

The Army Secretary and the Army Chief of Staff released a joint statement clarifying, based on these dangerous actions proposed by the President's team, that "there is no role for the U.S. military in determining the outcome of an American election."

It is hard to believe that those officials in our government who help defend our country would even have to say that based upon what the reporting indicates.

So I hope that, even in this holiday season, it is made very clear by every Member of the U.S. Senate that this will not be tolerated and has to be condemned. We can't just say: Oh, well, it is another outrage, another insult. It should be condemned, just like the actions of the Russian Government should be condemned as well.

### CORONAVIRUS

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I just want to make a couple of brief comments about the legislation we are going to be voting on, we hope, tonight.

I will talk about, for purposes of time, not the spending bill or the spending portion, the so-called omnibus. I will talk about the COVID-19 relief provisions. I won't go through all of them, obviously, but there is a lot of good news for many Americans in this legislation.

The consensus on unemployment benefits will help a lot of Americans: \$300 per week for all Americans receiving unemployment benefits through March 14. The Pandemic Unemployment Assistance Program is extended to help self-employed individuals, gig workers, and others in nontraditional employment.

The economic impact payments for Americans across the country: \$600 for individuals making up to \$75,000 a year and \$1,200 for couples making up to \$150,000 per year, as well as a \$600 payment for each dependent child. That means a family of four would receive \$2,400 in direct payments.

The Paycheck Protection Program, so-called PPP: \$284 billion for the first and second PPP forgivable loans.

There is more money for transportation, more money for health, and, in particular, money for the procurement of vaccines and therapeutics, as well as money for vaccine distribution.

Education is funded for more than \$80 billion; emergency rental assistance, \$25 billion; the Postal Service, \$10 billion; childcare, \$10 billion—both very important.

The ones I am especially grateful for, even though on a lot of these I would vote for higher numbers—a lot of us would—are the nutrition provisions: \$26 billion in agriculture and nutrition funding. Half of that will be used for direct payments to farmers who have suffered losses due to the impact of the pandemic. The remaining 13, the other half of the 26—\$13 billion will be used to combat food insecurity, which is on

the rise due to the economic impact of the pandemic.

There is a lot in here that is positive for American families, for workers, for small businesses, and for so many other needs. It took way too long. This is months overdue. There are gaps in it.

I think this is a 3-month bill to help folks get through January, February, and March. I think we will need another bill after that. And, obviously, I am very disappointed we don't have dollars in here to help nursing homes, which I fought very hard for. We will keep up that fight.

It doesn't have the direct help to State and local governments, even though there are provisions that will help States but not nearly enough.

So it is far, far from perfect, but I think it is important that we pass it to provide direct help to people who have challenges, whether it is with employment or running a small business or supporting their families.

The last point I will make on this is that we gather here today—and we hope the vote will be tonight before midnight, but we don't know. But it is just ironic that today is the 21st of December, the winter solstice, the darkest day of the year.

I was noting this weekend Elizabeth Dias wrote an op-ed, a very thoughtful op-ed, in the New York Times about winter and all of the ways different cultures have dealt with the darkness and the severity of winter. But here is what she says, and I hope it provides a context for what we are about to pass and what we must do in the months ahead when the virus is still raging and the death number keeps climbing. Here is what Elizabeth Dias says:

The great irony of winter is that the moment darkness is greatest is also the moment light is about to return. Each year the winter solstice comes with the promise that the next day will be brighter.

In this season of hope and this holiday season, we hope and we pray that this legislation will bring some light to people's lives, that it will give them a sense, in addition to having a vaccine available now, that brighter days are ahead.

We can't underestimate the darkness that has engulfed so many families, but we hope tonight that we provide at least a measure of light to all the darkness that so many families have faced.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to engage in a colloquy with my friend and colleague from the State of Delaware, TOM CARPER.

