

subsection (a) shall include the grant programs relating to veterans treatment courts carried out by the Attorney General pursuant to sections 2991 and 3021 of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (34 U.S.C. 10651, 10701) or any other provision of law.

(d) REGULATIONS.—The Attorney General shall promulgate regulations to carry out this section.

RECOGNIZING AND CELEBRATING THE 200TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ENTRY OF ALABAMA INTO THE UNION AS THE 22ND STATE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 456, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 456) recognizing and celebrating the 200th anniversary of the entry of Alabama into the Union as the 22nd State.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 456) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

ORDERS FOR WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2019

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 9:30 a.m., Wednesday, December 18; further, that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, morning business be closed, and the Senate proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the McFarland nomination.

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

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order, following the remarks of Senator WHITEHOUSE.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Madam President, we are rapidly running out of

time to protect our future and that of our children and grandchildren from worsening climate upheaval. America ought to be taking every measure available to rein in greenhouse gas emissions from legislative action to legal action, to diplomatic action, to regulatory action, which is going to be a theme of this talk tonight. We are not doing those things, and, frankly, it is because of corruption, plain and simple.

Regulatory action, that means enforcing the laws on the books. We have a Clean Air Act that requires the Environmental Protection Agency to stop dangerous pollutants from fouling our air. The EPA has found that greenhouse gases are pollutants under the Clean Air Act, and the Supreme Court has upheld that finding. That means we ought to be regulating methane. Methane is among the most potent of greenhouse gases. When released into the atmosphere, it traps about 30 times more heat than its chemical cousin, carbon dioxide. Oil and gas extraction releases massive methane pollution. In fact, a growing body of research suggests methane pollution from natural gas extraction may completely offset the climate gains of switching from coal to natural gas.

To fulfill its duties under the Clean Air Act, as a matter of law, EPA needs to prevent methane pollution. It is the law; it is not optional. But the corrupt Trump EPA won't fight methane pollution. This corrupt EPA is run by the fossil fuel industry, which could not care less about methane emissions.

Within weeks of Scott Pruitt taking control of the Agency, the corrupted EPA withdrew its request that oil and gas companies even report methane emissions. The industry knew a true report on methane leakage would damage their case for natural gas as a less dangerous air pollutant, so they went to a line of attack, taken directly from the Big Tobacco playbook: Silence the science. The fewer facts the EPA has, the less action it needs to take under law—the corrupt Trump EPA deliberately made itself ignorant and stopped the reporting so it could avoid its duty.

Step 2 came in March 2017 with the corrupt Trump effort to roll back existing greenhouse gas regulations, including methane regulations. Trump's Executive order reads like a fossil fuel lobbyist's dream, probably because fossil fuel lobbyists wrote it. He called on the EPA to "review existing regulations that potentially burden the development or use of domestically produced energy resources and appropriately suspend, revise, or rescind those that unduly burden the development of domestic energy resources."

Regulations to limit methane pollution were among those that Trump's Executive order singled out, saying, "As soon as practical, suspend, revise, or rescind [them]."

Step 3 was to write a do-nothing replacement. After lots of dawdling,

Trump's corrupt EPA decided to draft a fake rule, a rule they could point to if challenged in court for doing nothing, but a rule that would conveniently do nothing to limit methane emissions. The fake rule exempts a huge chunk of oil and gas production from regulation, leaving the industry with an effective blank check to pollute as much methane as it likes.

As I speak, the corrupt Trump EPA is preparing to issue its final rule, and the corrupted fossil fuel industry is poised to grab everything it wanted. The final rule is one that industry stooges could have written themselves because, well, it looks like they did write it themselves. They bought that privilege the old-fashioned way, by buying it.

Even before Trump took office, the fossil fuel industry began showering him with money. Trump raised a record amount for his inauguration—nearly doubling the previous record—and Hess, Chevron, BP, Citgo, ExxonMobil, Consol Energy, Continental Resources, Murray Energy, and Valero all made six- or seven-figure donations. The oil and gas and mining sector was the second largest source of donations, providing more than \$10 million to Trump's inaugural committee. That money still flows as the 2020 election ramps up.

Fossil fuel companies are among the largest donors to the political group supporting Trump's reelection. A pipeline company is the largest single donor to the Trump victory political action committee, more than \$700,000 as of this November. The oil, gas, and mining industries account for more than \$5 million to the Trump Victory PAC.

Fossil fuel executives are some of the largest individual donors to the Trump Victory PAC. One executive alone gave \$360,000. These known donations likely represent the tip of a big dark iceberg. Dark-money political organizations accept unlimited donations and provide no disclosure, and Super PACs accept unlimited donations with little disclosure. So the bottom line is we cannot tell exactly how much fossil fuel money is flowing to groups supporting Trump, but it is a lot. When you consider the \$650 billion annual subsidiary the fossil fuel polluters enjoy, they have every reason to buy control over government from a corrupt Trump administration.

