Street executives and the big banks, they always get what they want.

When have big corporations ever been held accountable? Look how the majority leader and President Trump treated Wall Street banks. Of course Facebook thinks they can make mess after mess, they can refuse to clean it up, and they face no consequences.

We know that big banks scam customers and break laws. Not only do they get away with it, they get rewarded. Last year, as we know, this Congress passed and President Trump signed legislation rolling back laws protecting working families from Wall Street greed, as if Wall Street weren't doing well enough. They had record profit and record executive compensation.

Remembering 10 years ago and what happened with Wall Street—there is a collective amnesia in this body. My

colleagues seem to forget what Wall Street did to our country 10 years ago.

I have said this on the floor before, and I will say it again: My ZIP Code in Cleveland where Connie and I live is 44105. That ZIP Code had more foreclosures in 2007 than any other ZIP Code in the United States of America. I still see the remnants of those foreclosures—high levels of lead-based paint, homes abandoned, property values going down. Yet this Congress and President Trump want to do more for Wall Street.

The big banks ask for weaker rules, even though it put millions of families at risk—job losses, the evisceration of retirement plans, people losing their jobs, people losing their homes. President Trump said: OK. Let's do what the banks want.

The year before that, Congress passed and President Trump signed a \$1.5 trillion tax cut for corporations, big banks, and the richest Americans. Since the Republican tax bill passed, corporations have moved jobs overseas. They spent hundreds of billions of dollars on stock buybacks because the executives apparently weren't making enough money with their record compensation. Corporations have spent \$1 trillion in these stock buybacks. Of the eight companies with the most stock buybacks last year, half of them were on Wall Street.

The big banks and the big investment houses have done very well with this Trump economy. They have done very well because of the goodies this body continues to bestow on them.

One thing we also know is that Wall Street can never get enough handouts. They always want one more. Not too long ago, a bank lobbyist said: "We don't want just a seat at the table, we want the whole table." That is so brazen and arrogant. Unfortunately, this Congress and this President seem to want to give it to them.

They let banks haggle over their stress test results. We require these banks to take a stress test, but before they take the test—imagine getting to do this in high school or college. Before you take the test, we will tell you a little more about what will be on the test.

They take away consumers' right to have their day in court when banks scam them.

They go easy on foreign megabanks. You could name them. So many of the foreign banks have gotten their way so often in this body and done damage to our economy.

We gave them breaks in the rulings that the Federal Reserve made. Last month, we saw the Fed once again go easy on Wall Street banks during their annual stress test. They basically gave them extra credit for even submitting to these tests at all. What does that mean for the giant banks? The Fed will let them do even more stock buybacks. The Fed ought to understand that megabank CEOs are not playing T-ball, where everyone gets a participation

trophy just for showing up; they are playing with family's lives.

We know all over the country what happened to people's retirement, what happened to their jobs, what happened to their homes. People in this town may have collective amnesia and have forgotten the financial crisis and housing crisis, but families who lost their homes and jobs and retirement savings and their college funds haven't forgotten what happened. This town has forgotten what happened 10 years ago, and it could happen again.

The more we roll back these rules and look the other way when corporations want to take big risks—not with their money but with other people's money—the higher the chance one of these big risks doesn't pay off. You know who pays the price. You remember who paid the price 10 years ago when the economy tanked because of Wall Street greed and Wall Street overreach. When Wall Street bets don't pay off, it is workers, families, taxpayers, and people in my neighborhood who pay the price. It is your money they are gambling with.

Hard-working Americans face real consequences when they break the law, and so should Wall Street executives.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. President, this past weekend, my wife Connie and I went to El Paso, to the U.S.-Mexico border, to bear witness to this humanitarian crisis. We met with children and families coming to our country to flee violence and persecution. These are families just like our own who only want a safe place for their kids to lay their heads at night. It underscored the inhumanity and coldness of President Trump's family separation policy—something I still can't believe our country is doing. In fact, the leader of our country is almost gleeful and bragging about this family separation policy of taking their children away from their parents.

We talked to one mother from Honduras. She and her teenage son and 6-year-old daughter were fleeing violent gangs who already murdered her brother. She choked back tears as she told her story. She arrived in the United States and was sent back to Juarez, Mexico, where she and her children slept outdoors on rocks and were given no access to even basic hygiene. She told us how hard it was to see her daughter cry, that "it was very hard for me seeing her treated as if she was a criminal." We are talking about a 6-year-old little girl. That is something no Member of this body would stand for if it were their child, but it happens to be a child from somewhere else who wants to be able to live a decent, safe life.

This story is a reminder of why the policy the Trump administration announced yesterday makes no sense for the American people and is so dangerous for those families. The President wants to require refugees to apply for asylum in the first country they pass through. For refugees like this

mother, that country would be Guatemala, but people are fleeing Guatemala too.

I talked to one volunteer at Annunciation House, the shelter we visited that takes in refugees after they are released from CBP custody. She said their numbers at the shelter were down recently. That has her worried because she knows that when families make it to the Annunciation House, they will be safe and well cared for. The staff are overwhelmingly volunteers, people in their churches and neighborhoods who want to help their fellow human beings. Now she is terrified that even more families are trapped in Juarez and other dangerous cities.

It is despicable how little compassion the President and his administration have. It is mind-boggling. It is not who we are as a country. It is not what people in Ohio think we should do. Yet this government thinks it is proper to separate children from their families.