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

### ENVIRONMENTAL LEGISLATION

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I have just recently been talking about a number of pieces of legislation that

have come through the Environment and Public Works Committee: the water resources act, the USE IT Act, the act called DERA to eliminate and reduce emissions from diesels, as well as additional legislation on HFCs.

My partner in all of those is here on the floor now, and I would just like to ask him if he would—since he has been such a great partner for the last 4 years that I have chaired the committee—talk about this as an accomplishment for the environment, for the committee, and for the Senate and for the country.

So I am just kind of curious, from his standpoint, where he sees things as a sign of success.

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, if my colleague will yield.

As Senator CASEY leaves, I thought his point about longest night and every day that follows will be brighter, and some of the provisions that Senator BARRASSO and I, along with JOHN NEELY KENNEDY, have included in the Nation's major budget piece of legislation ensure that it will be brighter.

One of the pieces of legislation, as Senator BARRASSO knows, deals with the phasedown of HFCs, hydrofluorocarbons. They are 1,000 times worse for climate change than carbon dioxide. Under the legislation that we have offered, it will phase down their utilization over the next 15 years by 85 percent. What is that worth? It is worth a half a degree Celsius—just this one thing, just this one provision.

A lot of people on this planet think the biggest challenge that we face on this planet right now, an existential threat, is the fact that our planet is getting warmer and that we need to do something about it. In this legislation, we do take a big bite out of it.

And my hope is what it will be is that it will serve as a source of encouragement for other Democrats and Republicans, maybe an Independent or two, to take other steps as we come back into the new year with the new administration and make further progress.

One of the great things that I love about our HFC legislation—thanks, colleague.

One of the great things, Mr. Chairman, that I love about our HFC legislation is that it shows that you can do good things for our planet and create jobs. That is what I said: do good things for our planet in the battle against climate change and create jobs. How many jobs? Tens of thousands of jobs—in this country, in this country; billions of dollars' worth of economic growth—in this country—and at the same time doing good things with respect to climate change.

Interestingly, it is not every day you find legislation supported by the National Association of Manufacturers, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, most major environmental groups, and co-sponsored by, gosh, two-thirds of the Senate—Democrats and Republicans alike.

In that case, we have done it. We threaded the needle. I just want to thank the chairman for his leadership and for his patience and the staff in working with us. And our thanks to Rich Russell, your staff leader on the majority side; Mary Frances Repko, the staff leader on our side; and everybody who worked with her.

But more than a decade ago, I remember standing next to my colleague JOHN BARRASSO—I remember standing right over close to where he is standing tonight, and a guy named George Voinovich came up to me—from Ohio. He and I had been Governors together for a number of years. Love the guy.

He said: I am looking for a Democratic cosponsor for a bill. He said: Do you want to think about it? I said: Well, what is it? He said: It is a proposal that fosters collaboration between businesses, folks who have buses with diesel engines, trains with diesel engines, boats with diesel engines, trucks with diesel engines; and it uses some Federal money, some government money, in order to use technology that is available to reduce the emissions from those diesel engines by more than 80 percent.

I said: Tell me more. And he told me more, and about a day or two later we signed on and introduced the legislation. He was kind enough to let me be his Democratic lead.

One month later, it was enacted. I have been here 20 years; I have never seen legislation with that kind of effect go through just like that. It was pretty amazing. Every so often, we reauthorize it; we increase the authorization. We have done it again with respect to reauthorizing the Diesel Emission Reduction Act.

One of the things I love about it is that it gets a lot of different stakeholders involved, and for a limited amount of Federal dollars, we can have a multiplier effect that can be, for every Federal dollar, \$5, \$6, \$7, \$8 that have come in from the private sector. That is the way we ought to do it.

The last one is USE IT. Not many people think Delaware is a farm State, but we raise a ton of chickens. I think for every person in my State, there are like 300 chickens or more. Those chickens eat corn and soybeans. We raise corn and soybeans. Our farmers have land that is close to the beach. We have five-star beaches in Delaware: Rehoboth, Bethany, Dewey, and others. There is always pressure for development and encroachment on our farms, and developers are trying to buy out the farmers and pave paradise and put up a parking lot. What we have figured out how to do is—and it is not just—we haven't figured out through this legislation, the so-called USE IT Act, but what we do is—the idea is to take carbon out of the air and to use it for a better purpose.

