

free press. We are relying on the press to bring us crucial, often life-saving, information about testing sites, shelter-in-place orders, school closures, government aid, and how to keep ourselves and our loved ones safe. That is why many States, Maryland among them, have designated local news outlets as “essential businesses” that are allowed to keep operating despite social distancing policies.

In a noble effort to keep the public informed, many local media outlets have removed their paywalls for COVID-19-related news, forfeiting desperately needed revenue. Meanwhile, COVID-19 continues to place immense economic pressure on local news outlets and jeopardize their ability to function at all. Dozens of local publications have had to furlough reporters, reduce their publication frequency, or drop their print editions completely. This financial nightmare comes on the heels of more than a decade of hardship for local news.

Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic is not the only threat facing journalists today. All around the globe, reporters face harassment and persecution for their attempts to spread the truth and hold leaders accountable. Reporters Without Borders has determined that at least 229 journalists worldwide currently are imprisoned for their work. According to the Committee to Protect Journalists, at least 25 journalists were killed around the world in 2019, and at least six journalists and media professionals have been killed in the first 4 months of 2020 alone. Corrupt and powerful governments and individuals understand that free expression is a mighty tool against injustice, so they go to horrible lengths to stifle it.

One courageous reporter who was murdered for pursuing the truth was Washington Post journalist and U.S. resident Jamal Khashoggi. The Central Intelligence Agency concluded with high confidence and the Senate unanimously approved a resolution stating that Saudi Government officials executed and dismembered Mr. Khashoggi in 2018 at the behest of Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia Mohammed bin Salman. To this day, however, justice for this crime remains elusive. The Global Magnitsky Act, which I authored with the late Senator John McCain to combat human rights violations like this one, requires the U.S. administration to declassify its findings regarding who was responsible for Mr. Khashoggi's death and to impose additional sanctions on the culpable parties. President Trump has refused to do so.

This failure to stand up for an American journalist an authoritarian regime silenced is just one example of how the Trump administration has turned its back on the freedom of the press. The President and his supporters have continuously tried to demonize and delegitimize news outlets whose reporting upsets them, to the point of labeling the media an “enemy of the Amer-

ican people.” As the illustrious journalist Edward R. Murrow so famously noted 66 years ago in responding to then-Senator Joe McCarthy's vile smear tactics and intimidation:

We must not confuse dissent with disloyalty. We must remember always that accusation is not proof and that conviction depends upon evidence and due process of law. We will not walk in fear, one of another. We will not be driven by fear into an age of unreason, if we dig deep in our history and our doctrine, and remember that we are not descended from fearful men—not from men who feared to write, to speak, to associate, and to defend causes that were, for the moment, unpopular.

When the leader of the United States, a country devoted to principles of liberty and democracy, flouts the truth in this way, it reverberates all across the world to the detriment of free expression everywhere. Between 2016 and 2019, the number of journalists imprisoned on spurious charges of disseminating so-called fake news more than tripled globally.

We Americans feel the impact of this vilification of the press much closer to home, too. I will never forget learning about the fatal shooting at the Capital Gazette in Annapolis, MD, almost 2 years ago. In the most deadly newsroom shooting in American history, a man who was angry that the newspaper accurately and merely reported his guilty plea in a criminal harassment case stormed into the Gazette office with a gun and killed five people. Those individuals—Gerald Fishman, Rob Hiaasen, John McNamara, Rebecca Smith, and Wendi Winters—died defending one of the most sacred institutions in our country. They died protecting every American's right to know the truth. But they and hundreds of other journalists worldwide should not have to die in the line of duty.

For the sake of our democracy and global human rights, we must do everything we can to eliminate the violence and repression news media face. The United States can help lead this effort by loudly voicing our support for the free press as a key component of an informed civil society and a government accountable to its people. That is why I am proud to cosponsor Senator MENENDEZ's resolution in honor of World Press Freedom Day declaring the need for a truly free press and condemning threats to the freedom of expression around the world. The resolution applauds the bravery of journalists and media workers and remembers those who have lost their lives in the course of their duties.