As we were in El Paso, throughout the day, what went over and over in my mind was Matthew 25: When I was hungry, you fed me. When I was thirsty, you gave me drink. When I was sick, you visited me. When I was a stranger, you welcomed me.

I have read a lot of translations of that, and some translations say: When I was thirsty, you gave me drink. When I was hungry, you fed me. What you did for the least of these, you did for me.

There are other translations that I like more than that: When I was hungry, you fed me. When I was thirsty, you gave me drink. When I was a stranger, you visited me. What you did for those less important, you did for me.

I have read many translations, but do you know what translation I have never read? When I was hungry, you fed me. When I was thirsty, you gave me drink. When I was in prison, you visited me. When I was a stranger, you welcomed me but only if I had the proper paperwork.

That is not in Matthew 25. Only this administration that splits up families will say: When I was a stranger, you welcomed me but only if I had the proper paperwork.

These are families whose lives are in danger. They are victims of drug violence and sexual violence. They are people who came hundreds of miles—not because they want so much to come to America, but they want to get away from the violence and the chances of death.

As I said, I met a mother and her son and her daughter. Her brother was murdered by these gangs. She came north. And President Trump, having no empathy, not caring about other human beings—especially if they look like they might be from Honduras or Guatemala or El Salvador—calls them names. He says: Go back to the countries you live in. Whether you call it racist or not, it is simply inhumane.

Despite seeing the inhumanity of this administration's policies—when we

were there, we weren't even allowed to see the worst. Frankly, government employees who were there were mostly doing their best. But the people who make these decisions—the people in the White House, the people at Mar-a-Lago, the people who don't have any idea of what people can see—they didn't want us to see the worst of the worst. They were denying me, as a representative of 12 million people in my State—they don't want people to see what they are doing to these kids. It is troubling because Ohio tax dollars are supporting them. It makes you wonder what else the administration is hiding.

Despite all that, so many parts of this trip were inspiring. We saw the passion and dedication of advocacy groups. So many people in Texas, in Ohio, in Iowa, in Minnesota, and in Wyoming had traveled on their vacation time to these border communities to try to help these refugees, people whose lives are in danger. They were trying to help feed them and clothe them and visit with them and heal them. They were trying to help because they know our government hasn't. They know our government—President Trump and the people around him—have abandoned them.

I saw the Border Network for Human Rights shining a light on migrants' mistreatment and abuse to hold our government accountable. We saw the generosity and kindness of the volunteers at Annunciation House. All of those advocates and volunteers represent the best of American values.

I remember seeing a bus of refugees who arrived at Annunciation House holding babies and children, smiling and waving at us. You could see the relief on their faces because they saw people who remembered: When I was a stranger, you welcomed me. They saw American citizens who love this country, Americans who understand our values, Americans who know we are a nation of immigrants. Those children knew they were welcomed. Their families knew their children were safe.

We saw the innocence of those children who find joy through play even at the darkest times, after witnessing horrors many of us can only imagine.

Connie held a smiling baby. I picked up a Wiffle Ball bat and handed it to one of the children, and then I picked up a ball. I was told this little boy had probably never held a baseball bat because in Guatemala and Honduras and El Salvador, they mostly play soccer. I pitched to him, and he was kind of a natural. It is a reminder of our common humanity—something I hope my colleagues will keep in mind as we think about and actually fix our immigration system.

One place where we ought to be able to start is on something so many of us in both parties agree on—that we have to find a solution for the Dreamers who are American in every sense but the paperwork.

Let me tell you a story. I was in Toledo, OH, 2 months ago. I met a young

woman who is probably in her midtwenties. She is married with a small child. She works full time. She has been in this country since she was 4. Her parents brought her from Central America. She doesn't remember Central America; she was 4. She is from Toledo, not from Guatemala anymore. Her parents speak Spanish. She speaks Spanish at home, but in every other way, she is as American as just about anybody else in Toledo. She said that she and her husband have one car. She goes to work. She drops him off, and she takes the car to work and then picks him up at the end of the day. She said: Senator, when I go to work every day, I go outside and I check my turn signal and I check my brake lights. When I stop at a stop sign, I count to three because I am terrified I am going to get picked up for a traffic violation and deported.

She works hard. She pays her taxes. She does what we ask her to do. She is active in her church. She does all the things that Italian and French immigrants coming to the United States have done.

In fact, I was talking to a gentleman who works downstairs in this body. He works in the Senate. He has worked here for 40 years. He came from Italy when he was 10. He said he was discouraged and unhappy about President Trump's comments about sending them back to where they came from. He said: When I was a kid, my parents were Italian. Their English isn't as good as mine. I was 10 years old. People told us to go back where we came from.

That is just wrong.

I hope my colleagues will keep in mind the comments from a young activist in El Paso, Senaida Navar. She is a Dreamer. She was raised in El Paso. She is a faculty member at the University of Texas at El Paso. She has dedicated her life to fighting for immigrant families. She has been a Dreamer for years. She said: "I don't know what it means to be without anxiety. That is not a dignified way to live." She is always worried. She is worried like that young woman in Toledo.

We share a common human dignity. It is despicable that this administration tries to rob people of that. I hope my colleagues think about that. We know the way we solve our complex immigration problem isn't by locking up families and children in cages. It is not by tearing apart families or by throwing out hard-working, law-abiding teachers and workers and students and families of servicemembers. Many of these Dreamers end up in the military. They have known no other home but America. We can't abandon our values—the same values that have made the United States a beacon of hope around the world for generations.

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.