One of those better purposes is to replenish the soil in my State, in Wyoming, in Montana, and other places so that our farmers will be less inclined to

leave the land. They will stay on the land. They will be able to make money, support themselves and their families. It creates a virtuous cycle. That is a wonderful thing.

I don't think we are going to be joined here yet—I called him just to give him a heads-up, but I don't think he is able to get here that quickly, but JOHN NEELY KENNEDY from Louisiana was a big part of the work we did on HFCs. I just want to say, in his absence, a real big thank-you to him. I want to thank—gosh, I think 70-plus Senators—Democrats and Republicans alike—who cosponsored our HFC bill. I want to thank our leadership, especially on our side but on both sides, for pushing to make sure these three bills would be included in the final compromise.

In addition to all the other things that were accomplished—and Senator CASEY and others talked about that—we have actually done some good things for our planet. Senator BARRASSO is going to move over and be the senior Republican on the Energy and Natural Resources Committee come January. I will remain on Environment and Public Works, be the senior Democrat. I want to say that this has been a wonderful partnership, just a wonderful partnership—fun, funny, serious when we had to be, collegial, and really focused on getting things done for Wyoming, for Delaware, for the other 48 States as well.

So you are not going to be too far, and I will still be around. We will have a chance to work on other things. It has been a real joy to work with you on these three items, and hopefully in the future we will have many, many more.

Mr. BARRASSO. I thank Senator CARPER. I appreciate it.

You know, it is interesting: Senator ALEXANDER recently gave his speech, his farewell address, and he said that sometimes politics is like a split-screen television set. On the one half, you see all the fighting and contention and the dysfunctional side. And on the other side of the screen, you see the functioning side. But not many people look at that functioning side.

What we have been able to do as a partnership on the Environment and Public Works Committee was functional—in a bipartisan way, coming up with solutions. As you mentioned, there were over 70 cosponsors on the one piece of legislation. All of them, I think, got through the committee unanimously. That is something that made no news because there wasn't a fight. There was cooperation for the betterment—to make sure we protected the economy and, at the same time, preserved the environment. That is what we need do: Continue to make sure that we can protect both and continue with economic development as well as environmental stewardship for our Nation.

With that, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

#### APPROPRIATIONS

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I come to the floor tonight to talk about many provisions that are currently moving their way through the House of Representatives and on our way to us. Obviously, our colleagues here are, I think, relieved that we have been able to give relief to the American people; that is, that we have been able to extend unemployment benefits and add bonuses to those unemployment benefits in the amount of 300 extra dollars per week, and we have been able to expand the COBRA tax credit programs to help people who have been unemployed and not been able to continue their insurance be able to continue health insurance. This is very important for laid-off workers in the State of Washington, like the aerospace workers.

We are very glad that we were able to give a stimulus check of \$600 per individual and \$1,200 for married couples; that we were able to get the PPP program that helps small businesses so that they can continue to try to make ends meet as we continue to work our way through this pandemic; and that we have been able to give \$9 billion to healthcare workers who are stretched so thin on these battle lines, who need every support that we can give them.

I want to talk about the rental assistance. We are at a point where, if we didn't act tonight, if we didn't act before we left here, many more people were going to be without homes. It is so important for us to have these provisions and programs like SNAP, the additional money for broadband, for healthcare, and for other things that are essential in helping to communicate during this pandemic for both healthcare and for education.

I also wanted to mention work that was done in tandem with this legislation, specifically on the affordable housing tax credit. The affordable housing tax credit was always important. Affordable housing was always important, but in a pandemic, in a COVID crisis, it becomes even more important. The affordable housing tax credit is something that Senator YOUNG and I worked on with Senator WYDEN and Senator Isakson, and we wanted to say that we needed to do more than what our current Tax Code could do in helping build more affordable housing.

