

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Driftnet Modernization and Bycatch Reduction Act”.

SEC. 2. DEFINITION.

Section 3(25) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1802(25)) is amended by inserting “, or with a mesh size of 14 inches or greater,” after “more”.

SEC. 3. FINDINGS AND POLICY.

(a) FINDINGS.—Section 206(b) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1826(b)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (6), by striking “and” at the end;

(2) in paragraph (7), by striking the period and inserting “; and”; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

“(8) within the exclusive economic zone, large-scale driftnet fishing that deploys nets with large mesh sizes causes significant entanglement and mortality of living marine resources, including myriad protected species, despite limitations on the lengths of such nets.”.

(b) POLICY.—Section 206(c) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1826(c)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (2), by striking “and” at the end;

(2) in paragraph (3), by striking the period and inserting “; and”; and

(3) by adding at the end the following—

“(4) prioritize the phase out of large-scale driftnet fishing in the exclusive economic zone and promote the development and adoption of alternative fishing methods and gear types that minimize the incidental catch of living marine resources.”.

SEC. 4. TRANSITION PROGRAM.

Section 206 of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1826) is amended by adding at the end the following—

“(i) FISHING GEAR TRANSITION PROGRAM.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—During the 5-year period beginning on the date of enactment of the Driftnet Modernization and Bycatch Reduction Act, the Secretary shall conduct a transition program to facilitate the phase-out of large-scale driftnet fishing and adoption of alternative fishing practices that minimize the incidental catch of living marine resources, and shall award grants to eligible permit holders who participate in the program.

“(2) PERMISSIBLE USES.—Any permit holder receiving a grant under paragraph (1) may use such funds only for the purpose of covering—

“(A) any fee originally associated with a permit authorizing participation in a large-scale driftnet fishery, if such permit is surrendered for permanent revocation, and such permit holder relinquishes any claim associated with the permit;

“(B) a forfeiture of fishing gear associated with a permit described in subparagraph (A); or

“(C) the purchase of alternative gear with minimal incidental catch of living marine resources, if the fishery participant is authorized to continue fishing using such alternative gears.

“(3) CERTIFICATION.—The Secretary shall certify that, with respect to each participant in the program under this subsection, any permit authorizing participation in a large-scale driftnet fishery has been permanently revoked and that no new permits will be issued to authorize such fishing.”.

SEC. 5. EXCEPTION.

Section 307(1)(M) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1857(1)(M)) is amended by inserting before the semicolon the following: “, unless such large-scale driftnet fishing—

“(i) deploys, within the exclusive economic zone, a net with a total length of less than two and one-half kilometers and a mesh size of 14 inches or greater; and

“(ii) is conducted within 5 years of the date of enactment of the Driftnet Modernization and Bycatch Reduction Act”.

SEC. 6. FEES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The North Pacific Fishery Management Council may recommend, and the Secretary of Commerce may approve, regulations necessary for the collection of fees from charter vessel operators who guide recreational anglers who harvest Pacific halibut in International Pacific Halibut Commission regulatory areas 2C and 3A as those terms are defined in part 300 of title 50, Code of Federal Regulations (or any successor regulations).

(b) USE OF FEES.—Any fees collected under this section shall be available, without appropriation or fiscal year limitation, for the purposes of—

(1) financing administrative costs of the Recreational Quota Entity program;

(2) the purchase of halibut quota shares in International Pacific Halibut Commission regulatory areas 2C and 3A by the recreational quota entity authorized in part 679 of title 50, Code of Federal Regulations (or any successor regulations);

(3) halibut conservation and research; and

(4) promotion of the halibut resource by the recreational quota entity authorized in part 679 of title 50, Code of Federal Regulations (or any successor regulations).

Mr. KAINÉ. I ask unanimous consent that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2021—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

S. 4049

Mr. KAINÉ. Mr. President, I rise tonight to speak about a provision of the National Defense Authorization Act that would direct the renaming of military bases and facilities that are currently named for those who voluntarily fought for the Confederacy during the Civil War.

I thank Senator WARREN for offering the amendment, and I particularly thank her for making adjustments to the amendment to accommodate concerns of colleagues on both sides of the aisle. I was proud to cosponsor the revised amendment in committee and speak in favor of it today.

It is important to state clearly what this amendment will do. If it passes and survives a threatened Presidential veto, it will require the Department of Defense to initiate a 3-year process to change the name of any military base, barracks, or other facility named after a Confederate military leader. Why 3 years? The timing is designed to allow a full public process in each location so that the desires of the community leaders can be taken into account in choosing new names.

I state with clarity the substance of the amendment because one of my colleagues took the floor earlier this

month to oppose the amendment, and he obscured its purpose in describing it, only saying that it required that “some of the names of our Nation’s military bases must be removed.” He neglected to mention that the amendment specifically sought change only to facilities named for Confederates. In fact, he did not mention the Confederacy or the Civil War at all.

If you are unwilling to be plain about what is at stake, it portrays a weakness in your position. So let me be plain. I speak today because I am a Senator from the State with the most at stake in this discussion. Three of the ten bases whose names must be changed under this amendment are in Virginia. Virginia was the State whose people were most affected by the Civil War, and I served as its 70th Governor. My hometown of Richmond was the capital of the Confederacy, and I served as its 76th mayor. I have dealt with issues of Civil War names, statues, memorials, battlefields, and buildings throughout my 26 years in public life. Based on decades of grappling with this question, I want to describe a principle, explain an epiphany, and finally pose a question.

First, a principle: If you declare war on the United States, take up arms against it, and kill U.S. troops, you should not have a U.S. military base named after you.

If you declare war on the United States, take up arms against it, and kill U.S. troops, you should not have a U.S. military base named after you.

This principle is nowhere stated in law because it need not be. It is a basic commonsense principle. The principle explains why we have no Fort Cornwallis, Fort Benedict Arnold, Fort Santa Ana, Fort Von Hindenburg, Fort Tojo, Fort Ho Chi Minh.

If you declare war on the United States, take up arms against it, and kill U.S. troops, you should not have a U.S. military base named after you, but we make an exception. Ten bases and many other military facilities are named after Confederate leaders who declared war on the United States, took up arms against it, and killed U.S. troops. Even further, they took these actions to destroy the United States, to tear our country in half so that the seceding Southern States could continue to own those of African descent as slaves—a species of property—rather than treating them as equal human beings. Is this worthy of honor? Does it justify an exception to the sound principle that I describe?

Why were these 10 bases so named when they were constructed in the years before and during the First and Second World Wars? The names were not chosen due to the military skill of the Confederate leaders. Some are revered for their prowess, but some are reviled. The names were not chosen to honor the character of the 10 leaders. Some are respected—excepting the blight on character that support for slavery confers—but others were not

distinguished in their behavior or their integrity. The record makes clear that the 10 bases were named for Confederate leaders upon their construction during the First and Second World Wars because of a lingering belief in their cause—dividing the Nation to uphold slavery and White supremacy.

In the days of mandated segregation, a vibrant Ku Klux Klan, popular culture painting a false picture of the war and its aftermath with films like “The Birth of a Nation” and “Gone with the Wind,” there was a powerful desire to hold up the Confederate cause, to sanitize the Confederate cause and deny the reality of African-American suffering. That desire even affected this very body during those years, as the Senate repeatedly used the filibuster to block Federal anti-lynching legislation.

It is clear now, as it has been clear for a very long time, that the cause of the Confederacy was not just but monstrous. Destroying the Nation to preserve slavery would have been a catastrophe.

History can't be rewritten, and it is important to tell it, but choosing who to honor is another matter entirely. I repeat a principle that I believe brooks no exception: If you declare war on the United States, take up arms against it, and kill U.S. troops, you should not have a U.S. military base named after you.

This wisdom was understood immediately in the aftermath of the Civil War by Robert E. Lee. He was asked about memorials to the Confederacy and stated: “I think it wiser not to keep open the sores of war but to follow the examples of those nations who endeavored to obliterate the marks of civil strife, to commit to oblivion the feelings engendered.” This amendment is consistent with Lee's wise observation.

Second, let me explain an epiphany that I have had just in the last few months. When I moved to Virginia to get married in 1984, I saw the Confederate statues in Richmond, and I was puzzled. As a Kansas-raised civil rights lawyer and then later as a local elected official in a city that was majority African American, I was struck by their continued prominence. But together with the leadership of my diverse city, we viewed these statues and other symbols of the Confederacy as painful symbols of an incomplete past—painful because of the reality of slavery and discrimination, which have warped our Commonwealth and country since 1619, and incomplete as well. Where were the statues to Richmond heroes from the revolution or the civil rights movement? Why did our city highlight 4 years out of a 250-year history and downplay everything else?

My generation of Richmond leaders endeavored to solve this problem by painting a more complete picture—statues of Arthur Ashe, Abraham Lincoln, Maggie Walker, a civil rights memorial on our capitol grounds, new mu-

nicipal buildings, courts, schools, many named after prominent African Americans, women leaders. Aging bridges that had been named for Confederate generals were eventually replaced and named for civil rights heroes.

In short, we viewed this problem as one that could be solved with a path of addition—not replacing the painful symbols of the past but instead adding to our built environment the recognition of people and eras that had not previously been honored. This was necessary and important work. I was proud to play my part in it during my 16 years in local and State service.

But in recent months, as I spent our extended April quarantine in Richmond and I talked to people about whether Confederate statues on our Monument Avenue should be removed, I learned something. When I refer to these statues as symbols of a painful past, again and again, I was told: Tim, you might see these statues as signifying a painful past, but we see them as signs of a painful present and even predictors of a difficult future.

This sort of stopped me in my tracks. I asked my friends to explain. Here is a composite of what they told me: If honoring these Confederates were just about the past, that would be one thing. But these statues are honored in the present by a city and State that maintain them, spotlight them, emphasize their beauty, and market their appeal to tourists. In the present, these statues become a rallying point for neo-Confederates and others who would take us back, just as occurred in Charlottesville in 2017.

The present is pretty frightening. African Americans are dying of COVID at disproportionate rates. The job losses in this economic collapse are falling so hard on African-American communities. We see scenes of police violence against African Americans playing endlessly on our televisions, and we don't see an immediate end to these disparities.

Do you really expect us to believe that a society that continues to honor those who tried to destroy our country to save slavery will be serious about ending the racial disparities that exist today? You either support the equality of all or you don't. If you honor those who opposed our equality—indeed, opposed the very notion of our humanity—what hope can we have about overcoming the real-time injustices that are manifest all around us?

I thank God I can still learn some new things at age 62. In my view, the statues and base names and the other Confederate honorifics that dot the American landscape have been about the past. But I now see that, for so many, they raise deep and troubling questions about the present and the future. Are we committed to the equality of all—the moral North Star announced by Jefferson in the Declaration of Independence and reconfirmed by Lincoln at Gettysburg? If we continue to honor men who fought to de-

prive those of African descent of their equality, we signal that we are not committed to our most fundamental American value.

Finally, there are questions for those, including the President, who attack those who want to remove Confederate names from military bases or take down Confederate statues.

When you saw young Germans in 1989 spray graffiti on the Berlin Wall and knock it down, how did you feel? I know how you felt. You felt good to see people standing up to leaders and saying: You will no longer divide us.

When you saw people throughout the Soviet bloc pulling down statues of Stalin and Lenin after the collapse of the Soviet Union or Iraqis pulling down statues of Saddam Hussein, how did you feel? I know how you felt. You felt good to see people standing and saying with their actions: We will no longer glorify tyrants who oppressed us.

When you see hundreds of thousands of Hongkongers in the streets protesting against the Chinese Government, how do you feel? I know how you feel because I heard you, even in this Chamber. You feel good seeing everyday people standing up against a government that would deprive them of their basic freedom.

Well, if you feel that way—and I believe virtually all Americans do—how can we feel otherwise about patriotic Americans who believe in a nation committed to the equality of all when they stand up and say: We will not be divided. We will not glorify those who oppressed us. We will not honor those who stood against our freedom. That is what our people, especially our young people, are saying to us now. Supporting this amendment will show them that we are listening.

In conclusion, we Americans have grown as a nation and as a people since the Civil War. And we have grown as a nation and as a people since the first half of the 20th century when, in very different circumstances, it was still seen as a good idea to honor the Confederacy.