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

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

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I come to the floor this afternoon with a number of my colleagues because we are very concerned about the lack of legislating that is happening here in the Senate, particularly on the issue of climate change.

As this poster shows, it has been 76 days since the House passed H.R. 9, which is the Climate Action Now Act. It is legislation that would prevent the President from using funds to withdraw the United States from the Paris climate agreement. We also have a Senate proposal, which is bipartisan legislation that I have sponsored, called the International Climate Accountability Act. It has been cosponsored by 46 Senators. Yet the majority leader has refused to bring these bills to the floor for a debate.

It didn't used to be this way. Even in my time in the Senate, it didn't used to be this way. The Senate used to take up important issues, put them on the floor for substantive debate, and at the end of the day, work to pass legislation to improve the lives of Americans. Sadly, what we see now is that the Senate is turning into a legislative graveyard. Unfortunately, the International Climate Accountability Act is one of several proposals that the majority leader wishes to bury. Yet, without a doubt, climate change is the greatest environmental challenge the world has ever faced.

At the end of last year, the U.S. Global Change Research Program released its "Fourth National Climate Assessment." This report makes it abundantly clear that every American is affected by climate change and that the threat it poses will get worse over time unless we take action.

I want to be clear that climate change is not just an environmental issue; it affects our public health, and it affects our economy. In New Hampshire, we understand this all too well. Rising temperatures are shortening our fall foliage season. They are disrupting maple syrup production. They are affecting our ski industry and snowmobiling industry. We are seeing stresses on our fisheries. Our trout is moving farther north in streams. We see an increase in insect-borne diseases. Lyme disease is on the rise in New Hampshire and throughout New England. Our moose population is down 40 percent, and other wildlife is being affected. All of these changes are tied to the effects of climate change.

A few months ago, I met with members of the New England Water Environment Association to discuss the enormous effect climate change is having on our water infrastructure. Rising temperatures and increased rainfall brought on by climate change make flooding more frequent and rainstorms

more intense. We are seeing that now on our gulf coast, where we have seen 20 inches of rain in parts of Louisiana.

Americans are witnessing this firsthand across the country with the historic flooding and with the tornadoes that have swept across the South and the Midwest. These extreme weather events not only endanger families and homes and businesses, but they increase the strain on our Nation's overburdened water systems. They take water treatment plants offline. This means debris is discharged into our rivers and streams, which affects our water quality.

These extreme weather events are particularly dangerous for coastal communities. I see my colleague from Maine is here, Senator KING. They take this in Maine with its long coastline. In New Hampshire, we have 18 miles of coastline, but we still see it at our coastline.

Accelerated sea level rise, which is primarily driven by climate change, is worsening tidal flooding conditions and imperiling coastal homes and businesses.

According to a 2018 study from the Union of Concerned Scientists, projected tidal flooding in the United States will put as many as 311,000 coastal homes that are collectively valued at \$117 billion at risk of chronic flooding within the next 30 years. That is the lifespan of a typical mortgage. By the end of the century, the report estimates that 2.4 million homes and 107,000 commercial properties that are currently worth more than \$1 trillion will be at risk for chronic flooding. This includes properties in towns like Hampton Beach, which is located in New Hampshire's Seacoast Region.

For those who haven't had a chance to visit Hampton Beach, it is beautiful. It is a perfect vacation destination. It is a barrier island town with the Hampton River on one side of the city and the ocean on the other. Unfortunately, this makes Hampton Beach one of the State's most at-risk towns from rising sea levels.

In this photograph, we can see the impact of rising sea levels. This was taken in November of 2017. We see what is happening. All of these homes should not be underwater here. Yet that is what we are seeing.

A 2019 report from Columbia University and the First Street Foundation found that Hampton Beach lost \$7.9 million in home value due to tidal flooding between 2005 and 2017. In total, increased tidal flooding has cost New Hampshire homeowners \$15 million in lost property value. This is just in recent years, and the problem is only going to get worse.

The impact of climate change will get worse if we don't act now to reduce harmful greenhouse gas emissions. I am proud that in New Hampshire, we understand the need for climate action. We have implemented policies that reduce carbon emissions, that help us transition to a more energy-efficient,

clean economy, but New Hampshire can't do this alone, and the United States can't do this alone. International cooperation is key to reducing global greenhouse gas emissions. That is why the Paris Agreement is so critical in mitigating the worst effects of climate change.

With a delegation from the Senate, I had the opportunity to attend the 2015 U.N. climate summit, and we participated in discussions that led to the Paris climate accord. During the summit, we were impressed by the leadership and the determination that was shown by the United States to encourage other nations to reach ambitious emissions reduction goals. Unfortunately, when President Trump announced his intention to withdraw from the Paris Agreement, the United States forfeited this leadership to other countries.

In the absence of leadership from the White House, the majority leader should allow the Senate to consider the International Climate Accountability Act, which would keep the United States in the Paris Agreement. Let's take up the bill that has been sent over by the House. Let's take up the Senate bill. Let's bring this bill to the floor, and let's have a debate. If people don't support it, they can debate it, but we should be talking about this. The threat to New Hampshire and to this country is in doubt, and until we act, it is only going to get worse.

We have a number of our colleagues who would like to come to the floor and speak to this issue, and I am pleased that Senator KING from Maine, my colleague, is here to talk about these impacts.

Yet, before my colleagues speak, I ask unanimous consent to show a banner that was delivered to my office by the Moms Clean Air Force.

