

protected—in other words, not lose their job. Isn't that common sense?

That is exactly what my amendment does. My amendment makes it clear that power sector employees who report threats to our electric grid are protected from retaliation; if they are fired, they can file a complaint with the U.S. Secretary of Labor. In that regard, this amendment brings whistleblower protections for energy sector employees in line with more than a dozen other whistleblower laws established by the Congress in recent years. I have been involved in a lot of those whistleblower protection laws.

Next week is Sunshine Week—a time when we celebrate the importance of transparency and accountability in government. With transparency, you get accountability, and the public's business ought to be public. The protection of our citizens from forest fires that are a result of bad equipment that electric companies are using—if you report unsafe conditions, you shouldn't be fired for it.

When we think about securing our electric grid, sunlight and transparency bring accountability, but they also bring attention to potential risks to our public safety and to our national security. They can potentially save lives. That is something I am certain we can all get behind and should be behind.

I am very thankful to Senator MARKEY for cosponsoring the amendment and for his support of this amendment. I strongly encourage all of my colleagues to support this amendment as well.

I yield the floor.

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.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

SECURING AMERICA'S MEDICINE CABINET ACT

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. President, on Tuesday, my colleague Senator MENENDEZ and I introduced the Securing America's Medicine Cabinet—or SAM-C Act—to encourage an increase in American manufacturing of active pharmaceutical ingredients. These are termed APIs.

We did this because China dominates this portion of the pharmaceutical manufacturing and given last night's news, I wanted to come back for a moment and highlight the important work that is being done in Tennessee and across the country to support our Nation's response to this coronavirus pandemic.

Many Americans are very concerned, as they ought to be, about the availability of testing. As you all know, this virus is novel, which means we did not have test kits on the shelves before the outbreak started. The tests that we do

have are not instant. When people think of an instant test, they think of a flu test or a pregnancy test. The test that is required for this virus is not an instant test, but this is in the works, and we do have top scientists at Vanderbilt University and other institutions who are developing faster techniques, but, for now, any test offered must be sent to a lab to be processed and analyzed. Although these tests provide important information, we must continue to focus on preventing transmission where we can.

Some of the other work that is being done will help lead us to a faster path for antivirals and for vaccines. There is work in East Tennessee, right outside of Knoxville, at the Oak Ridge National Lab. Researchers have been using cutting-edge technology to identify drug candidates for targeting the novel coronavirus. They are using Summit, which is the world's fastest supercomputer. What they have done is feed in information about the coronaviruses, MRSA, SARS, and H1N1—the different viruses—and they crunched it down, and they have identified 77 drug candidates for targeting the novel coronavirus that we know is COVID-19. Enabled by the screening of this database of more than 8,000 known drug compounds, the researchers accomplished in days what would have taken years for scientists to do in the lab.

In my remarks on the floor yesterday, I went into detail about the decades-long effort by scientists at Vanderbilt University's Denison Lab to study coronaviruses. I want to reiterate one important point—that all across the country, scientists just like our friends at Vanderbilt are developing the antivirals and the vaccines that will eventually be used to combat multiple strains of virus, not just this particular outbreak but in addition to this outbreak.

The United States is a leader in research and development of pharmaceuticals. Our labs, talent, and capacity for innovation are the envy of the world, but right now we depend heavily on Chinese and foreign companies to manufacture active pharmaceutical ingredients. When this happens, we lose control of our supply.

So while we have all of this great work done in Oak Ridge, TN, and we have this wonderful work done in the Denison Lab at Vanderbilt, we need something like the SAM-C Act to enable us to have access to these drugs and these compounds that they are identifying that we need. The SAM-C Act will not solve our immediate problem. Once passed, it will incentivize companies that specialize in development, manufacturing, and workforce training to bring those operations back to the safety of U.S.-based labs and institutes of learning, and it will expedite having the antivirals and the vaccines that are needed to prevent this.

I encourage all of my colleagues to think ahead, offer their support to S.

3432, and let's commit to securing our pharmaceutical supply chain.

I yield the floor.

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

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

COASTAL ACT

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I would like to talk for a few minutes today about my favorite subject, which is Louisiana.