One of the key areas of our growth—admittedly a progress of fits and starts—has been a greater acceptance of others, regardless of race or religion or sexual orientation or gender or nationality or physical ability. Thank God for that growth. Of course, the evidence all around shows that we still have a long way to go to reach full equality. It might be like the North Star. We can steer by it, but it is not in the capacity of mortal mankind to reach it.

But when we do steer by it and step in its direction, we become better. That is what this amendment will accomplish, and it is why I so strongly support it.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

PRESCRIPTION DRUG COSTS

Ms. ERNST. Mr. President, Americans are facing extremely challenging

times, and, right now, folks are working hard just to make ends meet to put food on their table and to care for their families and their loved ones.

As our communities continue to grapple with the devastating impacts of the coronavirus pandemic, the crisis of rising drug costs in the United States has only worsened. Now, more than ever, folks are operating on very thin margins and simply don't have room in their budgets for expensive prescriptions.

No individual should have to make the decision between filling a life-saving prescription and feeding their family. The skyrocketing costs of prescription drugs have become a matter of life and death for so many. We have heard the heartbreaking stories of individuals who could not afford their insulin, who were forced to ration and skip doses, and, as a result, they lost their lives.

I remember quite vividly a conversation I had with an Iowa mother explaining how she lost her son who, as a young man, was rationing his insulin because he could not afford to do more. It was a heartbreaking discussion, and having that discussion with that mother, I could not help but think then of my own brother and sister who have been reliant on insulin as juvenile diabetics for nearly all of their lives. When we talk about the cost of prescription drugs, lives are literally on the line.

Iowans have been very clear with me where they stand on this issue. They want to see us come together to advance solutions that drive down those drug prices. Seniors, families, and children all need to be assured that when they go to the pharmacy, they will be able to afford their medications and not have to skip a meal—or more—to do so.

This is why I was proud to join my friend and my colleague, Senator GRASSLEY, in introducing a piece of legislation that I know he has worked tirelessly on—the Prescription Drug Pricing Reduction Act of 2020. This vital piece of legislation would root out unfair pricing shenanigans and perverse payment incentives that allow pharmaceutical companies to take advantage of the system at the expense of taxpayers and patients.

According to the Congressional Budget Office, this bill would save taxpayers \$95 billion with a “b,” reduce out-of-pocket expenses by \$72 billion with a “b,” and reduce premiums by \$1 billion with a “b.”

It needs to be said that Chairman GRASSLEY worked for months on end to craft this bill in a bipartisan manner with his Democratic counterparts. In fact, two-thirds of the Senate Finance Committee approved our bipartisan Prescription Drug Pricing Reduction Act a year ago this very month—two-thirds of the Senate Finance Committee. Yet, at a time when Americans are struggling to afford rent and groceries, my colleagues across the aisle

suddenly chose to drop their support for this bipartisan drug pricing reform bill that they helped write.

Let me make that clear. The Democrats helped write the bill with Senator GRASSLEY. Those who sat on the Finance Committee approved this bill last year.

This year, they are refusing to assist my senior Senator, CHUCK GRASSLEY, in moving forward a bill they helped write. That begs the question: What changed over the course of one year? Do you know what, folks? That is exactly what happened. It was the year: 2020 is an election year, and that means Washington is not focused on solutions; it is all about the political scoreboard.

We have seen it already this year with our friends across the aisle blocking us from even debating the JUSTICE Act, the police reform bill that contained about 70 percent of what our Democratic colleagues were asking for in police reform.

Iowans put their partisanship aside and came together and got a police reform package passed; that is, Iowans in our State legislature. I wish we could say the same for Washington, not only on the JUSTICE Act but also this prescription drug pricing bill. Lowering prescription drug costs shouldn't be about who gets the credit. It should be about working across the aisle to save lives, which is the very reason that Senator GRASSLEY worked hand in hand with Democrats on this bill.

Iowans should expect more from Washington. They want more, and they should get it.

Chairman GRASSLEY, President Trump, and I will not back down from this fight. We will press on and do everything in our power to provide relief to Americans who desperately need it. I will continue to call on my Democratic colleagues to come to the table to work on improving our Nation's healthcare system and drive down the costs for Americans. Whether it is lowering drug costs, expanding childcare options for families, ensuring protections for individuals with preexisting conditions, like my sister and my brother, or simply making sure that children have access to clean diapers—simple things. These are all issues that Americans want to see Congress take action on.

Just recently, I joined with my colleague Senator BRAUN of Indiana in introducing a bill that helps address yet another critical issue for Americans—increasing transparency and lowering healthcare costs.

Our Healthcare PRICE Transparency Act would implement the administration's rules requiring hospitals and insurers to reveal their low, discounted prices and negotiated rates to patients before they receive medical care. Iowans should be able to know the costs associated with their healthcare in advance so they can make the best decisions for themselves and for their families.

Folks, let's not forget that, outside the Halls of Congress, Americans are

facing hard times. They are mourning the loss of loved ones who have been taken by this virus. They are worried about how they will take care of their children at home while they work to provide. They are concerned for their health and the well-being of their loved ones. Many of them are considering skipping a dose of their medication or cutting a pill in half to try to make those prescriptions stretch just a little bit further until their next paychecks.

Let's put aside political interests. Let's work together on this. I will be standing at the ready, and it is my sincere hope that my colleagues on both sides of the aisle will join me in this effort.

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

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

THE GREAT AMERICAN OUTDOORS ACT

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. President, 6 weeks ago, I stood here as the Senate prepared to begin deliberating historic conservation legislation—the Great American Outdoors Act. I introduced this legislation with Senator MANCHIN, of West Virginia, along with so many other bipartisan champions for the outdoors and our public lands. Senators DAINES, PORTMAN, WARNER, ALEXANDER, KING, CANTWELL, BURR, and HEINRICH are just a few of the champions who helped to shepherd this historic legislation through this Chamber. I remarked on that day that it was not often the Senate had a chance to make history, but, indeed, history we made.

The Senate came together in an overwhelmingly bipartisan fashion and passed the Great American Outdoors Act 73 to 25, and just moments ago, the U.S. House of Representatives joined us in making history by passing the Great American Outdoors Act with a vote of 310 to 107.

This legislation is headed today to the desk of the President of the United States for his signature. The President has already supported the bill, noting the nature of this historic bill and the huge conservation victory that it is.

In the weeks since Senate passage, I have traveled all over the great State of Colorado and have visited with land management officials, professionals, stakeholders, and constituents to discuss what the Great American Outdoors Act will really mean on the ground on a personal, local level for Colorado and Colorado's public lands. I would like to share some of those stories with you today.

Here we have a picture of an amphitheater that is outside of the Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park. If you would just go a little bit further to the right, you would actually be in the canyon.

This is an amphitheater that was built, basically, in the 1960s. The park itself is now about 20 years old. It had over 430,000 people visit it last year. It has a deferred maintenance backlog of \$7.7 million, and this South Rim Amphitheater facility is part of that backlog. It is currently being used, but it needs significant upgrades. If you actually sat on one of those benches, you probably wouldn't be able to sit anywhere else for quite a long time because of the splinters and the gouges that you would receive from the shards of wood that are on those benches, and there are electrical outlets that are popping up from an old projection system.

This is supposed to be used for education and educational opportunities. With the right improvements, they will be able to restore this and get it back to its original purpose. New park benches and electrical work are among just a bit of this amphitheater's needs—a \$200,000 deferred maintenance project alone, this site for education for experiential learning. Within the rest of the park, there are millions more in maintenance projects like this one that need to be performed and carried out.

Our lands are busy. People are loving them. This is one example, and it is one example of a project that will be completed thanks to the Great American Outdoors Act. Yet it is not just national parks that have maintenance needs.

Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue joined me in Colorado in mid-June, and we toured the Mizpah Campground, which is in the Arapahoe and Roosevelt National Forests, that has been closed for a decade. This is a beautiful river, and the campground is back here. There is only one problem: There is no bridge. This river wiped out the culvert and the bridge a decade ago. This is a campground without access because, 10 years ago—a decade ago—a flood came through—high water came through—and wiped out the access. You can't even use this public facility because of a decades-long maintenance backlog at this facility alone.

The Great American Outdoors Act will provide line-of-sight funding for projects like these, which will no longer have to compete for a small pool of funding with every other national forest in the country.

When I talk to these professionals—when I talk to the forest rangers and the park superintendents—they talk about how they are able to accomplish building structures in their parks, how they are able to build campgrounds in their parks, and how they are able to keep up with restroom facilities, but they have had no line-of-sight funding for additional help down the road. This means that, as the facilities age, they may just have to be closed or, in this case, as access gets wiped out, you will just never regain that access. What a loss to the American people that is, but what a benefit to the American people

the Great American Outdoors Act will become.

It is not just the national parks or the national forests or the Bureau of Land Management that will benefit from the Great American Outdoors Act. This is a picture of the Runyon Sports Complex in Pueblo, CO. This area has a number of ballparks from little leagues to adult leagues. In fact, they just had their first pitch of the season last week—a day that I was actually at the Runyon Sports Complex in Pueblo, CO, to kick off a tournament to celebrate the beginning of a season that had been much delayed thanks to COVID-19.

This area saw people like Pee Wee Reese play baseball and Babe Ruth visit this same area to play baseball. Now Coloradans of every generation are able to go to the Runyon Sports Complex and enjoy it. It has become a regional draw to help benefit the city economically and to teach kids about sports and teamwork. That is what this means.

The Land and Water Conservation Fund, yes, helps forests and parks, but 40 percent of the Land and Water Conservation Fund's funding is dedicated to projects at the State and local levels. If you grew up on the Front Range of Colorado and played baseball, the odds are good that you will have spent some time on the field at Runyon or at any other number of places that have been funded by a Land and Water Conservation Fund project. Runyon has received over \$100,000 in LWCF funding over the years, and the complex continues to be a vital part of the community today.

The LWCF is not just about our public lands; it is about your local ballpark, about your local swimming pool, about playground facilities, and urban parks that otherwise wouldn't give minority communities access to recreation. That is what it is about.

Just up the road from Runyon Field, in El Paso County, CO, and the communities within them, they have benefited greatly from the LWCF. We visited a project in El Paso County that received hundreds of thousands of dollars. It is a county that has received \$5 million in funding over the years and has provided benefits for everything from building parks to tennis courts and trails. The State has received over \$2 million in funding to improve the Cheyenne Mountain State Park facilities within El Paso County, CO.

Local, regional, and State outdoor recreation projects will only further benefit when the Great American Outdoors Act is signed into law. With the Great American Outdoors Act, Congress is finally fulfilling its commitment to fully and permanently fund the LWCF, which will benefit every State in the Nation.

The passage of this historic legislation could not come at a more critical time. Our economy has suffered during the coronavirus pandemic, and stay-at-home orders have kept Americans

cooped up indoors for the last several months. Millions of people and families are facing uncertain futures. Will school return in the fall? Will my business survive this challenging time? Will I receive my next paycheck?

When the first waves of the virus hit and shutdown orders went into place, some of Colorado's mountain towns and rural areas were the hardest and first hit. Community restaurants closed; hotels emptied; and their stores' doors were closed to visitors. These are challenging times, no doubt, but one glimmer of hope will always be our public lands and the great outdoors.

This Nation does not have Republican or Democratic public lands. This is not a partisan issue. Preserving and taking care of our public lands provides a benefit to the entire country, and it will provide a benefit for generations to come.

Yet, not only is this legislation about preserving and protecting our lands, it is also about job creation and economic recovery—more hope for the people of this country. Passing the Great American Outdoors Act will create over 100,000 jobs by addressing the park maintenance backlog alone. In my home State of Colorado, it will create thousands of jobs across the State as the mission of the Great American Outdoors Act is fulfilled. There will be more jobs created as the work begins to address maintenance projects on other Federal lands. The Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, our National Wildlife Refuges, and the Bureau of Indian Education's schools all have needs that will be addressed by this legislation. These will be important opportunities to create jobs when the projects are finally and fully funded.

I mentioned this statistic quite a bit during the consideration of the Great American Outdoors Act here in the Senate. For every \$1 million we spend on the Land and Water Conservation Fund, it supports between 16 and 30 jobs. That is a figure above and beyond the 100,000 jobs that we created by the parks' provisions of the legislation alone. This is a bill that will put people to work. It is a bill that will put people to work by building playgrounds, fixing trails, cleaning up ballparks, and protecting our iconic landscapes for generations to come.