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

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Let me just show everyone this. This was made by the mothers who came to our office. What they have written is: "Please protect the families of New Hampshire from air pollution and climate change. Moms Clean Air Force." You are able to see all of the folks who were with the delegation and who visited my office to sign this because everyone is concerned about what the impact is going to be on their families and on their communities if we don't address climate change.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

Mr. KING. Mr. President, I am happy to join my colleague from New Hampshire and other colleagues tonight to talk about one of the most serious threats to ever face this Nation or, in fact, this world.

A few years ago, Tom Brokaw, the television news anchor, wrote a wonderful book called "The Greatest Generation." He was writing about the generation of our parents and grand-

parents who fought in World War II, who paid off the debt from World War II, who built the Interstate Highway System—who, by the way, paid for it—and who built the greatest economy the world has ever seen. That was the "greatest generation."

The characteristic of that generation was that of meeting their responsibilities. It was not of avoiding problems but of meeting them head-on and establishing for the world and for this country an example of governance and of the responsible dealing with issues and problems the likes of which we have not seen in our lifetimes.

If Tom Brokaw were writing another book today about us, it would be called "The Lousiest Generation." We are the ones who have built up an unconscionable debt for our children. We cut taxes in the middle of a war in 2005. It was the first time I had been able to find in world history when that had ever happened. We have given ourselves tax cuts and not paid the bill, and we are passing on this enormous \$22 trillion debt to our children.

None of us on our deathbed, when our children are standing around, would lean up and say: Here is the credit card, kids. I have run it up to the max. You can now pay for it. Yet that is exactly what we are doing collectively—the lousiest generation, the one that hasn't paid its bills.

Infrastructure. We have allowed our infrastructure to fall to pieces. It is the infrastructure that was given to us by our parents, that was paid for—the bridges, the roads, the railroads, and the airports. Now we have one of the poorest infrastructure situations in the world. It is embarrassing to go to a small country somewhere else in the world and walk into an airport that makes ours look old and falling apart.

So we haven't kept up with the infrastructure, and that is a debt that we are passing on to our children, just as real as the national debt.

Finally, we are facing a known, real, unquestionable crisis in terms of the effect on the climate, and this is something that we are shamefully passing on to our children. They are the ones who are going to have to deal with the consequences that we will not face. They are the ones who are going to have to pay the bills, who are going to have to shore up the infrastructure, who are going to have to respond to the drastic changes in the climate not only here but around the world, and we are doing nothing.

What will it take? What will it take for us to meet this responsibility? What is it going to take?

Well, OK, let's go down a list. Maybe it will take scientific data that demonstrates the level of CO₂ that we have put into the atmosphere.

I don't seem to have a chart. I don't need a chart. For millions of years, CO₂ has varied between 180 and 280 parts per million. People say: Well, it varies over time. This is nothing new. No, between 180 and 280 is the variation until the

last 50 to 75 years, when it has become a hockey stick. We are now at over 400 parts per million, the highest it has been in 3 million years, and, by the way, the last time it was at 400 parts per million, the oceans were 60 feet higher.

CO₂ in the atmosphere is our responsibility. It didn't come from volcanoes. It came from the consumption of fossil fuel, which developed and built the wonderful economy that we have and the economy around the world. Nobody can gainsay that.

The question is, Now that we are seeing the consequences, don't we have a responsibility to do something about it? Has there been a gigantic increase in CO₂ in the atmosphere? Check. Yes. Unquestionably.

No. 2, how about Arctic ice? Here we are. In the last 30 years, two-thirds of the Arctic ice has disappeared—two-thirds.

I was at a conference this morning on the Arctic. The Arctic Ocean is open for the first time in human history. The conference was about shipping and mineral exploration and Native peoples losing their habitat and their way of life. Two-thirds of the Arctic ice is gone in 25 years. This is a place that has been covered with ice for thousands of years—as long as we have any memory, but now the Arctic ice is going.

Every time I see a prediction of where it is going to be in 10 years, lo and behold, it is there in 2 or 3 years. It is opening up. That is telling us something.

Is there an indication from the Arctic ice that something drastic is happening to our climate? Yes. Check that box.

No. 3 is the increased intensity of fires. We have seen the most intense wildfires in this country in the last 10 years that we have ever seen—more acreage, more intensity, more lives lost, more property lost. This is caused by drought and by changes in the climate, all wrought by our activity.

Increase in fires and wildfires? Check.

Sea level rise. Here is the background on the sea level. We tend to think of the sea level as being a fixed quantity. We walk out in the ocean, and it always looks pretty much the way it is, whether it is off the Maine coast or the New Hampshire coast.

Well, it turns out that back here, 24,000 years ago, when the glaciers were covering most of North America, the sea was 390 feet shallower than it is today. Chesapeake Bay was dry land. It was 390 feet shallower than it is today.

Then, the glaciers melted, and the sea level started to rise. This is an interesting period about 14,000 years ago called the meltwater pulse 1A.

This drastic rise in sea level is about a foot a decade. That is what is predicted for the next century.

Oh, it could never happen. A foot a decade? You must be crazy.

It happened. We know that it happened.

Now, here is why we aren't paying attention. The last 6,000 years, it has been pretty flat. It has been pretty level. The sea level has plateaued, in effect, and, therefore, that happens to be recorded human history, that 6,000 years. So we think that is just where the ocean has always been.

But do you know what? The last remnant of the glaciers are in Greenland and Antarctica, and they are going. They are going. There is 20 feet of sea level rise in the Greenland ice sheet and 212 feet of sea level rise stored in the Antarctic ice sheet, and they are going.