I could talk the rest of the day and through the entire weekend about the good things about Louisiana, but today I want to talk about one of our problems. It is not just a problem for Louisiana; it is also a problem for the United States of America; it is also a problem for the American people; it is also a problem for energy independence for our country. Louisiana is drowning. It is drowning because we are washing away. Our land is washing into the gulf.

I live about 250, 300 miles north of the Gulf of Mexico—sort of in the toe of the boot, if you think of Louisiana as a boot. If things continue as they are going, I may not be alive then, but my home—whenever lives in it after I am gone—will be gulf front property. Remember, my home is 250 to 300 miles from the coast.

Why is that happening? Why is our land washing away into the gulf? There are a number of reasons. I will mention two, in particular. The sea levels in the Gulf of Mexico are rising. We can have a rigorous debate about the reason for that, and I know many smart people think it is for this reason and others disagree and think it is for that reason, but we can't deny the fact that sea levels are rising whatever the cause. In fact, as the gulf meets the southern part of my State, it is rising about 12 to 13 inches every 100 years.

We have another reason, though, as to why my State is washing away—our land in southern Louisiana is sinking.

Why is that?

The Mississippi Delta, of which Louisiana is a part, is an ecological and hydrodynamic masterpiece. What God did in creating our State is just breathtaking. It used to be the Mississippi River, which runs right through my State, would overflow every year. It would deposit its sediment in South Louisiana. The water would recede and go back into the river channel, but the sediment would remain. After thousands and thousands of years, the land was built up. Then we leveed the Mississippi River. I am not saying we did the wrong thing by leveeing the Mississippi River, for we have increased the quality of life for a lot of Americans and enhanced our economy. When we leveed the river, we prevented it from overflowing so that it would no

longer deposit sediment, but the sediment that was already there before we leveed the river was slowly sinking. So we have sea levels in the gulf rising 12 to 13 inches every 100 years, and we have the land sinking. You don't have to be a senior at Cal Tech to figure out we have a problem. That is why our land is washing away.

Now, why is this important?

It is obviously important for the people who live on the land that is washing away, but it is also important for America's energy independence because underneath the land that is slowly being washed into the gulf—crisscrossing that land and extending over into Texas and into Alabama—are 26,000 miles of pipelines that carry oil and natural gas that heat American homes and generate American energy. When that land washes away, those pipelines are going to be exposed.

Do you know what the saltwater is going to do to those pipelines?

It is going to corrode them. When that land washes away, those pipelines now exposed are going to be exposed to ocean currents, and they are going to burst. It will not be all at once, but they are going to burst, and this country's energy independence is going to be undermined.

Do you know how long and how much money it will take to move those pipelines?

I don't know. I am not sure if there are enough ditches to quantify it.

Let me shift gears and talk about the solution as I think I have defined the problem.

We are helping ourselves, and I will give you an example. The Morganza to the Gulf project doesn't mean a lot to some of you, but trust me—it is a big deal to the people of Louisiana and to the American people who are familiar with it. We have been taxing ourselves for 20 years to pay for that project, which is part coastal restoration and part hurricane protection. We also received help from the American people.

Thank you. Thank you, American people, for coming to our aid.

In 2006, the U.S. Congress passed what we call GOMESA. It stands for the Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act. That is what I mean when I talk about GOMESA, and GOMESA is a pretty straightforward bill. It says that, for all new oil and gas drilling in the Gulf of Mexico, the Federal Government and the State government are going to share the oil royalties.

The government, as you know, owns the seabeds. We lease them to oil companies, and they drill and produce oil and natural gas. In fact, off of Louisiana's coast, we have wells that produce about 16, 17 percent of the Nation's oil and about 3 percent of the natural gas. Those oil companies pay royalties to the Federal Government, and the royalties flow through the Federal Government to the State government.

Under GOMESA, the American people, through their representatives, said: OK. On all new wells that are

drilled after 2006, Louisiana gets 37.5 percent of the money that the Federal Government gets—but not just Louisiana. We didn't want to be greedy. We asked to have Texas included. We asked to have Mississippi included. We also asked to have Alabama included so it would get 37.5 percent too. Fair is fair. The Federal Government gets the rest.

