

our own communities as a result of climate change. The past 2 years alone were the two worst fire seasons on record. Climate change has, no doubt, heightened the impact of these fires which is why we are witnessing these horrific impacts, and they are so difficult to manage.

Climate change is happening now and we must do more. For starters, we must continue to make significant efforts to reduce our carbon footprint. We must continue to invest in clean air and affordable transportation made more readily available to all of our communities throughout the country.

Last year, the House took strong steps to protect our planet in the future by passing H.R. 9, the Climate Action Now Act. H.R. 9 confronts the climate crisis by keeping us in the Paris Agreement, and demanding a plan of action from the administration to participate in a meaningful fashion. But that bill, along with hundreds of others, are currently sitting on Senator MCCONNELL's desk collecting dust, sadly.

These current events have made it clear that we have an imperative need to act on this climate crisis. And while we wait for the Senate to act, I am doing all that I can to make a difference in California as it relates to our air quality, transportation, and our water needs that are impacted.

As a member of the State legislature, years ago, I created the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District to help monitor and reduce pollution in the valley and improve our air quality, and we have made progress.

I am also the cosponsor and helped to introduce the Clean Corridors Act and the Clean School Bus Act that also reduced greenhouse gases.

We have also helped kick-start California's High-Speed Rail project which will get millions of drivers out of their cars and into cleaner, more accessible transportation, along with our inner-city transportation, our intermodal concept to use all of the modes of transportation more effectively for cleaner air quality.

I am also working on water legislation that will help improve conservation and work toward a sustainable water supply for our farmers and cleaner water for our communities throughout California.

California's broken water system is not suited to deal with the increased volatility caused by climate change.

For those of you who are unaware, California gets most of its water, its moisture, between November and March. The rains are important. They are critical, and the snow in the mountains are Mother Nature's icebox.

With climate change, we see the droughts have become longer and more intense, and the storms that we rely on for the snowpack are fewer and are at a higher elevation, which means this incredible water system that we have created over the last 100 years has to adapt to those changes.

Food is a national security issue, not only in California, but in America and throughout the world. Without a reliable supply of water, we cannot grow food, not only for our Nation but for the planet, and so this is a critical issue.

We need to understand that for 7 billion people on the planet in the last 2 years—suggested to increase to 9 billion by the middle of this century—the ability to provide a sustainable water supply for the entire world and for us to grow food to feed our people in this country is absolutely critical.

Therefore, we have a moral responsibility to be good stewards of this planet that we call home for ourselves and for the future generations to come.

As we begin the new year, let's work together now to find bipartisan, commonsense solutions to help us pass along a better planet for future generations to come. This, among all of the other difficult issues we face, I believe, is the primary challenge of the 21st century.

IMPORTANCE OF RURAL HEALTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss the importance of rural health and what it means to the nearly 60 million Americans who call rural America home.

No matter where you live, access to quality healthcare should not be considered a luxury. Recently, a local hospital in my district was recognized as a healthcare leader in rural America. The University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, Northwest campus in Venango County was one of 18 rural hospitals in the Nation to receive an award for excellence and patient safety and quality in 2019.

The accolade is given annually by The Leapfrog Group serving more than 2,100 hospitals to find the Nation's best in healthcare safety and quality.

Hospitals like UPMC Northwest are just one piece of the puzzle when it comes to building a network of reliable care in rural America.

In many cases, rural residents can still live very far away from the closest hospital, which makes getting quality care even more difficult.

Telehealth can help reduce barriers to health services for all residents, particularly the elderly, and those with limited mobility. The Northwest campus of UPMC has been a leader in telehealth and telemedicine.

Telehealth options are becoming increasingly available in not only rural communities, but across the country. Ninety percent of healthcare executives say their organizations are developing or already offer telehealth services, and in 2018, approximately 7 million individuals took advantage of a telehealth consultation.

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Telehealth services are a great tool for those who may live far away from a hospital, but it also takes much of the hassle out of scheduling an appointment and makes routine care much more efficient.

Mr. Speaker, I have been proud to assist in leading the advancement of telehealth and telemedicine legislatively in this body, including the STEP Act, which greatly expanded access to telemedicine to our Active Duty military, Reserve, and Guard. That was signed by President Obama in the VETS Act, which did the same thing for our American veterans under the VA MISSION Act signed by President Trump.

As we continue to explore ways to increase access, affordability, quality, and basic choice, telehealth or telemedicine must be a part of that conversation.

GIVE PEACE A CHANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DOGGETT) for 5 minutes.

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, "All is well!" "So far, so good!"

This is the latest sequel in Trump's government-by-tweets, that couldn't be further from reality. Hopefully, we pray that no American lives were lost last night. But every American is less safe today than before Trump's assassination of a major foreign leader. He has taken us to the brink of war, and, hopefully, he will use the opportunity of a restrained counterattack not to escalate further but to seek an off-ramp to deescalate the crisis that could endanger the world.

Attack begetting attack, and hate begetting hate—in that direction lies the abyss. The only justification that he can offer for ignoring President Ronald Reagan's Executive Order against assassination of foreign leaders is that of an imminent attack, that we need to get them before they get us. He has failed to offer any such evidence of an imminent attack to justify this rash assassination that previous administrations, Republican and Democrat, and the Israelis who had the capacity to do this, recognized posed more danger than good.

"Overreliance on our packing the biggest gun and having the fastest draw as in some old John Wayne western movie does not truly make us safer. This is not a formula for the safety of our families. It is a formula for international anarchy. A quick draw may eliminate the occasional villain, but it comes at the cost of destabilizing the world, disrupting the hope of international law and order, and, ultimately, it will make even Austin a very unsafe place in which to live."

Those were the precise words I used in challenging the horrendous Bush-Cheney invasion of Iraq, and they apply even more today to the war with Iran, a country that is about four times