This is a bill that reminds us that our communities and our shared, public outdoor spaces are worth investing in. It is a bill that reminds people that we have hope for America. It is a bill that reminds people that your public lands are waiting for you and that Congress was able to come together, during these trying times, in a bipartisan fashion that was so strong and so great that you will be able to enjoy the great American outdoors the way they were meant to be enjoyed.

I am pleased that the House of Representatives affirmed all of this by passing the Great American Outdoors

Act today with such a strong, bipartisan vote. I thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle and in both Chambers for their hard work and dedication to passing this historic conservation legislation.

I look forward to the President's signing this bill in the days ahead. I look forward to getting out into the great outdoors, and I look forward to these lands as they continue to inspire the hopes and dreams of kids and adults alike for generations to come.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, before the Senator from Colorado leaves the floor, I offer to him my congratulations for his inspired leadership of the Great American Outdoors Act.

This is something that good people on both sides of the aisle have worked on, literally, for as much as a half a century. Now, people are used to politicians who exaggerate, but that is no exaggeration, because I have been around long enough to know and to understand that—first, with the Land and Water Conservation Fund, which was first enacted by Congress in 1964. I was the chairman of President Reagan's Commission on American Outdoors and reiterated support for that in 1986. Senator GARDNER, Senator DAINES, Senator PORTMAN, Senator WARNER, Senator HEINRICH, Senator MANCHIN, Senator CANTWELL, and a whole parade of Senators on both sides of the aisle have worked very hard to make this happen.

And it would not have happened without President Trump's leadership, either. We would not have been able to spend the money the way that it is spent—energy exploration money for conservation purposes—unless the President's Office of Management and Budget had approved that.

So it is usually never true that an important piece of legislation is passed by a single Senator. It is usually a parade of Senators. But Senator GARDNER has been leading the parade, and I congratulate him for that and salute him on behalf of all of us who want to see our national parks—the 419 different places we have, from the Great Smokies to the Rocky Mountains, to Yellowstone, to Pearl Harbor, to the National Mall—protected, as well as our national forests, our national wildlife refuges, as well as the permanent funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

So I wanted to have an opportunity to say that before he left the floor.

And I see my friend Senator PORTMAN from Ohio here, who really, along with Senator WARNER of Virginia, began the work on the other part of the bill—the bill that would take money from energy exploration and reduce the national park backlog by half over 5 years. That had the support, combined with the Land and Water Conservation Fund, of more than 800 different outdoor recreation, conservation, and en-

vironmental groups, as well as the President.

People will say: Well, that was easy to do with all that support.

It wasn't easy to do. If it had been easy to do, it would have happened 20 or 30 years ago. So it took support from the Senator from North Dakota and leadership from the Senator from Ohio and Senator WARNER from Virginia, especially.

I came to the floor also to talk about something else, but I see the Senator from Ohio so I think I will yield the floor and then speak on the other subject after he has a chance to speak, if he would like to.

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Tennessee for focusing on the American Great Outdoors Act. I had come to the floor to talk about the COVID-19 legislation we are considering, but I am very pleased to be here with my colleagues who helped to get this legislation across the finish line. It is incredibly important and truly historic for our national parks.

I have spent more than a dozen years on this. It is kind of embarrassing because I wasn't very successful for the first 11, but from my days as the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, I have been focused on what really is a tragic situation—about a \$12 billion now maintenance backlog in our national parks, far more than the parks could ever afford to take care of based on our annual budgets that we provide them from this place and yet something that had to be done.

So it is not very exciting for some people to think about, gosh, fixing a visitor's center or making sure a trail isn't eroding into a river, making sure that our roads and bridges in our national parks are kept up to speed, so that when you go to a national park you can actually use the restroom facilities and the lodges. But we have had a huge problem with finding funding for that, and in this legislation, as was noted by my colleague from Tennessee, who has been at this for many years, as well, we are finally doing something to help our parks that is badly needed.

The priority projects—\$6.5 billion worth—will now be handled by legislation that passed the House today by a 310-to-107 vote and passed the Senate a few weeks ago. The President has agreed to sign it, and it will keep our promise, and it is a debt unpaid to our parks. Without it, future generations wouldn't have the opportunity to visit and enjoy these incredible treasures.

I spent the last few weeks at a couple of our national parks—one, the Charles Young home in Ohio, which is a beautiful historic home that is actually a station on the Underground Railroad and, therefore, has particular and very important historic significance for our State. Charles Young was the first Black colonel in the U.S. Army, the first Black superintendent of a national park, and his home needs to be preserved for future generations. And

yet the maintenance backlog is huge there, as you can imagine, and without this legislation, they would not be able to make progress.

I got to see specifically what the money is going for, which is making sure that house still stands years from now so that people, particularly young people in our community, can understand the history of our country—the good and the bad, the cooperation and the seeking for freedom that came from the Underground Railroad and the incredible leadership that Charles Young showed as an early African-American pioneer, both in the military and in our national park system.

And then I was at the Cuyahoga Valley National Park, where I had the opportunity to see the 13th most visited park in America and a number of different needs that they have, adding up to about \$50 million. Their annual budget, by the way, is about \$11 million, and yet they have \$50 million worth of things that have to be fixed.

I saw trails literally falling into the river. I saw railroad tracks for the beautiful scenic railroad that runs through there where the tracks have to be replaced. I saw a bridge that is truly becoming dangerous and has to be fixed—an historic bridge. These are things that can't be done with their normal budget that funds the rangers and some programs. These are capital expenses, things that have to have a separate funding source, the way we budget around here, and we are doing that now.

So after many years of trying different efforts at this and finding some success over the years—the Centennial Act has helped a little bit and some other things to get private-public partnership money—we now have the ability to really say that the parks are going to be in good shape for our kids, our grandkids, and the future generations that can enjoy what LAMAR ALEXANDER has referred to—I think, paraphrasing Ken Burns—as America's best idea.

With that, I yield back. I would like some time in a moment to talk about the COVID-19 legislation, but I would like to yield now to the Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Ohio for his courtesy, as well as his leadership. I will not be long.

(The remarks of Mr. ALEXANDER pertaining to the introduction of S. 4284 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. ALEXANDER. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, the legislation that Senator ALEXANDER is talking about probably is something we ought to look at in connection with this legislation that we are likely to pass here in the Congress in the next week or so regarding the COVID-19 crisis that we face. I am here on the floor

today to talk about that—to talk about what the next steps ought to be and how we should be responding as Congress to this unprecedented challenge we have of the pandemic.

We are now about 5 months into it, and for much of April and certainly in the month of May we were seeing pretty good progress on the coronavirus pandemic. The situation was improving, and many of us thought we were turning the corner. Unfortunately, as we have moved into June and July, we are now trending in the wrong direction in much of the country. Over the past week, the number of hospitalizations, for instance, has risen in many of our States, and there is concern that the situation could worsen when the weather begins to cool.

Today, in Ohio, our Governor announced a statewide mask mandate, as an example. We have not had that yet. He did so because he is concerned about some of the numbers. Ohio is not in as bad a shape as some of the States, but we are not seeing the progress we hoped for.

The past few months have been a somewhat better story for the economy. After the initial shocks of the self-imposed economic shutdown this past spring, a couple months ago, we have seen a steady rebound taking place in most parts of the country. New unemployment claims, put out just last week, while still far too high compared to where we were before this pandemic, are the lowest we have seen since the crisis began. Recent retail sales numbers are about where they were a year ago when there was no pandemic. So we are seeing better improvement in the economy as compared to the disappointing progress we were making recently on the pandemic.

Thanks to unprecedented Federal action, such as the Paycheck Protection Program which has allowed small businesses to keep their doors open and to retain employees, thanks to some of the targeted tax relief to help our families and also our businesses, we have been able to prevent an even more serious economic collapse that in my view would have had a devastating impact on all of us. However, we are not out of the woods yet. There are still, roughly, 17 million Americans out of work. That is a lot of Americans who have been furloughed through no fault of their own because businesses are not operating. This corresponds to about an 11-percent unemployment rate, more than three times higher than it was just 5 months ago.

You will recall that in February we had historically low unemployment. Now we are up to 11 percent. Of course, there are parts of the economy that have not seen the progress that other parts have.

So there is a lot for us to consider now that Congress is back in session and now that we are in the middle of negotiating this new what they call the phase 5 coronavirus rescue package. The new legislation will have a signifi-

cant impact on how we address these dual healthcare and economic crises. That is why it is important, and more important than ever, that we figure out how to work together, Republicans and Democrats alike, and make some smart bipartisan policy decisions.

Unfortunately, that is not the way the House of Representatives has proceeded to date. The House Democrats chose to construct their own proposal. It is called the Heroes Act. Rather than working constructively across the aisle to try to find some common ground to help Americans deal with this healthcare and economic crisis, Democrats chose and made and released an 1,800-page, \$3.5 trillion package that included some provisions that have nothing to do with COVID-19.

How big is \$3.5 trillion? Well, that makes it the biggest piece of legislation ever passed by either the House or Senate in the history of our country. Never have we had legislation that expensive. Also, \$3.5 trillion is just a lot of money. The budget last year was \$4.5 trillion—the entire budget for the entire year for our country. This one bill is \$3.5 trillion. So it is not only the most costly legislation ever to pass, but, again, it is not just about COVID-19. In fact, one Democratic leader called it “a tremendous opportunity to fix things to fit our vision,” which is why it passed by a nearly party-line vote.

If true, by the way, that vision entails raising taxes on some small businesses; it includes giving out tax breaks, largely to benefit very wealthy individuals on both coasts; it has direct payouts to illegal immigrants; it has immigration reforms related to ICE and other things; it has unprecedented mandates on the States to require mail-in voting and telling States, by the way, that they are required to have certain kinds of ID. This has always been within the province of the States to run their own election systems. That is in this legislation.

At the same time, out of \$3.5 trillion and 1,800 pages, there is nothing in it to provide liability protection to our schools, hospitals, and small businesses; no funding for the Paycheck Protection Program; no assistance for Americans trying to get back to work. It is \$3.5 trillion in taxpayer money being appropriated on a party-line vote. I don't think that is what people are looking for. I think they want us to get together, as we have already with four previous COVID-19 legislative packages, and work together to try to get it done. We have to find that common ground.

We have to be sure we pass something that is bipartisan, that supports our healthcare system, our schools, our local governments, our employers, our families, and that we do it in as targeted a way as possible given the fact that we have already the largest deficit in the history of our country this year, and, of course, all this adding to our national debt.

We need to do it based on good data on what has been spent and what remains to be done. We need to keep in mind what is the most important policy proposals to include in this legislation and not make it a catchall.

First, and most importantly in my view, we need to increase funding for the healthcare response and the safety efforts. This is the underlying problem: Until we focus on this pandemic and what the virus is doing, we can spend all the money we want around here, and it is not going to make much of a difference. So we have to be sure that we are focused on the actual problem. I think that means getting our healthcare professionals the resources they need to effectively respond to this crisis. They need more funding. We need more funding for testing, contact tracing, PPE—the personal protective gear that, unfortunately, we still don't have the stockpiles here that we need. We need to be sure we are doing everything we can do to get this antiviral medication up and going. We have one, Remdesivir, that is showing positive results. We need to make sure that we are doing everything we can to get this vaccine as fast as possible because with a vaccine, as we have with the common flu, we will be making tremendous progress in pushing back against the virus. Stopping the spread of the virus has to be our top priority in this next bill, as it has been in some of the other legislation.

It is clear from the recent resurgence in cases that we are still not where we need to be in testing. I know there has been a lot of discussion recently about testing and whether it is needed or not. I will tell you it is critical because we need to know where the disease is and how it may be spreading. It also gives us much greater context in taking steps toward reopening in a safe way, whether it is our schools or whether it is our businesses, going to restaurants, going to bowling allies, movie theaters. Testing is very important.

Last week, I was in Columbus, OH, at the Columbus Health Department, where officials told me what a huge difference the CARES grant that they received has made in being able to expand testing. They are building a track to monitor and maintain the virus in Franklin County that is needed right now, and they are doing a great job. They are providing testing that is driveby testing. It is easy to access. If you don't have insurance to pay for it, it is covered through CARES funding that passed in the Congress. We are being sure that the funding is providing the best information available as we fight this invisible enemy. We have to continue to do that to prioritize bolstering the ability of our healthcare officials at home and to be able to coordinate the response—State level, local and national levels, and testing, obviously, is key to that.