I have been to Greenland. You can see it. The Jakobshavn Glacier has retreated as much in the last 10 years as it retreated in the prior 100 years.

The only thing slower than a glacier, by the way, is the U.S. Congress. We make glaciers look like they are moving fast, and, in fact, the Jakobshavn Glacier is moving fast.

Sea level rise is happening. In Norfolk, VA, they have seen a foot and a half in the last decade. They are having sunny day floods. They are having sunny day floods in Miami. They are spending millions of dollars to build up their roads.

People say dealing with climate change is too expensive. Not dealing with it is too expensive. In not dealing with it, the expense is going to be astronomical.

By the way, if you talk about sea level in Norfolk, VA, it is a national security risk. With the number of bases that we have around the world that are at or near sea level, it is going to be an enormous task and a very expensive one to protect those assets.

There is another national security issue involved in this that we are ignoring, and that is the displacement of peoples. During the Syrian civil war, there were 4 to 6 million Syrian refugees. A few came here, not many. Most went to Western Europe, and, as we know, that refugee flow turned the politics of Western Europe upside-down. Call it 5 million people.

The estimates for refugees from climate change over the next 100 years is between 200 and 400 million people. Imagine what that is going to do to the geopolitics of this world—200 million people on the march, looking for water, looking for a place that is habitable, looking for relief from drought, from fires. This is a national security threat.

Is it a national security threat? Yes. Check that box.

What is it going to take? What is it going to take?

Intense storms. We don't need to tell people about the intensity of storms. We have seen them. We have lived through them. I once made a joke in Maine that I am 300 years old, and somebody said: Why? I said: Because according to the news, I have lived through three storms of the century.

We keep having storms of the century or 500-year storms, and they are happening more and more frequently.

The heat. Nine out of 10 of the hottest years on record occurred in the last 15 years. This past June was the hottest June since records were kept—the hottest June since records were kept.

Now, there is a difference between weather and climate. I understand that, and I am not going to say that the heat wave that the Midwest is suffering this weekend is a reflection of climate change. It may or may not be. Weather is what happens day-to-day. Climate is what happens in the long term, and we know that we have already increased global climate by about 1.5 degrees Celsius. In many cases, it is causing irreversible damage.

When we get to 2 degrees Celsius, which we are headed for, it is going to be catastrophic for coral, for farms, for animals, and for people.

Species are already on the move. Senator SHAHEEN mentioned the ocean. There are the lobsters in Maine. There used to be a vigorous lobster fishery in Massachusetts and Rhode Island. It is essentially gone now, and the lobsters are in Maine, which is a mainstay of our economy. It is a \$1.5 billion a year business. The lobsters are moving north and east. Why? Because the Gulf of Maine is heating faster than 99 percent of the areas of the world. The only place heating faster than the Gulf of Maine is the Arctic, and those lobsters are doing what any animal does. They seek out more hospitable climate.

Climate. This isn't academic. These aren't predictions. This is something you can see. The people on the water in Maine know it is happening. The woodsmen know it is happening because they are seeing different species of trees. Bugs are moving farther north. Ticks are a huge problem in Northern New England and places where they weren't before. This isn't something that is academic.

What is it going to take?

One of the things that the Senator from New Hampshire talked about is—and I think it is important to emphasize because I hear this sometimes—why should we do this? It is happening everywhere in the world.

Yes, that is why the Paris climate accord was so important. It wasn't mandatory, but it was a set of goals, and the entire world was engaged. Now there is the entire world but one—us. We are out. We are outliers. We have lost our voice. We have lost our influence. We have lost our leadership position on one of the most important challenges faced by this or any generation. Yes, we haven't met our responsibilities as our parents and our grandparents did.

On December 1, 1862, Abraham Lincoln came to the House Chamber and spoke about the crisis of the Civil War. The Congress didn't get it. They were doing politics as usual, and President Lincoln was trying to move them from the lethargy of the legislative process into the emergency and the urgency of the Civil War.

He said two things toward the end of that speech that I think are profoundly instructive for us today. The first is how to deal with this change. And this is a change. This is new. I understand that, and dealing with change is difficult.

Abraham Lincoln uttered what I think are the most profound words about change that I have ever encountered. Here is what Abraham Lincoln said:

The dogmas of the quiet past, are inadequate to the stormy present. The occasion is piled high with difficulty, and we must rise—with the occasion. As our case is new, so we must think anew, and act anew.

And here is the punch line:

We must disenthral ourselves, and then we shall save our country.

“We must disenthral ourselves,” and that means to think in new and different ways, to see reality as it is, “and then we shall save our country” and, in this in case, the world.

The other admonition from Lincoln that day, which I think is very important for us, puts the responsibility directly on us right here. He was talking to Members of Congress.

He said:

Fellow-citizens, we cannot escape history. We of this Congress and this administration, will be remembered in spite of ourselves. No personal significance, or insignificance, can spare one or another of us. The fiery trial through which we pass—

Of course he was talking about the Civil War, and we are talking about a fiery trial of our generation.

The fiery trial through which we pass, will light us down, in honor or dishonor, to the latest generation.

The fiery trial through which we pass will light us down, in honor or dishonor, to the latest generation.

I want to meet this responsibility. I want this Congress to be remembered, as we will be, either way, but I want this Congress to be remembered as people who met the fiery trial, who met our responsibility, who thought about others more than ourselves and made a difference in the life of this country and the world.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. UDALL. Mr. President, I rise with my colleagues to talk about this urgent issue that faces us: climate change.