We can also demonstrate our commitment to a free press by remembering those journalists and media professionals who have lost their lives in the course of their duties. To that end, Senator PORTMAN and I have introduced a bill, S. 1969, to authorize a national memorial to fallen journalists. The National Capital Region has numerous monuments and memorials to honor those individuals who have helped make our country stronger

since its founding days. Currently missing from that honor roll is a memorial to reporters and other journalists, such as those at the Capital Gazette, who have sacrificed everything to protect the free, open, and transparent society that all people deserve. My hope is that Congress will pass the Fallen Journalists Memorial Act soon. Once we establish this memorial, we will have a visible reminder to pay tribute to these heroes not just once a year, but every day.

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF EARTH DAY

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, while the Senate was out of session, the American people celebrated the 50th anniversary of Earth Day. I would like to take a moment to acknowledge that historic anniversary.

We first celebrated Earth Day in 1970 when then-Senator Gaylord Nelson brought more than 20 million Americans together to mobilize in defense of our planet. In the half-century since, our Nation has benefitted from a passionate environmental movement that has pushed lawmakers, businesses, and communities to foster a healthier Earth. While this movement has yielded significant progress, we nonetheless must do more to address the gravest threat to our environment: climate change.

I recognize that, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, it might be difficult to wrap our heads around a second crisis, but we have an important opportunity here to learn from one global emergency about how to navigate another.

The first lesson from the COVID-19 pandemic: We must listen to experts. Public health experts have long forecast the risk of a viral pandemic. Still, our leaders failed to prepare for COVID-19 and even denied the magnitude of the threat we faced when it was at our doorstep. The novel coronavirus has now claimed over 72,000 lives in the United States, a death toll higher than any other country.

We are witnessing a parallel problem with climate change. For decades, experts have warned that human-caused climate change is heating the Earth. Ninety-seven percent of the world's scientists agree on this. Scientists are no longer just predicting the future implications of this crisis; they are pointing out the very real consequences of climate change that have already arrived.

These include the rise in extreme weather events like floods, hurricanes, and wildfires that we have experienced across the United States in recent years. In Maryland, we have seen communities like Ellicott City devastated by flash flooding from increased rainfall. Our State's many miles of low-lying coast make us particularly vulnerable to high tide flooding and storm surge. The longer we wait to address climate change, the more natural disasters we will face.

Nevertheless, many of our Nation's leaders continue to ignore and deny the science of climate change. President Trump has nominated several individuals to oversee environmental regulations, despite their alarming lack of expertise. Federal agencies like the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and U.S. Department of Agriculture have suppressed climate science while carrying out crucial environmental research. And the Trump administration has advanced a policy agenda that unravels critical environmental protections.

Right now, we need to be doing everything possible to protect our planet, not make it more vulnerable.

Experts tell us that we have a short and critical window for action before the climate crisis becomes far more dire. According to the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, we have 10 years to reduce global carbon emissions by 45 percent, or the Earth's ecosystems will likely begin to collapse. That will mean even greater sea-level rise, more high tide flooding, more devastating hurricanes, more and faster-spreading wildfires, and more global infectious diseases.

It is vital that we listen to experts and take steps to curb the development of climate change before it is too late.

The second lesson: We must work with the international community to tackle this crisis. Much of President Trump's foreign policy seems to rest on the assumption that the United States can become stronger through isolation. But the spread of COVID-19 makes it painfully clear that we are part of a global community and that there are certain threats that we will either overcome together or succumb to together.

Climate change is one such threat. The United States is the second-largest emitter of greenhouse gas. Our failure to improve our environmental practices will have enormous impact on the rest of the world. Likewise, America's long-term security depends on other countries' efforts to protect the environment.

For example, as climate change continues, the number and severity of natural disasters in the United States will increase, which will take a substantial toll on our economy. A report that I requested from the Government Accountability Office shows that the 14 climate disasters in 2018 cost the U.S. at least \$91 billion in damage. And today, taxpayer spending on Federal disaster relief in the U.S. is almost ten times what it was three decades ago.

We need help from our friends around the world in order to avoid these repercussions of climate change. And if we ask for help, we had better be prepared to do our part, too.

It is, therefore, extremely disappointing that President Trump is finalizing the withdrawal of the United States from the Paris Agreement, which we joined alongside more than 190 other countries in 2016. Parties to the agreement committed to lowering

carbon emissions with investment in clean and renewable energy sources, placing them at the forefront of the fight against climate change. Our Nation's retreat from this agreement undermines our global credibility and leadership and threatens devastating environmental consequences.