In addition, as more parts of our country are putting in place safe plans to reopen our economy, we want to

make sure that the individuals who went on the COVID-19 unemployment lines in the early days of this pandemic have the opportunity and the incentive to reenter the workforce. We have to be sure our workplaces are safe.

This week, I introduced legislation called the healthy workplace tax credit, a credit on payroll taxes to ensure employers can afford additional safety measures, from the Plexiglas you have probably seen in some places, the shields to be able to protect people, to the PPE that is needed, the gowns in some cases, the masks, the gloves, hand sanitizer, to be able to afford that, and to be sure that there is testing in place so employees and consumers feel safe reentering the economy. This tax credit will support our efforts to make our workplaces healthy and safe and to build consumer confidence that all appropriate measures are being taken.

It doesn't really matter what we say as elected officials. It doesn't matter what our Governors are saying or local health officials. If people don't feel safe or feel comfortable, they are not going to reengage in the economy and step forward. I think this kind of a tax credit should be something that both sides of the aisle can strongly support, and we can ensure that we are doing everything we can to get people back to a more normal life.

As we tackle this healthcare challenge head-on, we also can't afford to step back on our efforts to combat the drug epidemic. Remember the opioid crisis that we were facing over the last couple of years. It has devastated communities all around our country, including my home State of Ohio. Unfortunately, we are seeing, during the coronavirus pandemic, the number of addictions, overdoses, and overdose deaths is growing. This is very concerning, particularly because, thanks to a lot of efforts, including efforts in this body, to provide more treatment and recovery and prevention services, we were finally making progress in 2018. In my State of Ohio we had a 22-percent decrease in opioid overdose deaths. Every single year for the previous dozen years we had seen increases, and, finally, we were making progress. Now, unfortunately, we seem to be backtracking because of the COVID-19 crisis.

People are isolated, and people are feeling anxiety. People are not being able to access the treatment they used to be able to access. So in this legislation, we should also be sure that we make permanent the progress we have made recently with coronavirus in providing more telehealth treatment, making that more accessible. I have introduced legislation called the TREAT Act that would do just that so we don't lose ground on this other deadly disease.

We also need to look forward to the fall and ensure that we have funding to support the schools so they are able to safely reopen their doors to students.

Keeping our children out of the classroom for a protracted period of time has already had a negative impact on many of them with regard to educational advancement.

We have heard this from the experts, the American Pediatric Society, and the pediatricians back home—the doctors who are looking at this situation are saying it is very helpful in terms of getting kids back to school for education but also for their mental health and for their social skills.

On top of that, many parents, of course, have been forced to make impossible decisions. Do they go to work to earn a paycheck or do they stay home to take care of their child. So reopening the schools will have the effect of having childcare, which is very important. We need to act fast to ensure children don't lose more progress.

Our phase 5 legislation should provide funding to help our schools safely reopen, whether it is providing additional masks, gloves or other protective gear or other resources we have talked about, I think that money is well spent.

Second, we have to get the economy moving again. To do that, I believe we need to remove the disincentive currently in place; whereby, interestingly, we tried to help on unemployment insurance, but we provided a flat \$600 payment that has actually disincentivized a lot of people from going back to work. Why? Because most individuals are making more on unemployment insurance than at their previous job. A University of Chicago study says that 60 to 70 percent of those who are on unemployment insurance are making more on UI than they did when working.

As part of this negotiation, I believe Congress should and will extend the additional Federal unemployment insurance benefit in some form, but you shouldn't get paid more not to work. I think that is a principle that we all agree with, I hope, on both sides of the aisle. We should fix this disincentive to work by making the benefit a percentage of your previous income.

By the way, a July 13 Yahoo Finance-Harris Poll found that 62 percent of Americans believed these enhanced UI benefits served as a disincentive to work. They are right. It doesn't have to be that way. We can help people to ensure they get the support they need but not have them being paid more than they would if they were going to work.

Depending on how high the Federal payment is, by the way, we ought to also consider a return-to-work bonus for individuals that they receive on top of their paycheck—in other words, take part of the Federal benefit with them back to work. I have been promoting this since May. We haven't been able to pass it yet around here, but I think this would help people—help those workers who do want to go back to work to be able to make that tough decision without having a financial disincentive. It would help our small busi-

nesses and others who need the workforce badly, and it would help our economy begin to be able to reopen properly.

This idea, by the way, has broad support across the country. That same poll I talked about found that 69 percent of respondents support a return-to-work bonus.

There are various ways we can accomplish this goal, but I believe it would be helpful if it is paired with an extension of the unemployment insurance.

So this is something we have to focus on and come up with a bipartisan consensus—a compromise—to ensure that we are not paying people more not to work but ensure we are taking care of people who are furloughed through no fault of their own.

I also think we should be considering provisions to help incentivize the hiring from the employer side, so it is also providing more of an incentive to bring people on board. A way to do this that makes a lot of sense to me because it is building on legislation we have already passed is to expand and repurpose the work opportunity tax credit to add a category for COVID-19 furloughed individuals. Also, the employee retention tax credit from the CARES Act we passed just a short while ago can be improved to make it more encompassing and a better hiring credit. Helping to subsidize the marginal cost of a new hire will allow businesses to ramp up operations more quickly as the economy reopens, while also bringing more individuals off of the unemployment rolls and into the workforce.

I hope these are part of whatever legislative package we end up with. Again, these two should be bipartisan. The work opportunity tax credit has always been bipartisan. The retention tax credit was bipartisan in the CARES Act. These are things we can do, and they should get done.

We should be sure to stick with what has worked to this point in our coronavirus response. One of the biggest successes, of course, has been the PPP loan program. However, one flaw in the original law creating the PPP program was that it put in place barriers to loans for those owners who had unrelated felony records.

This was brought to my attention by a constituent of mine. His name is Troy Parker. He is a person who has done everything you would expect and you would want someone to do who comes off of a felony conviction—a mistake that he made. He was given a second chance, and he took it. He started a small business. It is a cleaning business, and he hires a lot of other second-chance individuals—returning citizens. He gives them a chance, an opportunity, and he has been successful. But during the coronavirus pandemic, he lost a lot of his business, as you can imagine, so he applied for a PPP loan. He was told he couldn't get one. Why? Because he has a felony record. He has a conviction for a financial crime, and it was within the last 5

years. It was several years ago, but it was in the last 5 years, so he couldn't get a PPP loan. Well, he is just the kind of individual we would want to help.

Thanks to Troy, we engaged on this issue when we learned about it. We worked with the Treasury Department. We got some immediate relief in terms of a rule, but we now have to put that into law to provide the relief that is needed to provide certainty and to codify it. The Paycheck Protection Program Second Chance Act does that. It is bipartisan. Senator CARDIN and I introduced this legislation. It has to be part of the next bill because it makes so much sense.

We also need a plan to adapt our economy for a future where many individuals may be living more of their lives at home and online. This is easier in some urban areas where you have access to broadband, but it can be a huge hurdle in some other areas, particularly rural parts of our country, including parts of Ohio.

Think about it. We rely much more on telehealth, much more on telelearning, and much more on teleworking. Yet, in many parts of the country, there is no access to the kind of Wi-Fi, the kind of broadband that you need to do so effectively.

Earlier this month, I introduced bipartisan and bicameral legislation to accelerate broadband access across the country to help our economy. Rural America deserves the same level of access to broadband, and including this legislation in this phase 5 package would help them get it faster.

Third, we need to solve the growing problem of State and local governments running out of funding the longer this crisis continues. This has affected some critical public safety services like EMS, firefighters, and police departments, leaving more Americans vulnerable at the worst possible time.

Ohio is particularly vulnerable because many of our local governments are so reliant on income taxes. In fact, the Brookings Institute has determined that four of the top five cities of America that will feel the largest fiscal impact are probably cities in Ohio.

Back in April, Senator BROWN and I urged the Treasury to provide more flexibility so local governments can use the CARES funding that has been provided for critical services like police and fire. While the administration—thanks to Secretary Mnuchin understanding and acting on this—did so administratively, it now has to be codified to be sure we have the needed certainty.

When I was home the last few weeks, I heard a lot about this from our county commissioners, our municipalities, and our mayors saying: We don't know if we can use these funds this way or that way. We have to be sure we have some certainty here. We don't want to have to repay this money.

So this codification will also be very important.

The flexibility, I hope, is something that both sides of the aisle can agree to. Why shouldn't we have more flexibility with regard to the CARES funding?

By the way, some of it hasn't been spent yet. As an example, in Ohio we still have \$850 million that is slated to go to the local communities, to our commissioners, and to our mayors for our cities that are under 500,000. Yet we don't have the flexibility and certainty we need there. That is important to pass as part of this legislation.

These are just a few policy proposals, I believe, that can make an immediate and lasting impact in our response to the challenges we face with this coronavirus pandemic. I am sure that in the coming days, we will be discussing the next steps forward in-depth because I believe we all recognize how important it is to get this right and to move quickly on it.

Unemployment, by the way, expires—that \$600—on July 31, at the end of next week. That is a deadline we can't let pass.

We are facing a momentous test of our ability to come together once again to address a disease that has changed almost every aspect of our lives, seemingly overnight. It is our responsibility to do that. Now is the time to put aside partisanship, get away from our partisan corners, and work together on some of these constructive solutions.

I look forward to working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle—my colleague from Washington State, my colleagues from North Dakota, and my colleagues who I know share my concern that we can't allow this opportunity to pass. We have to once again come together.

As we said tonight, there are many of these things that are bipartisan, where there can be a lot of consensus. We have to move forward to support our healthcare system, our schools, our employers, and our families as we work to overcome this crisis.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

THE GREAT AMERICAN OUTDOORS ACT

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I come to the floor to talk about the NDAA, but before I do, I want to join my colleagues and share their great enthusiasm tonight out here on the Senate floor in talking about the Senate-crafted bill, the Great American Outdoors Act, that took a step closer to getting to the President's desk today. That is the investment that we believe we should be making in open space and public lands passed the House of Representatives and we hope will be signed by the President very shortly.

This investment, as my colleagues were talking about tonight, has been a long time in coming on two fronts—obviously, coming from a State that represents a lot of National Parks and areas that need the investment in deferred maintenance projects—every-

thing from Olympic National Park that will get an upgrade for some aging water systems to new trails at Mt. Rainier, to other projects at Lake Roosevelt and even Fort Vancouver.

I want to thank all my colleagues, Senators GARDNER, MANCHIN, PORTMAN, KING, BURR, WARNER, ALEXANDER, DAINES, and HEINRICH, who made up the coalition who have been working on this issue in the more recent days to make sure that we got it out of the Senate and got it over to the House of Representatives. The important thing is that it has been a bipartisan coalition of people who believe in public lands and open space that has brought us to this point.

The Land and Water Conservation Fund was something that Scoop Jackson led the charge on in the 1960s, based on the fact that he thought America was urbanizing and, with our highway system, he thought we would need open space and, boy, was he right. So everything from Gas Works Park in downtown Seattle that gives families a great view of Lake Union to the impressive things that have been done all over the State, being able to say now that the Land and Water Conservation Fund will receive \$900 million permanently means two to three times more money than we previously had to make investments in open space.

And we know that investments in open space are not only restorative to all of us who enjoy the outdoors, whether it is hunting or fishing or hiking, but it also is a big juggernaut for our economy. That over \$800 billion in revenue is generated from this industry, and it is an industry that is well worth putting more investment in.

So I thank all my colleagues that were here tonight and for their hard work. Particularly, I want to thank Senator MANCHIN. Senator MANCHIN has done an incredible job taking this issue as the ranking member of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee and understanding how important it was to get it over the goal line.

So I tell the Senator that I am going to give him a picture of myself hiking in the Dolly Sods in West Virginia as a great thank you for his perseverance of moving this effort to the final goal line. So I just want to thank Senator MANCHIN and, obviously, all my colleagues.

S. 4049

But, Mr. President, I wanted to come as we were wrapping up the final debate on the National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2021 to talk to my colleagues about this bill as it moves to conference.

I want to make sure we continue to pay particular attention to one provision, and that is that the NDAA bill, as reported out of the Armed Services Committee, I believe included some egregious provisions that would effectively wrestle away civilian control of spending on our nuclear arsenal and give it to the military, a provision that would allow the Department of Defense

to raid dollars out of the Department of Energy that are literally there specifically for us to meet our nuclear cleanup obligations and also to fund R&D at our national laboratories, places like the National Renewable Energy Laboratory in Colorado or other facilities in my State, like the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory.