The affordable housing tax credit has provisions that have been in law since 1986, but, actually, using the tax credits and how they worked have been a fluctuating rate, so the consequence is that the historic rate of what people could get to use the tax credit has changed, and this legislation will put a floor of 4 percent in to give investors a

bigger idea of what this investment can do for the market.

We believe that it will add, in the State of Washington, more housing that is needed immediately, more housing that is needed on the national basis, and help us stabilize things in the near term so that we can work on affordable housing and how we can put more incentives for people to build affordable housing.

People know affordable housing doesn't just get built. People don't just go out and say: I am going to build housing at this low rate.

The tax credit is a tax credit that helps people do it by giving those borrowers the ability to work with the tax credit. But the American people have been greatly impacted by so many trends—baby boomers reaching retirement age, not being able to save, people being pushed out of the last economic crisis into a rate of unaffordability. It really has been a dramatic increase.

According to the Hudson Institute, 60 percent of our affordable and low-cost housing was lost from the housing stock between 1985 and 2013. That is the housing that we had that was affordable. Basically, the time period ends, and they end up being swallowed up, like so many places in Puget Sound, into market-based rates. Literally, people are pushed out of their housing, and then there is no other affordable housing in the region.

These tax credits can help us build more affordable housing for the long run. Over the next decade, nearly 500,000 low-income housing tax credit unions and 655 other subsidized units will reach the end of their affordability period. Just like I was saying, they are going to get to a point where they are no longer in a protection of affordable housing, and the consequence is that growth and demand are pushing us even higher.

For example, seniors—10,000 baby boomers retire each day. That means that those low-income seniors, those woefully inadequate to pay for increasing housing costs, are going to be growing every single day and putting more demand on the system.

For veterans, nearly 2.5 million older veteran households—almost a quarter of men and women who helped protect our country—are cost-burdened. That means they spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing. The lack of affordable housing in our country has been a longstanding crisis, but the COVID crisis has made it much worse. One in five renters is behind on their rent, and the eviction moratorium expires in less than 2 weeks.

As I said, I am pleased that we are voting tonight, hopefully, on this legislation that includes a 1-month eviction moratorium and \$25 billion for rental assistance and that we will continue to work on these issues. And I am glad that we are working on the passage of not just the low-income housing tax credit fix of a 4-percent floor but also

that we will continue to work across the aisle on this legislation moving forward.

At a minimum, the 4 percent could increase affordable housing production by at least 130,000 affordable homes over the next decade. That is critically important—130,000 more affordable homes over the next decade. It could generate and help us with job growth—162,000 jobs and about \$18 billion in wages and impacts to the economy.

Building more affordable housing helps us solve lots of problems. We have an increase in demand, as I just articulated, and a COVID crisis. Investing in affordable housing is very good for us in helping our economy grow and putting a roof over people's heads.

I would also like to mention as part of the small business package, the Paycheck Protection package, a provision that was supported by so many of our colleagues to help make sure that we continue to get local news and information out to the public. People understand that local news has been threatened ever since the transition to an information age and has certainly been challenged by what I think are unfair practices by tech companies and the compensation for material and proper reimbursement on advertising.

The issue for us is that COVID has created an environment where we absolutely need to get the news, and we absolutely need to get the local news. It is imperative that we do what we can in this legislation to help small newspapers, small broadcasters, small radio stations that didn't previously get helped in the last COVID package so they can continue to communicate important local news to people throughout the United States.

I want to thank Senators SCHUMER, CARDIN, and, obviously, I want to thank specifically Senator BOOZMAN for working so hard on this legislation with me and introducing legislation. I want to thank Senators KLOBUCHAR, ERNST, and many of our other colleagues who signed on to that legislation, as well as our House colleagues, Representatives VELÁZQUEZ and CICILLINE and SENSENBRENNER, who also worked hard on getting this provision in, and Senators RUBIO and MCCONNELL for helping us in this process.