I led the U.S. congressional delegation to the conference where the parties originally adopted the Paris Agreement; therefore, I could not stand by and watch that important work be undone. So I introduced a bipartisan resolution expressing support for the agreement and calling on the U.S. to continue working with the global community to address the causes and effects of climate change. It will be up to leaders at the local, State, and national level to ensure that the United States pulls our weight in this worldwide effort.

The third lesson: Meaningful progress is within reach if Americans commit to urgent and bold action. Though it pains me to see the suffering that the COVID-19 pandemic is causing, I have been proud to watch communities across the country make the adjustments required to slow the spread of the virus and keep each other safe. People are staying home, teleworking, helping their kids learn remotely, and isolating from friends and family. Health workers, first responders, and other essential employees are inspiring us with their bravery and dedication. And in Congress, we are working in a bipartisan fashion to pass major legislation that will help us weather this storm.

The resilience of the American people in the face of this public health emergency gives me faith that we can similarly pull together to combat climate change if we recognize it for the life-threatening emergency that it is. After all, the World Health Organization predicts that climate change will kill an additional 241,000 people per year by 2030, and the World Bank estimates that, by 2050, it will force more than 140 million people out of their homes.

The good news is that, unlike with COVID-19, the adaptations that will help us tackle climate change will also create jobs and stimulate our economy. The U.S. clean energy economy employs more than 3.3 million workers, a number that has been on the rise for the last 5 years. Furthermore, producing renewable energy is cheaper in the long run than continuing to rely on coal. By 2025, almost every existing coal plant in the country will cost more to operate than building replacement wind and solar plants nearby. And crucially, energy efficient infrastructure will strengthen communities by lowering the cost of utilities, improving residents' health, and increasing economic development.

For my part, I will keep working as a member of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee to advocate for laws that protect Americans

by protecting our planet. This Congress, I was able to get the first ever climate title included in the surface transportation reauthorization bill in order to reduce vehicular emissions, the single largest source of U.S. carbon pollution. I have also cosponsored bills that will lessen our dependence on fossil fuels and increase the development of renewable energy technologies by supporting the wind and solar industries.

As always, I will continue to defend the vital wetlands and marshes of the Chesapeake Bay. As climate change causes severe weather patterns to increase, these ecosystems will act as pollution filters and buffers from storm surge and flooding, minimizing the damage to Marylanders' homes and businesses. The Chesapeake Bay restoration program is a model for the local, State, and Federal cooperation that we need to reach our environmental goals. I am confident that we can address the climate crisis as a whole in an equally collaborative manner.

Now is the time for an "all hands on deck" approach. Just as we have responded to the COVID-19 pandemic, Americans must urgently work together, on Earth Day and every day, to slow the causes and consequences of climate change. If we do things right, then perhaps on the 100th anniversary of Earth Day, someone will be standing here, thanking her predecessors for protecting the Earth and looking forward to many more golden anniversaries on our beautiful home planet.

TRIBUTE TO THE BOUSTANY FAMILY

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I rise today to tell the hopeful story of the Boustany family, Lebanese immigrants who arrived in Providence, RI, 100 years ago next month. The family's history exemplifies the extraordinary contributions that generations of immigrants have made to American life.

The Boustany family's journey began in Deir al-Qamar, Lebanon, a village southeast of Beirut. Life in Lebanon was difficult in those days. The people of Deir al-Qamar had seen it all: war, famine, pandemics, and even swarms of locusts. Michel and Yahout Boustany lost eight children to difficulties in childbirth and illnesses, and a ninth was tragically kidnapped. The surviving members of the grief-stricken family resolved to leave their native country to start a new life in a land of opportunity.

Getting to America wouldn't be without heartbreaking setbacks. The departure was delayed 6 long years due to World War I. Sadly, Michel passed away unexpectedly not long before the family was to make the voyage. Yahout, and two of her sons, Francis, age 11, and Frem, age 17, resolved to carry on with the plan to emigrate.

The Boustany family left for the first leg of the journey from Beirut on a