Specifically, the committee-reported bill would have stripped the Energy Secretary's power over his own budget and would have allowed subcabinet officials on the Nuclear Weapons Council to approve the budget for the National Nuclear Security Administration.

So I know the Presiding Officer knows this well. But it would have allowed the Pentagon to prioritize making nuclear weapons over the critical missions of the U.S. Department of Energy. And I believe it also would have reduced civilian control over spending on our country's nuclear weapons complex.

I am so glad that Energy Secretary Brouillette wrote to Senator INHOFE and talked about this and said: "These provisions eliminate a President's Cabinet Secretary from managing some of the most sensitive national security programs in the Department, most notably, assuring the viability of the Nation's nuclear deterrent."

I do want to thank Senators INHOFE and REED for hearing the concerns expressed by many Senators on both sides of the aisle and for hearing the concerns of the Secretary of Energy and accepting the Manchin-Cantwell amendment that stripped these troubling provisions out of the bill because I believe it was a radical change that did not have enough debate.

But I certainly appreciate the Presiding Officer's interest and determination as well. In particular, I want to thank Senator ALEXANDER and Senators HEINRICH, CASSIDY, WYDEN, BARRASSO, HIRONO, RISCH, and SANDERS who jointly sent a letter to the Senate leadership expressing opposition to these provisions.

In a letter that stated, if these provisions would have remained in the bill, they would have "impeded accountability and Congressional oversight, as well as imperil future funding for other critical DOE responsibilities such as promoting scientific and technological innovation, managing our National Laboratories, sponsoring basic research in the physical sciences, and ensuring cleanup of the nation's nuclear weapons complex."

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that that letter, the Cantwell-Alexander letter, be printed into the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

JULY 1, 2020.

DEAR MAJORITY LEADER MCCONNELL, MINORITY LEADER SCHUMER, CHAIRMAN INHOFE, AND RANKING MEMBER REED: As the Senate considers the Fiscal Year 2021 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), we write to

express our opposition to the inclusion of controversial and far reaching provisions that would fundamentally alter the Department of Energy's (DOE) responsibilities for the nuclear weapons budget.

As members of the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, we write in support of Secretary Brouillette's June 29, 2020 letter to Chairman Inhofe and share his concerns that provisions in the Senate NDAA bill undermine DOE's ability to meet its mission goals and responsibility for maintaining the viability of the nation's nuclear deterrent.

As currently written, the Senate NDAA bill would strip the Secretary of Energy of the ability to manage some of the most sensitive national security programs that account for almost half of the Department's budget. Such changes could impede accountability and Congressional oversight, as well as imperil future funding for other critical DOE responsibilities such as promoting scientific and technological innovation, managing our National Laboratories, sponsoring basic research in the physical sciences, and ensuring cleanup of the nation's nuclear weapons complex.

Sweeping changes impacting civilian control of our nation's nuclear weapons programs should only be made in consultation and coordination with the committee of jurisdiction in an open and transparent manner. The changes included in the Senate NDAA bill have been met with opposition from the Trump Administration, former Secretaries of Energy, recent NNSA Administrators, and the Congressional Advisory Panel on the Governance of the Nuclear Security Enterprise.

We therefore request that the provisions be removed from the pending bill or that the Senate be allowed to vote on the relevant amendments filed by Ranking Member Manchin.

Sincerely,

Senator Maria Cantwell, Senator Lamar Alexander, Senator Martin Heinrich, Senator Bill Cassidy, Senator Ron Wyden, Senator John Barrasso, Senator Mazie Hirono, Senator Jim Risch, Senator Bernie Sanders.

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I respectfully ask that the members of this year's NDAA conference committee—I am assuming there will be one—that they consider all these issues as they go to conference.

This is not just a bureaucratic budget dispute or some interagency accounting measure. This is, I believe, a very important issue, as it relates to civilian oversight of our nuclear weapons complex and, as written in the original bill, would have required the Nuclear Weapons Council to set the priorities for the NNSA budget and would have required the Department of Energy to get the Nuclear Weapons Council's approval before it could submit its Energy budget to OMB.

So, yes, there was a big takeover of the Department of Energy budget snuck into the NDAA. Well, let's just say some of us knew about it; some of us didn't know about it. But we objected, and now, we have taken this language out.

But I am sure this will continue, and I think it still continues. I think people who have a desire to have a larger National Nuclear Security Administration budget definitely are going to continue this effort. But people should

know that the National Nuclear Security Administration makes up about 45 percent of the Department of Energy's budget.

So, in other words, the Secretary of Energy would have lost control over almost half of his budget. And it would also mean that the Nuclear Weapons Council, which is comprised of five DOD subcabinet officials and one representative of the Department of Energy, that they would have effectively been dictating to members of the President's Cabinet what the budget should look like. So imagine that the Secretary of Energy has to come before Congress, and he says, 45 percent of my budget has already been determined by somebody else, and you really can't go talk to them.

This isn't just an issue of transparency. This is also an issue about the Department of Energy's obligations to clean up, specifically in Washington at Hanford. So I want to make sure people understand that nuclear waste cleanup is a Federal obligation. It is an obligation that we have as a nation, not just in Washington, but other States, and unfortunately, we haven't met all the milestones for nuclear waste cleanup. In fact, Idaho experienced this between 2012 and 2018 when DOE failed to meet cleanup milestones at the Idaho National Laboratory.

Taking away DOE's ability to control its own budget would make it harder to meet milestones, and now, some want more of their budget taken away by the NNSA. How are they going to meet these milestones? This is probably nowhere more important than in the State of Washington. And so the Department of Energy is legally obligated to meet these cleanup obligations at the Hanford site and to meet the obligations of what is called the Tri-Party Agreement, which is a legal contract with the State of Washington.

It is the duty of our Nation to clean up what was a national effort in World War II and the Cold War.

So I hope our colleagues won't forget history here, won't forget the obligation to clean up those nuclear waste sites, and certainly won't forget this effort we had here on the Senate floor. Last year, the Department of Energy completed a Lifecycle Scope, Schedule, and Cost Report for the completion of the Hanford cleanup site. It found remaining cleanup costs to be \$323 billion at a best-case scenario and \$677 billion at a worst-case scenario.

So that makes cleaning up legacy military nuclear waste sites in central Washington the second largest long-term obligation the Federal Government has after Social Security and Medicare. So it is no wonder people come and try to raid it.

Trust me, I could be going on all night over all the efforts that have been going on for decades, where people try to come up with a new way of either taking that money out of the budget or saying that they are going to find a quicker way to do cleanup. I am

all for speed, but I am also for meeting the obligations. But there is no magic here. It is a responsibility, and it is science, and it is an investment, and it belongs to the whole Nation. And we certainly don't deserve to have people coming to the Senate floor with a bill trying to take away 45 percent of the administration's budget and then say we don't have to meet that cleanup obligation because we are investing in nuclear weapons instead.

So, believe me, as this bill moves off the Senate floor, I am going to be watching the conference. I am not just going to watch this issue now or in conference. I am going to be keeping watch on this issue in a constant fashion, just like I always have on Hanford cleanup dollars. But I resent that people believe that Congress would fall for such a tactic to believe that the efforts of nuclear weapons development should be controlled by a small subcommittee council and that they shouldn't report to the Secretary of Energy on that budget, but make up their own budget and demand that it be met at the Presidential level.

Now, I just hope we don't reach this same dilemma again. I hope we have learned from it. I hope that people understand that these priorities of cleanup of our nuclear waste sites and what these parts of the country did for us in meeting our obligations in World War II and the Cold War.

We laud those efforts from a scientific perspective. We laud those efforts from the manpower that it took. We should now laud a budget that keeps the focus on cleanup and gets the job done and not lose track or sight because, from time to time, somebody else wants to make a larger investment in nuclear weapons.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—AMENDMENT
NO. 2457

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I rise tonight to ask: What does democracy look like in America? I have here a picture of what democracy looks like—people showing up presenting their opinions with their feet and their voices and their signs saying: We want change. And the change they want is to pursue the important value that public safety in America be a value that is applied equally to all citizens; that every single person in the community is viewed as a client for the public safety team; that the distribution of protection is equal and the treatment of citizens is equal, so that when public safety officers respond, they respond equally no matter what section of the city the call comes from; that they respond

the same no matter the color of a person's skin; that profiling is a thing of the past; that viewing two young Black men on the street is not viewed differently than viewing two young White men on the street. It is that goal of having everyone treated fairly that has led so many to come out and say: We need major reform in our country. We need to set behind us the time period when departments of public safety tend to look at the White community and say, "Those are our clients," and look at the Black community or the dark-skinned community and say, "Those are the threats." That is what people are trying to change by turning out in America in this fashion.

It is an important moment in which we need substantive change, real change—real change like the bill CORY BOOKER put together and led the battle on, and KAMALA HARRIS put together with him in partnership and led the battle on. That is the type of change we need in America. That is why people have been turning out in the streets.

But there is an unexpected twist on something we didn't anticipate, in which the President of the United States hasn't listened to this message about coming together so that everyone is treated equally. Instead, he is doubling down on a strategy of racism, a strategy of bigotry, a strategy of creating conflict in America with a determined new effort.

This is a picture of protesting in Oregon. I was at a demonstration much like this, where people chanted: "This is what democracy looks like. This is what democracy looks like."

This is what democracy looks like, colleagues—people coming together with their signs and their feet and their time, saying: We need change. It is as fundamental as free expression under the First Amendment. It is as fundamental to our Constitution as the right to assemble. This is as fundamental to the vision of "We the People" as anyone can imagine—that vision that Lincoln summarized as "government of the people, by the people, for the people," not of, by, and for some dictatorial force, not someone who wants to consolidate power in an imperial Presidency.

In fact, our Founders were really worried about authoritarianism. They were really worried about an imperial Presidency.

Once they launched that Constitution, what would happen with that first President? Would that first President say: I am now going to consolidate power in this young Republic, hold on to the Executive, ignore the balance of powers between the branches of government, and consolidate power in the Executive. I am going to take the forces that were the Revolutionary War forces, and I am going to turn them into a force to keep in power regardless of the constitutional requirement for elections.

They were very worried about this. One of the reasons they particularly

liked the idea of George Washington being the first President is that George Washington was very worried about that, and the example he set would mean a whole lot.

It is one thing to have a Constitution on paper. It is a whole other thing to hold onto it, to keep it. Coming out of the Constitutional Convention, the story goes that someone asked one of the convention policymakers: What do we have? And he replied: A republic, if we can keep it—if we can keep it.

This is what democracy looks like right here. There is another picture of what democracy looks like. This is the "wall of moms" in Portland, OR, coming out, standing side by side, creating a barrier between the police and the Federal forces that had been allocated to the city by President Trump and the people, creating that barrier, that "wall of moms," to say: Do not use flashbang on us or all the people behind us; do not use tear gas on us or all the people behind us; do not use impact munitions, a polite name for, essentially, rubber bullets—they say "non-lethal bullets"—we hope, right, because sometimes they do enormous damage—do not use your batons to knock us down and break our bones; do not pepper spray us in the face. We are the "wall of moms."

This is what democracy looks like, but this is a message lost on President Trump. We have something entirely different from the President. The President said: I am going to send some forces out to Portland to basically pour gasoline on the fire and turn it into, basically, a much more intense conflict.

So you already have the basics of a challenge in which you have had folks from the White extremists coming in camouflage to Portland to create trouble and looking for a fight, and you have antifa coming to Portland to look for a fight with the White extremists, the White nationalists.

Well, that had calmed down enormously to where there was only a small group left, coming in late at night and causing trouble. But Trump said: If I can recreate conflict in Portland, well, I can run a campaign on fear. Because what we have seen, in Presidential campaign after Presidential campaign, is a Republican candidate saying: If we run on fear, we will win because people think of us as stronger on national security.

Well, we have seen the different strategies. There was the Ebola run-on-fear strategy. There was the "immigrants, rapists, and murderers are going to run across the border and swarm America" run-on-fear strategy. There was the "ISIS is going to row across the Atlantic and invade America" run-on-fear strategy. There was the Willie Horton "you are going to be attacked by a dark-skinned person in an alley" run-on-fear strategy.