Climate disruption is an existential threat to our planet—an existential threat. Scientists recognize this, so do the American people, and so does the international community. One hundred ninety-four countries and the European Union have signed the Paris Agreement, and so did the United States.

Quite frankly, we shouldn't even have to argue this anymore, but for those who still don't see the evidence of climate change, it is all around us: a warming climate; recordbreaking hurricanes off the Atlantic, the Gulf of Mexico, and in the Caribbean; unprecedented flooding in the Midwest; Native

villages in Alaska actually falling into the sea; and drought and the most severe wildfires in the West we have ever seen.

This is from a 2003 fire near the Taos Pueblo in New Mexico. We in New Mexico are on pins and needles every fire season now. We don't know what disaster will hit us. We know this climate catastrophe is caused by human activity. Report after report tells us we don't have any time to waste; that we need to act now.

Even this administration's most recent climate analysis finds that global warming “is transforming where and how we live and presents growing challenges to human health and the quality of life, the economy, and the natural systems that support us.” The report concludes we must act now “to avoid substantial damages to the U.S. economy, environment, and human health and well-being over the coming decades.”

That is coming from an administration of a climate change-denying President. Yet this administration has slashed and burned every protection, program, and agreement aimed at combating climate change it can find, from the Clean Power Plan to methane control regulations, to the Paris Agreement. I can tell you who in this Congress is the administration's No. 1 accomplice: the majority leader of the Senate. The leader's legislative graveyard is littered with legislation the American people want and deserve, from improving healthcare to reforming our democracy, to commonsense measures to prevent gun violence.

Climate change threatens the land, the lives, and the livelihoods of homeowners, small businesses, farmers, ranchers, fishers, and so many others all across the Nation. The majority leader's refusal to take up climate action is about as bad as congressional malfeasance gets.

In May, the House of Representatives passed the first major climate legislation in nearly a decade—the Climate Action Now Act. H.R. 9 aims to decrease greenhouse gas emissions by about one-quarter by 2025. The bill ensures the United States stays in the Paris Agreement.

This bill is not extreme, but it does respond to the dire situation we face. The Senate should debate this bill and pass it, but we will not. We all know the majority leader will continue to stand in its way.

Due to this negligence and inaction, States are filling the void and taking it upon themselves to act. My home State of New Mexico passed legislation this year aimed at transitioning to 100 percent carbon-free electricity. Our largest utility says they can do this by 2040. It is an approach that is consistent with the renewable electricity standard bill I introduced last month. That legislation is designed to achieve at least 50 percent renewable electricity nationwide in 15 years, putting the United States on a path for a zero carbon power sector by 2050.

The fact is, no American is immune from the threats of climate change, and many of our most underrepresented and vulnerable communities are at the greatest risk. For example, the most recent National Climate Assessment finds that Tribes and indigenous peoples are impacted disproportionately and uniquely. Many Native people's way of life is intimately tied to the land and water. These natural resources—that they have depended on for hundreds or even thousands of years—are being disrupted in ways that upend their communities. Their subsistence, their cultural practices, their sacred sites are all being threatened.

Look at the proximity of this fire to the Taos Pueblo. It is not only sacred to the Taos people, but it is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Last week, Senator SCHATZ and I wrote to American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian leaders seeking their input on how climate change is affecting their communities. We want to foster a dialogue about what actions Congress and Federal agencies should take to mitigate the impacts.

I am the vice chairman of the Indian Affairs Committee. Senator SCHATZ is the chair of the Special Committee on the Climate Crisis, and we were joined by all Democratic Senators on the Indian Affairs Committee. This effort should have been bipartisan—climate change is blind to political party—but it wasn't because too many Republican members just follow President Trump and the majority leader, killing anything aimed at progress.

The majority leader jokes that he is the grim reaper, sounding the death knell on legislation, but climate change is no laughing matter and neither is access to healthcare for millions of Americans, or our broken campaign finance system, or the safety of American schoolchildren.

The Senate must do its duty to the American people and tackle these most pressing problems. This does not mean rubberstamping legislation sent to us by the House. The Senate has a storied tradition of debate and compromise. Let's return to that tradition, have a real climate debate, and pass some real bipartisan solutions.

We all came to the Senate to solve problems—problems like climate change. We didn't come here to spend time in a legislative graveyard. We don't want to be a place where good ideas come to die.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

Mr. SCHATZ. Mr. President, Leader MCCONNELL may, in fact, be proud that he has turned the Senate floor into a legislative graveyard, but that doesn't mean we Senators have abandoned our effort to make this body work for the American people.

Today the special committee on the climate crisis held its very first hearing, where we heard from five mayors from cities across the United States.

They told our committee that the average temperature in Atlanta has already increased 2 degrees since 1980; that 3 of St. Paul's 10 biggest floods ever recorded have happened in the last 10 years. So it is clear to them that climate change is not something that will happen eventually, in 5 or 10 or 20 years. It is happening now. It is happening in real time.

That is why these mayors are not waiting for Leader McConnell, or for the Trump administration, or anyone else to start doing something about it. Honolulu, St. Paul, Pittsburgh, Atlanta, Portland and cities and towns across the Nation are working to transition to 100 percent clean energy.

Atlanta is converting an abandoned quarry into a reservoir to increase the city's emergency drinking water supply. Portland, OR, has designated more than \$50 million for a green jobs and healthy homes initiative.

The experience of these mayors stands in contrast to some of the rhetoric we hear on the Senate floor and elsewhere about how climate action is somehow economically unwise.

