

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.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—whoever 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