And all too often it has worked, this effort to gear up division in America, to play on racism in America.

But to that strategy of division and racism I say: No way. That is too low, too wrong for America. We should be coming together as a country. We should have a message of coming together as a people. We should be taking on the challenges of healthcare and housing and education.

Those are the bills we should have here on the floor of the Senate. We should be taking on the issue of fair labor, good-paying jobs. We should be working on rebuilding America's infrastructure.

We should be addressing the fact that, even today in States all across this country, you can be discriminated against for being a member of the LGBTQ community. You can get married in the morning, and you can proceed to be thrown out of your apartment. You can be told you cannot eat in this restaurant, you cannot sit in this movie theater, you cannot receive this government benefit.

The Supreme Court just took one step forward on the employment question, strengthening the ability to not be discriminated against in employment.

We passed a bill here in the Senate back in 2013 to do exactly that, to strengthen protections in employment, but the Republican-controlled House wouldn't take it up and treat LGBTQ Americans fairly.

If we were doing our job, we would have a debate on the Equality Act that would end discrimination in all of these areas because it is the right thing to do that no door should be slammed in the face of an American because of who they are or whom they love. Isn't that something we should be doing here?

Shouldn't we be taking on this challenge of carbon pollution and climate chaos? All the fossil fuel companies have worked hard to turn this into a partisan issue. It didn't used to be a partisan issue. Back when President Bush—not yet President but candidate Bush ran against candidate Dukakis, it was the Republican candidate who ran on climate change. It was the Democrat who ran on fossil fuels.

It is not so long ago, before Citizens United, that we had so many climate champions on both sides, but then dark money was introduced, and the fossil fuel community said: This is our chance to control the U.S. Senate. They put hundreds of millions—not thousands, millions—of dollars into the Senate campaigns 6 years ago, 2014.

I remember it well because I was one of the folks they were targeting, and I saw their strategy of taking that money and putting it into third-party campaigns and running tremendous numbers of assault ads, negative ads, attack ads—doing it on social media all across the board.

Since then, what happened? Well, all the voices that were on the Republican side of the aisle saying "We need to take on climate" disappeared. That is the corrupting power of Citizens United and dark money.

Then we had a bill here on the floor. We needed 60 votes, under our policy rules, to be able to pass it to close debate. It was disclosure—to say at least we should disclose where money comes from. But what happened? The fossil fuel lobby said no Republican can dare to vote for this bill if you want us to keep you in power, and every single Member across the aisle followed their lead and voted against disclosure.

They voted for darkness. They voted for hiding these massive contributions coming in from who knows where because they are hidden.

My point is that this is democracy here, people expressing their views, and here in this Chamber we should have democracy as well.

We had it almost over our entire history, of people being able to put virtually any issue on the floor and have it debated on and then to have it voted on and then to have voters know how their Senator voted so there was accountability.

But no more. We are in this incredible period in which there are a record number—low—of amendments, and the amendments we do have are basically not very significant to begin with or they are preprogrammed by leadership, not by each Senator having power. The idea of 100 Senators having that power—that sounds like something out of just another world, yet that was the Senate throughout its history until recently.

Why do I keep emphasizing this? Because this concentration of power where bills and amendments only go through the majority leader is an absolute fit with government by and for the powerful—the opposite of government by and for the people.

So if someone has a bill that says you can't gouge Americans on drug prices, they can't get that bill to the floor because it is blocked by the majority leader, and the drug companies don't want that bill on the floor, so they give a lot of money to that team.

If someone says we should have reasonable gun safety laws—not violating the Second Amendment—and we will make the world a little safer for our children, well, that bill can't get on the floor because it is blocked by the majority leader, and it is backed by massive spending of dark money and the NRA.

Or if we have a bill that says we should do a lot more about housing, I can't put that bill on the floor. How about we have a banking system that serves the cannabis industry so that we don't have huge bags of money opened up to the possibility of organized crime moving it around the country and doing bad things? We should extend that coverage, but we can't get that vote on this floor—which brings me to something more important than just basically anything I have just talked about, which is what President Trump is doing right now: deploying secret police across America, secret police here in America.

Now, we know that President Trump admires authoritarian leaders. He has spoken with admiration about Duterte in the Philippines. He seems to be in love with Erdogan in Turkey. He loves the Crown Prince in Saudi Arabia, who assassinated an American-based journalist.

He can't find anything wrong with how Putin runs Russia, as basically an authoritarian-style dictator. But now he is doing something beyond just this affection: He is bringing the tactics of authoritarian governments to the streets of the United States of America.

This is what democracy looks like, but I am going to show you some pictures of what democracy doesn't look like—instead, what authoritarianism looks like, what paramilitary forces look like.

So let's take an exploration of the President's strategy. Well, first, authoritarians don't want identity about the organization on their police uniforms, and they want the police, in functioning, to look more like warriors in some other fight across the sea.

So you dress them in camouflage. Here are folks deployed by President Trump in the streets of Portland. What agency do these belong to? No shoulder patch, no identity on this front, no identity on the other shoulder, no identity on the helmet—no identity. Who are these people?

How about these people? Are these the same group here? These are White extremists, nationalists, who come to Portland to get in fights. So President Trump dresses up his Federal forces to look like White extremists on the streets of Portland.

How is there accountability if you don't know where they are from?

Who can tell me if these folks are from Customs and Border Protection? Are they from the Federal Protective Service? Are they U.S. Marshals? How do we know? We don't because they are deliberately not marked.

We are told that these are actually Customs and Border Protection. I called up the head of Customs and Border Protection, and I said: What is the story with this tactic of secret police on the streets? He said: Oh, no, no, no; we insist they have "CBP" on them. We insist they have a unique identifier.

In fact, he put this in a tweet. He told all of America: We don't do that. But America has pictures, and those pictures tell us there is no ID. They are being deployed as secret operators on the streets of Portland.

That is going to be terrifying because you don't know who they are. Is it just someone who wants to create trouble who puts "police" on their shirt? Is it one of these folks? These folks have badges on them that look a little more official. We see an American flag here. We see an American flag here.

Are these White extremists coming to the streets to beat people up, or are they Federal agents? And if so, who are they, and what is their mission? We found out their mission in short order.

Here we have a picture of a Navy vet. That Navy vet said he came down to say: What does it mean to honor your oath—your oath of office, your oath to the Constitution? He wants to know. He was a veteran who served in our forces to defend the Constitution.

How did President Trump's secret police respond? Here is a CBP agent with a baton right here, striking him. Here is another one with a baton coming around to strike him again. Here is another one spraying pepper spray into his face. This man, just standing here—his hands are basically hooked in his pocket, like this—he is just standing here saying: I came down here to see what people thought about honoring their oath to the Constitution. And he is attacked. He is attacked by multiple members of this secret force Trump puts on the streets of our Nation.

They had not just pepper spray and not just batons; they had other weapons, impact munitions—in this case, U.S. marshals.

Here is a young man who is holding a boom box over his head—that is what it looked like—and he is on one side of the street. On the other side of the street are the marshals. As he stands there in the video, you see him crumble and fall to the ground because from across the street, he was shot right between the eyes. Critical condition. Fractured skull.

Who in the world would expect a Federal officer to shoot a protester, who is either holding up a sign or a radio, between the eyes from across the street? Do you think that is accidental? They accidentally shot him in the head? It wasn't accidental; it was deliberate. They are sending a message. A lot of other people got shot with these munitions. I am told that he is no longer in critical condition. Thank goodness for that, but it could have been very, very different. We still don't know the ultimate outcome of this assault on a peaceful protester.

Pepper spray, using batons on veterans, shooting a peaceful protester in the head from a few yards away—that is not all that Trump's secret police were up to. They decided to go through the streets and grab people and throw them into unmarked vans.

Here is one of those vans on the streets of Portland. Here are President Trump's secret police, unmarked, throwing another protester into a van.

One of the individuals who was treated in this fashion said he was terrified because he thought these camouflaged folks were the White extremists who come to make trouble, and was he being kidnapped? They would not answer the question when they were asked "Who are you?" They didn't answer the question.

Secret police, unmarked, using pepper spray, batons, impact munitions, and tear gas on peaceful protesters, and then throwing people—grabbing them and throwing them into unmarked vans. What does that make you think of? What country are we talking

about here? Are we talking about Syria? Are we talking about Duterte in the Philippines? Are we talking about Erdogan in Turkey? Are we talking about the Crown Prince in Saudi Arabia? Are we talking about Putin running Russia? We could be talking about any of those folks, as they use these tactics, but this is unacceptable and outrageous and unconstitutional in a democratic republic.

President Trump coordinated this deployment of secret police and attacks on peaceful protesters to create a big conflagration, a big explosion of protests in Portland. The protests had died down to just less than 100 actors and some bystanders in the late evening, and then I am told that on the days that followed these outrageous attacks, the protests multiplied—not one- or twofold but fivefold or more. That is exactly what Trump wanted because he wanted to say: There is this dissent and trouble in the streets of Portland. I am your law-and-order President; I will take care of that trouble.

You create the trouble. You escalate the conflict so you can say "I am the one who can deescalate it" later. This is a horrific strategy that no Member of this Senate should have the slightest sympathy for—a strongman in the Oval Office adopting the secret police tactics of the worst dictators from around the globe.

Some of the headlines that followed were things like this:

"Federal Law Enforcement Use Unmarked Vehicles To Grab Protesters Off Portland Streets."

"A Navy vet asked federal officers in Portland to remember their [constitutional] oaths. Then they broke his hand." You saw the pictures of them striking him with the batons.

"Federal Officers Deployed in Portland Didn't Have Proper Training, D.H.S. memo said." It says: Untrained, undisciplined folks, but they knew what the President wanted and that was to create an escalation of violence on the streets of our city.

You are probably wondering, didn't the President call and talk to the Governor before he decided to deploy these secret police on the streets of Portland? No, he didn't. Didn't the DHS Secretary? No. How about the Department of Justice? The Attorney General? No. Surely they called the mayor and said: Before we deploy folks to patrol the streets with tear gas and batons and impact bullets, rubber bullets, pepper spray; before we beat up peaceful protesters and shoot them in the head, we want to talk to you, Mayor, about what is going on. Did the President call? Did the Secretary call, the Secretary of Homeland Security? Did the Secretary or the Attorney General call? Did the head of Customs and Border Protection, CBP, call before they sent in their special operating group? Did the Marshals' lead director, commissioner call? The answer is no, no, no, no, and no. None of them called be-

cause they weren't coming to coordinate, to help; they were coming to disrupt. They knew that if they asked to come, asked whether they were wanted, the answer would be no, you are not wanted because you are coming to inflame the violence and disruption.

The President was giving speeches, saying "Look at what a wonderful President I am because I am sending help to quell violence in Portland" while he was sending secret police to create violence. This has to be one of the bigger lies he has told in his time as President. By various accounts, he tells a number of them every single day. But this lie to the American people is not just a little white lie; this is not just a little misrepresentation; this is something of constitutional input about who we are as a country. We don't do secret police in our country. We don't grab people off the streets and terrify them and throw them in unmarked vans in our country—at least not until now.

You see, the President has looked at the polls that say we are not very happy. Americans are not very happy with the way you have executed the Presidency. We are certainly not very happy with the way you have managed this really big crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic. When there is a crisis, you start to see someone—can they rise to the occasion? Can they bring forth the best in people? Can they facilitate cooperation? Can they mobilize resources? Can they make the case in an effective and persuasive fashion?

The American people have seen that President Trump could not rise to the occasion. He could not bring himself to bring people together. He could not make the case for a national strategy on how to tackle the coronavirus. He could not mobilize resources to address it in a timely fashion. Millions more are going to get sick as a result of his incompetence, and tens of thousands more will die because of the incompetence of President Trump.

What is a President running for reelection to do when his incompetence is revealed in its complete and total clarity to the Nation? You create a war. That is what you do. You create a war because a war might rally people to your side when we are being attacked. But in this case, the President couldn't come up with an overseas war. ISIS? Too weak. The scary Ebola? Too long ago. North Korea? A completely failed strategy by the President of expressing his love for yet another dictator and that love not being returned in any effective policy changes. So what is left? Immigration. Oh, wait—he already played the rapist and murderers at the border card. He already offended people throughout our Nation by snuffing out the lamp of Lady Liberty. What is left? You have to create a war inside the United States.