The Portland mayor, Ted Wheeler, pointed out that his city's investments in reducing carbon emissions are the very things that make people want to live in Portland. He said in his testimony that "failing to take meaningful action to address climate change is bad for the economy."

That is why Senate Democrats are not going to wait for Republican colleagues—because the cost of climate inaction is so much higher than the cost of action. The damage that is being done to our cities, our farmers, our fisheries—and the risks that are threatening our workers, our small businesses, our financial industry, and our taxpayers—are too high for us to wait any longer. The benefits of action are way higher than the cost of inaction.

The Pittsburgh mayor, William Peduto, said today that if you want to turn a coal miner into an environmentalist, then give them a paycheck. If you want to turn a coal miner into an environmentalist, then give them a paycheck.

Hawaii isn't a coal mining State, but his words rang true to me because they illustrate the basic point, which is that climate action can, should, and will work for everybody.

So we are not going to let Majority Leader McConnell stop us from taking action. He is certainly slowing us down, but he is not going to stop us.

Over the coming months, the Senate Democrats' special committee on the climate crisis will establish the predicate for climate action. Through hearings both in Congress and out in the field, we are going to build the record and the coalitions needed to move forward.

We are also going to keep an open door for our Republican colleagues to join us. There is a way to address the climate crisis that is consistent with

conservative principles. Senator Whitehouse and I have introduced a carbon pricing bill that aligns with traditional conservative principles and has the support of Republicans outside of the U.S. Senate, but as long as Leader McConnell keeps standing in the way of the Senate doing anything, as long as he has turned this body into a legislative graveyard—not just on climate but on healthcare, on prescription drug costs, on the cruelty shown to children and families on the southern border of the United States—then we are going to have to find other ways to act without it.

All of this stuff should be bipartisan, and one day it again will be, but right now we cannot wait. We will not wait. The severity of the climate crisis and the urgency for action are just too great.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I join my colleagues in bringing up the challenges of climate change and our responsibility to do something about it.

Climate change is real. It is putting our communities at risk. Our activities here on Earth are affecting climate change, and we can do something about it. By reducing carbon emissions, we can make a real difference in the trajectory of the catastrophic impact of climate change. I just want to give a couple examples.

Last Monday, we had record flash flooding in this region. In less than 1 hour, we had 1 month's worth of rain. That is becoming typical as a result of climate change. In our region, we saw streets that were flooded, sinkholes that developed, water pouring into our Metro stations, and roads that were literally ripped apart.

This shows one major road in Potosi, MD—not very far from here—that is critically important for a community to be connected. The road was destroyed by the record rainfall during that period of time.

We had CSX and Amtrak put high-speed restrictions on the rail service. In Baltimore, we had 1.3 million gallons of sewage from the Jones Falls river flow into the Inner Harbor, which produced a sight in the Inner Harbor of Baltimore that is truly regrettable.

This photo I think shows beautiful downtown Baltimore. It doesn't look very beautiful. That was just this past Monday and was as a result of the high amount of water flow and the inability of our sewage treatment facilities to treat that amount of runoff. We are just not prepared for it. It is another example of why we need to act.

We need to act now. Climate change is here. The catastrophic impacts are here, and we can do something about it.

Let me just make a couple of suggestions. We need to upgrade our stormwater systems in this country. We have a 21st-century problem with 20th-century infrastructure. It can't

handle it. We need to invest in adaptation and deal with the realities of the new weather systems we are confronting every day.

Yes, we have to act on climate change. As I said, it is real. Our activities are impacting it, and we could do something about it. There are many examples I could give that are affecting our lives. I have already shared some about some water. We have wildfires in the West. We have extreme weather conditions throughout. We have unprecedented concentration and frequency of rainfall in the mid-Atlantic, driven by climate change.

Studies have shown that tropical storms move more slowly, with much more precipitation. We saw that with Hurricanes Harvey and Irma in 2017 and Florence in 2018. All those were slower moving hurricanes, dropping a lot more water, saturating our inlands, and making it more difficult to deal with the next weather condition. We have warmer ocean temperatures that are making these storms more costly to our communities. We have what is known as compound flooding as a result of climate change—storm surges that hit our shorelines, which are already saturated by inland precipitation.

After Tropical Storm Barry, FEMA said: "Given [the] unprecedented magnitude of natural disasters over the past two years and the current projected path of the storm, a hurricane making landfall is likely to impact communities still working to recover from the previous event." That is how frequent we are going through flooding.

I will give another example of how much flooding we have had. In my region, in Baltimore, if you use the period from 1957 to 1963, that 6-year period, we had an average of 1.3 floods per year. If you use 2007 through 2013, we have had 13.1 floods per year. In Annapolis, those numbers are 3.8 floods in the 1957 through 1963 period, compared to 39 floods from 2007 to 2013. That is a tenfold increase in the number of flooding events.

This is an issue that is with us today. Thanks to climate change, Baltimore may feel more like the Mississippi Delta than Chesapeake Bay country.

Professor Matt Fitzpatrick at the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science published a study in February in the journal *Nature Communications* with Robert Dunn, an ecologist at North Carolina State University, to match cities with their climate counterparts in 2080. If we continue this trajectory, they predict that the average city will come to resemble climates more than 500 miles away, often to the south or west. Each one of our communities is going to be impacted by climate change if we do not take action to change the trajectory.

Like all States, Maryland has a very important agricultural community. As a farmer, it is difficult to make ends meet today, but with these extreme weather conditions, it becomes even more difficult.