These provisions are important to help make sure that large public institutions, like the University of Washington and others, continue to also get information out to the public.

This news information and local information isn't going to go away with the help and support of this bill, but it may be a lifeline in helping us continue to make sure we have critical public health information available to the public at all times, and, hopefully, we will then go on to really understand what has happened to local news and information and do something in the future Congress to help fix the inequities that are existing today.

If I could, I also just mention quickly the issue about broadband. This legis-

lation that we are going to be voting on includes \$7 billion for more broadband priorities, \$1 billion for connectivity issues for Tribal country. I know, as the Presiding Officer knows, that Indian Country needs a lot of connectivity. So getting more broadband into those communities will be very helpful.

The COVID package also contains money, additional funding, that I know Senator WICKER and others worked on for telehealth. Telehealth is a critical path during the COVID crisis to make sure communities have the ability to get expert advice into our homes, into our communities, to connect people with information.

This telehealth grant is a very important program in the State of Washington. I think we probably got something like \$8 million previously from telehealth, and this will help us continue.

I am disappointed that we did not include priorities in here for the E-rate program to help close the homework gap. This is something Senator MARKEY and others worked on very hard, and it is very disappointing that we can't come to an agreement on something as important as E-rate. This legislation provides the ability for hotspots for people who may be going to college and not going to classes, but are in or around a university.

I think that is a good idea, but we were prohibited from doing the same thing for students at the K-12 level. One thing the pandemic has shown us is that students are at home and need to be able to connect to stay connected to their education schedule, to do their homework, and to be part of the education system. I hope that we will address this inequity in the bill in the future.

I am pleased that, working with Senator WICKER, we were able to include language that gives the Federal Trade Commission new authority to seek civil penalties for scams and deceptive practices related to the COVID pandemic. You probably think this is already something that was on the books, but in reality, the way the Federal Trade Commission has operated, they had to give a warning first, almost like a cease and desist. The next thing you know, the same practice would pop up over here, with somebody making a claim about how safe their product was or how this would stop COVID or something of that nature.

In my home State alone, the FTC reports that consumers have been scammed out of nearly \$5 million since the pandemic and the number is over \$200 million nationwide. These scams can range in everything from straightforward identity theft to making all sorts of accusations on people during the quarantine period.

I want to thank Senator WICKER for working with us on this important legislation. Now the FTC will be able to go after and find these people on first-

time offenses. I think this is so important to do to make sure that we are policing an environment where public health is so important.

I also want to thank Representative SCHAKOWSKY for leading this effort on the other side of the Capitol.

I also want to talk about very important aviation legislation that we were able to include as part of the larger omnibus package that is moving through the House, as I said, tonight.

It is so important that we make safety a No. 1 priority in the United States. If we want to be No. 1 in aviation, we have to be No. 1 in aviation safety. Chairman WICKER and I worked with our colleagues on both sides of the aisle to produce important legislation that improves the safety reforms needed at the FAA—the safety reforms of oversight of manufacturing and the certification process, and reforms that will help us here in Congress better stay on top of the information as far as the certification process.

This is so critical after the crash of the Lion Air 610 and Ethiopian Flight 302, both involving Boeing 737 Max aircrafts and the loss of 346 lives.

I can never say how painful this incident has been for those families. I can never say how much they have suffered in this horrific tragedy that has befallen them, but I know that these reforms are what are needed, and their help and support in passing this legislation has been critical.

I want to thank all of the families who helped us in communicating why the safety reforms are important, but I want to thank, particularly, Michael Stumo and his wife, Nadia Milleron, who lost their daughter Samya Stumo in the Ethiopian air crash, and to let them know that, even though we are putting a big down payment on safety reforms in the U.S. Congress by passing this legislation, this process does not stop with the passage of this legislation.