First came Washington, DC. He tried out the secret police strategy by deploying forces onto the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, unmarked, and nobody knew who the hell they were. Who

are these people who are on the Lincoln Memorial? Are they far-right extremists carrying guns? Are they Customs and Border Protection? Are they U.S. Marshals? Who are these people? Nobody knew. They were secret police at the Lincoln Monument.

And then he decided to test the strategy of using weapons against peaceful protesters across from the White House. There they are gathered together. There is this great tradition in America. If you want to protest where the President can see you, you go to L'Enfant Plaza and you look up at the second story and you hold up your protest sign and you scream your position on something that you consider very important for America—the change you want to see or the man you object to. The President and his family look out those windows and say: I sure hate seeing those protesters.

But that is symbolic of the right to assemble and the freedom of speech in our beautiful Nation under our extraordinary Constitution. What did President Trump do? Well, he walled off L'Enfant Plaza across from the White House so people couldn't protest there. That is what this President thinks of protesters. He sees them as a threat to him. He doesn't like freedom of assembly, and he doesn't like freedom of speech, but what he does like is a good photo opportunity.

So the President decides to get the team together and we will go over and I will stand on the steps of the church and hold up a Bible. I still am a little confounded about what his message was to do that. The thing is, to get to the steps of the church, he would have to come near these protesters he hates because he hates protesters. He doesn't like Americans calling for change or criticizing his policies.

I am thinking back about this “wall of moms” that I showed you earlier—these moms coming down, forming a line, and saying: Don't tear gas us. Don't do shock grenades. Don't shoot us with rubber bullets. Don't pepper spray us.

And yet his forces did all those things.

Where did he try this out first? He tried it in that area behind L'Enfant Plaza where the church steps were. His forces went out and attacked those protesters. Nobody saw violence of any kind. This had nothing to do with quelling a riot. This had to do with one simple thing: The President hates protests and wanted to show what a strong man he is, like those dictators he admires all across the planet—like the Crown Prince in Saudi Arabia, like Duterte with his extrajudicial executions in the Philippines, like Putin, whom he just can't say enough good things about who suppresses the civil rights of the Russian people. He wanted to show how strong he was so he sent his team out to tear gas, use impact munitions, rubber bullets on the protesters so he could stand at the church with a Bible.

I am still wondering what passage in the Bible he was there to talk about. You can think for yourselves. You can imagine. You can ask yourselves: What did the President want to say with the Good Book in his hand? Did he want to say this book talks about turning the other cheek, and I will show how much I admire that principle of turning the other cheek by coming out and telling my team to tear gas and shoot peaceful protesters? Is that what the President wanted to do, kind of somehow demonstrate support for turning the other cheek by having his team gas and shoot people in that area close to L'Enfant Plaza, close to the steps of the church, or did the President want to come out and say: This Good Book talks about beating swords into plowshares, and I want to come out and show just how I believe in the principle of beating swords into plowshares by having my team gas people and baton people and do these explosive flashbang grenades. Is that what the President was trying to do?

What message in the Bible was he trying to convey? Was he trying to convey the message that Jesus Christ talked about time and time and time again of helping the poor and the destitute, and he thought it was such an important message to carry to the United States that he would use force, tear gas, rubber bullets to clear the path so he could talk about how important it was to help the destitute and the poor in America and how his policies might help them? No. We don't know. I don't think the President knew. He has never indicated that he is actually familiar with the contents of that book he was holding up, which makes it a particularly bizarre photo op.

But this was his first trial run of this strategy of using weapons against peaceful protesters, of using unmarked uniforms on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial. He loved it so much. He loved that sense that he was so strong because he could clear the path with his Presidential team so he could get to those steps. He was such an awesome man, such an incredible President showing strength by attacking peaceful protesters so he could have his photo on. It filled him with such energy, he thought: Let's try this out elsewhere in the country—so he comes to Portland.

He comes to Portland, and he proceeds to say: Let's use that secret police strategy again, unmarked. Let's use those batons and pepper spray again against a peaceful protester. Let's use those impact munitions again against someone holding up a sign, shooting them from across the street, giving them a fractured skull and putting them in critical condition and into the hospital. Let's take it and even amplify it a little bit and put them into unmarked vans and sweep them away. This is what we have with the Trump secret police strategy.

As he did these things, he went out on the campaign stump and said: Look

what a mighty leader I am attacking these peaceful people with these weapons. I did it to the protesters in Washington, DC, and I did it to the protesters in Portland, OR, and now I am going to take my strategy of attacking protesters and spread it all across America.

What does he talk about? He says: I want to take this strategy to Baltimore. He says: I want to take this strategy to Philadelphia. He says: I want to take this strategy to New York. And then he said: I want to take it to Chicago and I want to take it to Detroit and I want to take it to Oakland, CA. What do those things have in common? And then he says: They are led by Democrats. I will take my strategy of inciting violence with secret police, unmarked van abductions, use of pepper spray, batons, and flashbangs—the whole arsenal—and I will take it to all these cities where there are Democratic mayors. Then I will say: Look at me. I am a law-and-order President, and I can quell all that trouble I created across this country.

You are probably thinking I made up this list of cities that the President talked about. Surely, the President wouldn't take this incredibly horrendous secret police strategy and express that he wanted to take it on a trial run all across America so he could create violence in Democratic cities, but in his own words:

Who's next? New York and Chicago and Philadelphia and Detroit and Baltimore and all of these—Oakland is a mess.

And he framed it as going to quell violence, but, instead, the strategy produces violence. It enflames. It accentuates. It outrages. It creates conflict.

I have here an article, and it is from FOX 32 News in Chicago: “Lightfoot confirms federal agents will help manage Chicago violence.” Chicago has a Democratic mayor. Let's go create trouble there.

Mayor Lori Lightfoot had a different tone Tuesday regarding President Donald Trump's decision to send agents to Chicago. “I'm hopeful that they will not be foolish enough to bring that kind of nonsense to Chicago,” the mayor said.

Well, what did she mean by “nonsense”? It is the polite word for attacking peaceful protesters with batons and flashbangs and tear gas.

I am certainly not saying that Portland didn't have some tensions. The extremist groups on the right have made a favorite trip out of coming to Portland to cause trouble and the anti-fascists have responded in kind, and that is what the local team has to manage and deescalate. They have succeeded in deescalating it to where it was a small group late at night. And then Trump came in and blew it all into a big crisis once again.

When I said that this is coordinated with his campaign, campaign ads went up. His strategy of creating chaos in America, then campaigning on it couldn't be more transparent.

As President Trump deploys Federal agents to Portland, Ore., and threatens to

dispatch to other cities, his re-election campaign is spending millions of dollars on omnibus television ads that promote fear. . . . The influx of agents in Portland has led to scenes of confrontations and chaos that Mr. Trump and his aides have pointed to as they try to burnish a false narrative about Democratic elected officials allowing dangerous protesters to create widespread bedlam.

The Trump campaign is driving home that message with a new ad that tries to tie its dark portrayal of Democratic-led cities.

There it is—campaign ads to fit his dark portrayal of Democratic-led cities.

The idea that not only would the President bring those secret police tactics to America—to our streets—he would deploy them in his effort to create conflict so he can win reelection, so he can have something that scares the American people. Don't we have enough to be worried about already? Don't we have a pandemic to manage?

A number of us worked to say: Mr. President, you need to have a national strategy on producing protective equipment to help stop the spread of this contagion. Mr. President, that should probably include taking available factories and putting them to work making protective equipment and distributing it quickly. The President said, no, he's not doing it. He is not activating the Defense Production Act to have a national strategy to stop the spread of this disease.

I have two healthcare workers in my family. My son works in a doctor's office recording the computer code on the symptoms and so forth. He is a medical scribe. My wife goes house to house visiting folks who are in hospice. They are in the final chapter of their life, and she coaches them and their family on care and support during this final chapter of our journey here on this planet. A number of the people she sees are very high risk because they are fragile and sick in that final chapter, so they would be very affected if this disease were introduced. Some of them have the disease.

She has to be very careful that she doesn't pick it up and bring it home to my elderly mother who lives in our house. My elderly mother is in her nineties. She probably wouldn't want me to call her elderly in her nineties, but she is fragile, and she would be affected. My son doesn't want to bring it home or spread it. Both of them had trouble getting the protective equipment they needed early in this pandemic because we didn't have a national strategy. Trump failed the leadership test.

How about another critical piece of this, which is testing?

We needed to crank up all of the biological manufacturing capacity of America to produce the reagents so that people could be tested and get the results within hours or a day so that, if they were infected, even if they were asymptomatic—they didn't have the disease symptoms, but they had the disease, and they could spread it—that they would be quarantined, but the President said no.

So we put into the bill a requirement for the President to produce a national test strategy and produce a report with his test strategy. What did it read? It read our test strategy—our national strategy—was to leave it to the States. What kind of leadership is that to have no strategy on producing the reagents or the tests and getting them around the country?

One thing we have done here is we have funded a lot of money to help communities buy tests because they are expensive. We said they should be free to the victims—to the people who are getting tested, that is. Every health expert has said you have to crank up this testing so that there is no wait time. It doesn't help to get the results 7 or 10 days later.

I have been holding townhalls. I hold one in every county every year in Oregon, 36 counties. This year, I only got 21 in before the coronavirus made it impossible to hold them in person, but I have been holding them digitally, electronically. I keep hearing the report from the county health agents that now testing has increased to its taking 7 days to get a response, 9 days to get a response, 11 days to get a response. Why is that? It is because we didn't have any national strategy for producing tests. As the disease flares up and grows in magnitude in the Southern States, more and more resources are getting diverted to those Southern States. So there are not the testing supplies because there is no national strategy.

Then the experts said: Well, you should have a contact tracing strategy, so, when people test positive, you can immediately find out who they have been in touch with so those people get immediately quarantined before they can pass it on to other people.

Yet that doesn't work if you can't get test results quickly, and it doesn't work if you don't have contact tracers. A number of us have worked to provide funding for contact tracers. ELIZABETH WARREN and I have introduced a bill that calls for 100,000 contact tracers across this country. There is \$75 billion in the House's bill for testing and tracing across the country.

How did President Trump respond this last week? President Trump said: I don't want any money for testing in this bill—no money for testing. He wants this stripped out; yet it is an essential element for controlling the coronavirus.

I don't think he will win on that one. I think the Members of this Chamber, on both sides of the aisle, care enough about their constituents that they want to help with testing and contact tracing, but the President wants the testing stripped out.

Why does he want it stripped out? It is because, if you test more people, then you get more positives, and if you get more positives, it doesn't look good. So he is choosing to have things look good rather than to contain the coronavirus.

If you proceed to offend people across the country by failing in leadership on protective equipment and failing in leadership on testing and failing in leadership on contact tracing, you need another plan, and we have the plan.

The President has made it clear he will test out his secret police and attacks on peaceful protesters in DC, magnify that experiment in Portland, and see if it creates more chaos. If it does, he will deploy that effort across the Nation. That is President Trump's plan, and it is as wrong as anything could be. Secret policing has no place in the United States of America.

I introduced a simple amendment to the Defense Authorization Act, which deals with security powers and things like Customs and Border Protection and deals with things like U.S. Marshals, and I said we are on that right now on the floor of the Senate. Let's have this debate about secret policing, and let's just ask a few simple things.

First, when the President sends agents anywhere in the country, they have to carry identification about who they work for. It is not that big of a request, and it is not expensive. Instead of putting a generic "police" or no marking at all, you put "CBP," or you put "U.S. Marshals," or you put "Federal Protective Service" or one of a dozen other Federal police units that play different roles. That way, the American people will know who they are. Then you put unique identifiers on them so that, if they do something terrible, like walk up and shoot a protester in the head, you would know who had done it. You could find out.

Now, some of my friends have said: Well, we are not sure we want to require names to be on the uniforms because there have been some cases in which people have been so outraged that they have harassed the families of the police officers or of these Federal agents. We don't want that. OK. A number would work that could be used to identify someone after an egregious act but would protect the families of our Federal agents who are doing a good job. That is pretty simple. Have an ID as to what agency you belong to and a unique identifier. You are no longer secret.

Then you can't be deployed on some expanded mission of sweeping the streets. Your legitimate mission should be to protect a Federal monument or a Federal building, and you have to be at that Federal building or in the near vicinity of it or of the monument. That is pretty simple. If you want a broader mission, you have to coordinate with the mayor and the Governor and get their permission.