Louisianans have put their money where their mouths are. We have dedicated every single penny of that GOMESA money to coastal restoration in order to try to build up our land faster than we have been losing our land to the gulf. It has been a losing battle, but we have been holding our own. To give you an idea of how dramatic it has been, since 1930—I think 1932—Louisiana has lost land the size of Delaware. I believe, if you run the numbers in terms of square miles, we have lost land the size of two Rhode Islands. I think we have lost a football field a day. Remember, this doesn't just hurt Louisiana. This hurts America, and it hurts our energy independence.

Louisiana has put its money where its mouth is. We said: Thank you, American people, for passing GOMESA. We appreciate the 37.5 percent of the oil royalties we are going to get out of the Federal Government's share, and we are putting every single penny into coastal restoration.

There is still a basic unfairness because 20 other States get 50 percent. Now, these States aren't coastal States. I am happy for them. Don't misunderstand me. These are inland States that have Federal lands. When oil companies drill on those Federal lands and hit oil or hit natural gas, those States don't get 37.5 percent of what the Federal Government gets; they get 50 percent. That is just not fair. Everybody ought to be treated the same. Louisiana and Alabama and Mississippi and Texas are not asking for any extra. We call that lagniappe in Louisiana. We aren't asking for any extra. We are just asking to be treated like everybody else. In Louisiana, we are dedicating every single penny—I don't know if I mentioned this or not—to solving the coastal restoration problem, which is not just Louisiana's problem but is a problem for the United States.

We have a bill. It is called the COASTAL Act. The full name is the Conservation of America's Shoreline Terrain and Aquatic Life Act. We call it the COASTAL Act. All the COASTAL Act would do would be to treat all the States the same. Everybody would get 50 percent—a 50-50 split. Louisiana wouldn't get more or less than any other State. Alabama wouldn't get more or less than any other State. Mississippi wouldn't get more or less than any other State. Texas would be under the same rule. All of the States would get 50 percent.

It would also make one other change. When GOMESA was passed, it capped

the amount of money that Louisiana and Mississippi and Alabama and Texas could get each year from that 37.5 percent at \$500 million a year. Out of basic fairness, we are asking that the cap be removed if we can pass this bill, the COASTAL Act. The quarterback of the bill is the senior Senator from Louisiana, Dr. BILL CASSIDY. I am helping him all I can as are the Senators from Texas and Mississippi and Alabama and other States. All we are asking is for equality.

I don't want to end on a negative note by just talking about our problems. If you haven't visited Louisiana, please come. I have lived in five States and a foreign country. I have just never lived in a place like Louisiana. It is my home, and I know I am biased. God blessed our State, and in having blessed us, I think God blessed us a second time.

I mean, look at our location. We are at the top of the gulf coast; we are in the middle of the Gulf South; we straddle one of the mightiest rivers in the entire world. We have more oil and gas than most nations do, which we share with the American people. My people are experts in things like agriculture, aquaculture, shipbuilding, petrochemical manufacturing, oil and gas exploration, food, timber, healthcare. I could keep going. Our people are hardworking, God-fearing, and fun-loving.

I tell my friends Senator CRUZ and Senator CORNYN all the time how much I love Texas—and I do. Gosh, Texas is a great State. Every day, it seems like it wins an award. Yet I tell Senator CRUZ and Senator CORNYN—in jest, of course—look, Texas is 5½ times bigger than Louisiana, but give us credit as we are 10½ times more interesting than you are.

We are just a fun, extraordinary, diverse State, but we need some help. We are not asking for extra; we are just asking for equity. I hope this Senate, in its wisdom, will pass the COASTAL Act.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, President Trump had chance, after chance, after chance to get ahead of this coronavirus pandemic in the United States. He failed. Congress can't make the same mistakes.

Senators should not leave town. I just saw Senator MCCONNELL on the floor. It is his decision. One Senator from one State can make this decision to walk away—to fail to take care of the \$12-an-hour worker who is sick, who has to choose between going to work—perhaps getting sicker or perhaps infecting others—or staying home