It is in our economic interest, our environmental interest, as well as our security interest for us to deal with the climate issues. Unchecked, the sea level in Maryland coasts will rise. If we don't do anything about it in the next century, it is projected to be at least 16 inches and could be as high as 4 feet. We know the catastrophic impact to our coastal communities if we do not take action to prevent that from happening.

Our activities of reducing carbon emissions can make a difference, and we should do that now to reduce our use of fossil fuels.

Our States have acted. I am very proud of the actions we have seen from local governments and from the private sector. Nine Northeastern and Mid-Atlantic States, including Maryland, announced an intent of a new, regional, low-carbon transportation policy proposal. All are members of the Transportation and Climate Initiative. This is great. Our States are doing what we need to do.

But I just want to underscore what many of my colleagues have said. President Trump made the egregious decision to withdraw us from the Paris climate agreement. I was there when U.S. leadership was indispensable in bringing the world community together to take action. Every country in the world joined us in making commitments to reduce our carbon emissions. It was U.S. leadership. The President has withdrawn us from that agreement—or is attempting to do that. We can act. We are an independent branch.

I applaud the action of the House in passing H.R. 9, the Climate Action Now Act, but it has been 76 days since the House has taken action on this very important climate issue.

Senator SHAHEEN was on the floor earlier and has introduced S. 1743, the International Climate Accountability Act. The United States should meet its nationally determined contributions. We determine our own contributions. We should meet those contributions and join the international community in doing something about climate change.

So, yes, I do ask the majority leader to let the Senate do what we should do. Let us consider climate legislation. Let us debate and act on climate legislation. We shouldn't be the graveyard on these important issues. The Senate must stop denying action on important issues and do the right thing to meet the threat of climate change. It is real here today. I urge my colleagues to bring this issue up so that we can, in fact, do the responsible thing.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at 11:30 a.m. on Thursday, July 18, the Senate vote on the Corker and Blanchard nominations and that if confirmed, the motions to reconsider be considered

made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action; further, that following disposition of the Blanchard nomination, the Senate resume consideration of the Tapia nomination; finally, that at 1:45 p.m., the Senate vote on the Tapia nomination and that if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session and 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.

U.S. VICTIMS OF STATE SPONSORED TERRORISM FUND

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I commend my colleague from New York for his tireless work to ensure that the brave men and women who selflessly responded to the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, receive the compensation and care they deserve. Out of respect for his work and their sacrifice I do not want to hold up the passage of this bill. However, I think it is also important that we remember the other Americans who have suffered and lost loved ones at the hands of foreign terrorists. In 1979, a group of Americans were taken hostage from the U.S. Embassy in Tehran, Iran.

In 1981, after 444 days of torture, 52 of them were finally released. Years later, I had the opportunity to meet with several of these brave Americans who reside in my State. In 2015, I worked with my colleagues in this body to ensure that these victims, their families, and other victims of international terrorism were able to receive compensation through the creation of the U.S. Victims of State Sponsored Terrorism Fund. Congress was clear that this fund was created specifically to help the Tehran hostages and other victims of state-sponsored terrorism who were not eligible to participate in other compensation funds.

However, due to a misinterpretation of the statute, the fund has become overwhelmed. This year will mark the 40th anniversary of the Iran Hostage Crisis. Time is not on our side. People who have been waiting for decades are now dying without the compensation they were promised.

Will Senator SCHUMER work with me and Chairman GRAHAM to secure a solution to this problem in the next appropriate vehicle so that the Tehran

hostages and other victims of state-sponsored terrorism can finally receive their due?

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I promise to work with Senator ISAKSON to ensure that the Tehran hostages receive the compensation they deserve and provide equitable treatment for all victims of terrorism.

AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, on October 22, 2018, the Departments of Health and Human Services and the Treasury issued a document, entitled State Relief and Empowerment Waivers, relating to section 1332 of the Affordable Care Act and its implementing regulations.

Although it was not submitted to Congress for review under the Congressional Review Act, CRA, this so-called guidance document seemed to me to be a substantive rule that should be subject to review under the CRA. Accordingly, I wrote a letter, along with Chairman PALLONE of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, asking the U.S. Government Accountability Office, GAO, to determine whether the CRA applied.

This week, I received a reply, in which the GAO general counsel concludes that the 2018 guidance "is a rule under the CRA, which requires that it be submitted to Congress for review."

I ask unanimous consent that the letter from GAO, dated July 15, 2019, be printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD following my remarks. The letter I am now submitting to be printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD is the original document provided by GAO to my office. I will also provide a copy of the GAO letter to the Parliamentarian's office.

Based on Senate precedent, my understanding is that the publication of the GAO legal opinion in today's RECORD will start the "clock" for congressional review under the provisions of the CRA.

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

U.S. GOVERNMENT
ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE,
Washington, DC, July 15, 2019.

Subject: Department of Health and Human Services and Department of the Treasury—Applicability of the Congressional Review Act to State Relief and Empowerment Waivers

Hon. RON WYDEN,
Ranking Member, Committee on Finance,
U.S. Senate.

Hon. FRANK PALLONE, JR.,
Chairman, Committee on Energy and Commerce,
House of Representatives.

This responds to your request for our legal opinion as to whether guidance issued by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Department of the Treasury (Treasury) on October 22, 2018, entitled "State Relief and Empowerment Waivers" (2018 Guidance), is a rule for purposes of the Congressional Review Act (CRA). Letter from Ranking Member of the Committee on