It is pretty straightforward. Have a patch with the agency, a unique identifier, and pursue your mission in the near vicinity of the Federal property.

What else?

The President would have to tell the people of America how many people he is sending, from what agencies, and to what city for a little bit of transparency. That is it.

This amendment that I am proposing to stop secret policing is simple; yet my colleagues are blocking it from being considered in this bill.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GARDNER). The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, in a moment, I will again ask for this important issue of deployment of secret police to be debated and voted on, on this floor. That is what the U.S. Senate is for, to address the issues facing Americans, but I didn't want to ask until my colleague was here to respond from the Republican Caucus. When he is ready, I will make that motion.

I make this motion to send a couple of different messages. One, most importantly, is that secret policing has no place in America, and all Americans must stand arm in arm and say no. The second is, when there is an important issue like this, this is the Chamber in which it should be debated and voted on so we can hear the conflicting views.

There may be clauses in the amendment that I will propose that people won't like, insight that they can provide, or modifications that they would like to propose to my amendment, but it can't happen unless this amendment is considered on the floor.

That is why, notwithstanding rule XXII, I ask unanimous consent to call up my amendment to stop secret policing in America, amendment No. 2457, an amendment to limit Federal law enforcement officers for crowd control; that there be 2 hours for debate, equally divided between opponents and proponents; and that upon the use or yielding back of time, the Senate vote in relation to the amendment with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. CRAMER. Mr. President, in reversing the right to object, I, like the entire staff in the Chamber today and like the Presiding Officer for most of this time, has endured this for the last hour, an hour that has been very similar to the hour we had yesterday on the very same topic and with the very same motion to have the very same amendment passed in the Defense Authorization Act.

I am a member of the Committee on Armed Services. Prior to the Presiding Officer, I was presiding. I was honored to sit in that chair and watch the chairman of the Committee on Armed Services and the ranking Democrat of the Committee on Armed Services talk in glowing terms about each other and the bipartisan effort that has led to a National Defense Authorization Act that has considered 807 amendments to this point. As we sit here, 40 more amendments—20 by Republicans and 20 by Democrats—are being hotlined for further consideration for, hopefully, tomorrow's final passage.

The National Defense Authorization Act has been greatly debated. In fact,

it has been the most debated bill that I have been part of since I got here. Not only that, the amendments that are represented in this 807 are almost, nearly, equally divided among the two parties represented in this great Chamber.

What we have been witnessing tonight is a diatribe—in some cases, fantasy but, in every case, an exaggeration and, in many cases, a fabrication. The good Senator from Oregon has shown us pictures of what democracy looks like. I don't disagree. We are self-governed. The exceptionalism of America is that we are self-governed.

Democracy also demands protocol in this Chamber, the most deliberative body in this world. Yet, without any warning—without any heads-up—here we are, dealing with a unanimous consent motion on an amendment that has already failed to get unanimous consent just in the last 24 hours on a bill that has already been debated for weeks and months. It included bipartisan amendments across the board. Then we are confronted with this breach of not only protocol but of—well, let's just say—common decency and respect for each other.

I do agree with the Senator from Oregon on this point: He is right in that we should have the debate, and that is why it is too bad that his amendment wasn't allowed to be debated in Senator TIM SCOTT's JUSTICE Act.

And the reason it couldn't be debated there was because he and most every one of his colleagues on the Democrat side other than three filibustered against TIM SCOTT's police reform bill.

I don't think they want a solution. They want to have this crazy rhetoric, demagogue all day and all night, wherever they can have a demagogue, and they want to blame President Donald Trump for the actions of criminals.

Now, I have heard it all when I have heard, from the Senate floor, antifa referred to as the anti—what did he call them? The antifascists. The antifascists. That is the way to sugar-coat thugs.

So for these reasons—and I could think of dozens of others, but I will spare you all and the staff this late night, getting later—I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Oregon's postcloture time has expired.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for 5 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. MERKLEY. And I would invite my colleague to stay if he would like to and yield to him if he wants to jump into the conversation.

Mr. CRAMER. I think we have had enough debate. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for 2 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. CRAMER. Mr. President, I don't object.

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

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, my colleague has said that the facts I have presented tonight are a fabrication, to use his exact word. He has called it a breach of protocol. He has called it a violation of common decency.

I think we are here as a Chamber to address difficult, important issues in America. This is a difficult and important mission.

This is a new use of force in a manner that doesn't belong in the streets of America. It is important that we debate it.

I would be happy to have it be a standalone bill, come up right after this National Defense Authorization Act, and have it debated for 2 hours and voted on, because then we actually have a conversation and we have to take a position, and our constituents can see where we stand, and folks could propose an amendment to it if they didn't like the way I have written it. It is so simple. It says: Do what we have always done. Put ID about where you come from. Have a unique identifier. And don't go sweeping through the streets if your mission is to protect a Federal property. Stay at that Federal property or work with the Governor or the mayor if you have a broader effort.

Those are reasonable things.

I don't think that it was a breach of protocol to ask this Chamber to consider that on this bill because there is a connection. We are talking about a bill that involves the use of force and how we govern in America.

I don't think it is a violation of common decency. My colleague does, and I would prefer that we actually have that conversation about the facts and about the arguments, about the simple solution I proposed when we can actually take a vote or other people can offer amendments to it and modify it. That is this Chamber doing what it should be doing.

So I am disappointed that my colleague is blocking this from being considered before this body.

I do love this body, and I first came here when amendments were freely—

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. MERKLEY. Thank you, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. CRAMER. Mr. President, I am just going to reiterate my final point one final time, and I promise not to take more time than the Senator from Oregon.

He had his opportunity to have this amendment considered, debated, and voted on in the JUSTICE Act, introduced by Senator TIM SCOTT, a bill that dealt specifically with police reform.

It would have been the perfect place to have the debate, except that my colleague voted against cloture so we couldn't even proceed to the bill.

I don't know how we could have made it any easier or better. In fact, when we took up the JUSTICE Act, he and his side were provided at least 20 amendment opportunities. We could have had the debate he seeks tonight at the appropriate time on the appropriate bill, and I am sorry that we didn't do that.

Perhaps after tonight's episode, he and his colleagues will reconsider, and perhaps before we are done this year, Senator SCOTT's JUSTICE Act could be brought to the floor and we could have an adult discussion and debate on amendments and on the bill and on all kinds of great ideas right here in the most august body in the United States. I hope that can happen.

With that, I yield the floor and wish you a good night.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. CRAMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

Mr. GARDNER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, the Congress, our States, and the administration talk about ways to handle the immediate consequences of COVID-19. We must also talk about the aftermath, and Steve Case has written a provocative op-ed about the future.

Those of us in Congress should read and discuss it. It has to be considered in future planning.

I ask unanimous consent that the text of this article be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Washington Post, July 19, 2020]

THERE'S NO GOING BACK TO THE PRE-PANDEMIC ECONOMY—CONGRESS SHOULD RESPOND ACCORDINGLY

(By Steve Case)

This week, Congress will likely take up the next steps in the economic response to the covid-19 pandemic. If the package is like previous efforts, it will focus on trying to turn back the clock to February 2020: treating the economy as if it were Sleeping Beauty, merely needing to be awakened to be fully restored. This strategy is a mistake: Congress needs to stop solely backing efforts to restore the old economic reality and focus on how to develop a new one.

Most of the \$1 trillion that Congress has put into business support so far during the pandemic has been directed to preserving existing firms through the Paycheck Protection Program and the Main Street Relief Fund. Helping those businesses and their workers is vital, but that alone won't fuel the economic recovery the country needs.

The problem is that many of the businesses backed by PPP or Main Street are going to wind up shutting down. Even when they aren't facing a global pandemic or economic crisis, about 100,000 small and medium-size businesses fail in the United States every year. New businesses will be needed to re-

place the ones that permanently close. Moreover, the failure rate is likely to be higher, as many firms were on the wrong side of trends—such as the move to online shopping, convenient food delivery or watching streaming content at home—that the pandemic lockdown has accelerated.

Another consideration: The protests stirred by the killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis police custody have made clear how many Americans were left behind in the pre-coronavirus economy; restoring the way things were before the virus hit won't address these needs.

Here are three ways Congress can help launch a new, more equitable era of entrepreneurship.

First: Make it easier for the earliest-stage start-ups to receive PPP dollars and for all start-ups to access the Main Street Relief Fund. PPP loans go to existing businesses to maintain jobs but not to new businesses that want to create them. Main Street loans go only to companies that are already profitable; most start-ups are not. That approach is backward: Studies show that nearly all net new job creation comes from start-ups, not established businesses.

A PPP revision should allow start-ups to obtain loans based on their plans to create jobs—with loan forgiveness granted only if those jobs materialize. If they don't, the start-ups should be required to repay the loans before any other obligations. And the barrier in the Main Street lending program that makes businesses ineligible for aid if they were not profitable in 2019 should be removed.

Second, the government needs to be a counterweight to private capital that exacerbates geographic disparities in opportunity as the country responds to the crisis. The pandemic is a devastating tragedy, but adversity tends to be met by the creation of new industries and new businesses. This crisis will stir innovations in medicine, goods and services delivered at home, remote work and learning, and more. Where will these new firms grow? If the decision is left to the private sector alone, almost all of them will be in three states: New York, California and Massachusetts, which attract 75 percent of all venture capital.

Great ideas to respond to this crisis are spread widely across the country—but capital is not. Business assistance programs created by Congress should have a special focus on getting startups off the ground in places that have lacked venture capital backing in the past. Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.) and others have already proposed such legislation; members of Congress from these neglected areas should insist it is part of any Phase 4 bill.

Finally, lawmakers should step in to address unintended inequalities of opportunity for female and minority entrepreneurs caused by the earlier relief bills. Because these programs fund only existing businesses, they reinforce opportunity gaps. Communities with thriving businesses get more PPP and Main Street aid; those that have lacked capital to get businesses off the ground in the past see little help now.

The solution would be for Congress to direct unused PPP funds to start-ups led by female entrepreneurs and entrepreneurs of color, creating opportunities where they have not existed before. The Main Street Lending program could be modified to extend special debt options to community development groups and minority-focused accelerators to back a new wave of startups founded by historically underrepresented entrepreneurs.

There's no going back to the pre-pandemic U.S. economy. Too much has changed; too many new needs exist. This is a rare oppor-

tunity to break with the past and create a better future. Congress should grab it.

VOTE EXPLANATION

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, I voted in support of S. Amdt. 1788, which would reduce defense spending by 10 percent and invest that money into healthcare, education, and poverty reduction in communities with a poverty rate of 25 percent or more. To govern is to choose, and as we face unprecedented challenges at home, this defense budget is out of step with the values, priorities, and needs of the American people.

The unchecked growth in the defense budget is unsustainable, and the Trump administration has exacerbated these challenges. We have a duty to ensure the readiness of our forces, and I have supported efforts to rebuild our Armed Forces after years of costly overseas engagements. But massive spending increases without clear strategic direction do not make us safer. We need to be thoughtful about our spending choices, recognizing that every dollar spent on defense is a dollar not spent on healthcare, education, workforce training, and other critical areas of need.

The National Defense Authorization Act as it is currently written would spend \$740.5 billion on defense. This represents 53 percent of total Federal discretionary spending and exceeds the defense budgets of the next 11 nations combined, including our allies in Australia, South Korea, Germany, Japan, France, and the United Kingdom. It is more than twice the combined defense expenditures of China and Russia. Topline defense spending has risen by more than \$100 billion since President Trump took office; after the \$74 billion cut proposed in this amendment, defense spending would still be above the fiscal year 2017 level.

Some of my colleagues have expressed unease about the across-the-board nature of these cuts, and I agree that a targeted approach is preferable. But I have seen the consequences of delaying difficult decisions and believe we can no longer wait to have difficult conversations about our defense budget. In addition, the National Defense Authorization Act is not an appropriations bill, and this amendment simply reduces the total amount of money authorized to be spent on defense in the upcoming fiscal year. The Appropriations Committee, on which I serve, will still have the task of making thoughtful, targeted reductions in areas of lower priority, while preserving funding for high-priority items. I encourage my colleagues to confront these challenges for the good of our country and make adjustments as needed during conference negotiations with the House while remaining under the cap set by this amendment.

I am glad that this amendment protects salaries and healthcare from cuts, and would have preferred that it go further in making targeted cuts in order