Money isn't the only way the fossil fuel industry exerts control. Oklahoma oil king and Scott Pruitt patron Harold Hamm set up a Trump leadership council to advise Trump. The fossil fuel industry was the heart of the council, with coal giants Alliance Resource Partners and Murray Energy, oil services company Baker Hughes, and natural gas company Devon Energy all active members. Of course, there was the National Association of Manufacturers, a trade association recently identified as America's worst climate obstructer.

With all these obstructers and polluters on board, the fossil fuel friendly

council fed Trump a steady diet of talking points about slashing regulations and achieving “complete American energy independence.”

These fossil fuel industry talking points became the Executive order I mentioned earlier, an order to kill any environmental protection that “unduly burdens the development of domestic energy resources.” Do you want to know who the winners were from that Executive order? Check the list of attendees at the signing ceremony: fossil fuel executives and fossil fuel industry trade association executives, come to celebrate the freedom to pollute that their influence and money had bought them.

Chevron has recently been identified as one of the companies that has done the most to damage our oceans. They are one of the top ocean-wrecking companies on the planet. In February of 2017, Chevron wrote to the corrupt Pruitt with a list of deregulatory proposals the company wanted to see implemented at the EPA. Included was a request to “refocus methane regulations, particularly those that impact existing sources, to encourage voluntary approaches.” For sure, you can trust one of the world’s worst ocean polluters with voluntary approaches.

The corrupt Trump EPA was stocked with fossil fuel industry cronies ready to implement whatever the industry wanted. Pruitt rose to political power on a wave of fossil fuel money and demonstrated a willingness to sell his office by putting fossil fuel industry asks verbatim onto his official letterhead.

Andrew Wheeler, Pruitt’s successor as Administrator, had been a leading lobbyist for the coal industry. The head of the EPA Air Office, Bill Wehrum, rose to prominence by helping build and run an array of trade associations and front groups for—guess what—the fossil fuel industry.

Beyond Pruitt and Wheeler and Wehrum, the EPA’s political leadership crawled with fossil fuel flunkies, like

the one who left to set up the fossil-fuel dark energy group Energy 45 to help promote fossil fuel energy policies; or the lawyer-lobbyist for energy interests Dominion Energy, Koch Industries, and TransCanada overseeing Air Office compliance, of all things. It has been an infestation.

It is easy for the fossil fuel industry to spend big money to corrupt the EPA because the corruption payback is so big; the dirty methane work alone is estimated to save oil and gas companies hundreds of millions of dollars.

Meanwhile, the American Petroleum Institute, the largest trade association for the oil and gas industry, announced a new seven-figure ad campaign called “We’re on it.” “We’re on it.” These ads—on the Internet, TV, and billboards—they are all over the Washington, DC, airport. They are designed to fool the public and to fool policymakers that the oil industry is “on its” methane emissions problem. Of course, they are not. Of course, they are lying. It is what they do.

Science tells us that methane emissions are far higher than the estimates out of the corrupt Trump EPA. The investigative journalism group Unearthed found that leading oil companies are emitting unprecedented methane pollution. In just three producing basins, in just 1 year, oil companies emitted methane equivalent to the annual emissions of 10 coal-fired power plants or 8 million cars.

There is a recent New York Times article that you can link to showing infrared imagery—it is really impressive to see, actually, if you click through to it—infrared imagery of methane billowing out of what they call super-emitter fossil fuel facilities.

A recent article described one methane blowout in Ohio leaking as much “methane than the entire oil and gas industries of many nations do in a year.”

“We are on it.” Yeah, they are “on it.” What they are on is a binge of

lying about emissions, corrupting our politics, and blocking climate action. These massive polluting industries have a long track record of climate denial and deceit. It is how they roll.

A top climate obstructer, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, pays for a phony study, claiming the Paris agreement would cost jobs and economic growth, and Trump pulls out a pass. Oil companies lobby to gut auto fuel efficiency standards, and Pruitt and Wheeler gut the standards. The natural gas industry objects to rules limiting methane emission. The corrupt Trump EPA rolls them back.

Just now, on the Senate floor, we are looking at a tax extenders package that wipes out the tax extenders for solar going forward, wind going forward. They gave us 1 year looking backwards. Great, thanks a bunch. Electric vehicles, storage, and batteries, all of that had been in a tentative agreement. The fossil fuel industry and the Trump administration kiboshed all of it. “On it,” indeed.

Will Attorney General Barr look into any of this? Of course not. In the corrupt Trump administration, fossil fuel money and influence puts that industry above the law. They can pollute and corrupt more or less at will. We cannot afford this self-dealing from polluters any longer. This is flat-out wrong. Indeed, it is flat-out crooked. It is not only time to wake up, Madam President, it is time to clean up. This behavior is a disgrace.

I yield the floor.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M.
TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands adjourned until 9:30 a.m. tomorrow.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 5:59 p.m., adjourned until Wednesday, December 18, 2019, at 9:30 a.m.