We need to continue to do more to improve aviation safety and to continue to act, even on a global basis, to be leaders—the United States leading the way on what aviation safety needs to be.

I also want to thank our staff: Doug Anderson, Ronce Almond, David Martin, Laurence Wildgoose, Jonathan Hale, Melissa Porter, and David Strickland for their work. And on the other side of the aisle: Mike Reynolds, James Mazol, Simone Perez, MaryAsa England, and John Keyes.

Many Members participated in the formation of this legislation. I want to thank Senator DUCKWORTH for her work with us on the NTSB recommendations and flight deck alert system, which were part of this package of bills to reform the FAA and the FAA process.

I want to thank Senator MORAN for his focus on helping us build those standards that we are talking about as far as the FAA going to ICAO and saying: These are the continued standards for improvement in aviation safety.

I want to thank Senator BLUNT for his leadership on the Air Grants Program, a very important program that we think will help build up the expertise and knowledge of very, very technical subject certification for people here throughout the process of oversight and legislating and the executive branch.

I want to thank Senators CRUZ and BLUMENTHAL for working on such critical elements in the legislation as to how the certification process itself works and what we needed to do to continue to bolster it.

Tonight, we are sitting one step closer to reforms that really will be meaningful. It will return the FAA to being in charge of what are the oversight members of manufacturers who are doing the work of the certification process. It is clear that the individuals who are part of this unit report to the FAA. They are supervised by the FAA. You can no longer have incentives at the FAA for expediting work. You, basically, now have a new whistleblower protection, thanks to my colleague Senator WICKER and his incredible work on this legislation. You have better accountability on misconduct. You create new safety reporting standards for the FAA employees.

We repeal authorities that would permit a certification by industry. That industry could continue to make recommendations about the certification process is something, in specific provisions, that are repealed here.

We also prohibit interference with FAA designees. That is, no one can try to influence a manager or someone directly involved in the certification of the process. We also tried to make sure the process itself worked better. And, again, many of my colleagues played critical roles in this.

On required safety system analysis on any plane coming through the process—whether it was new or a derivative—you still have to do a safety system analysis. You have to have regulations that are the most up-to-date as it relates to making sure you comply, as we said in this legislation, with the NTSB recommendations on flight crew alert systems and to mandate a safety management system for manufacturers. This is something that is long overdue. And in some instances, people said: Oh, the OMB and executive branch don't think we need to do these things. Oh, these things are cost prohibitive. These are regulations we don't need to put in place.

Trust me, having a safety management system is essential, and we should make sure that this is in place as this legislation requires within the next few years.

This legislation also requires disclosure of safety critical information. This was something, as I said, our colleagues, Senators BLUMENTHAL and CRUZ and many others, worked on as part of this legislation.

It also provides expert teams of panels. At the beginning of any kind of

certification process, the FAA will be assisted by the best experts in aviation, whether they come from NASA or the Air Force or outside individuals who understand the latest and greatest technology. Why do we have that? Because we know that we are in an era of unbelievable technological change in which now the human interface with technology is so critical. Whether you are going to be in driverless cars or whether you are in Amtrak with positive train control or you are in the flight deck of an airplane and the software that is working with it, we need to understand how people are going to respond to human factors.

We all get frustrated with our own computers and our own software, but we need to put safety first when it comes to a pilot interacting with that software in the cockpit of an airplane.

It also helps us make sure that the process for the certification appeals are strengthened and that we tighten the process. We need to listen to the engineers on the ground. The engineers are telling us what we need to do, and we need to listen to them. I hope that the leaders, both within manufacturing and the FAA, will do that.

As I mentioned, this legislation establishes a National Air Grant Program. Some of you can think of it here on Capitol Hill as similar to the Sea Grant Program, a program that was long-established to give us technical expertise on OSHA and maritime issues here in Congress. We want the same thing for aviation to exist.

It is too important of a sector and safety is too important to not have a technical skill set here that can stay on top and replace individuals as retirements happen throughout the aviation system.

It requires disclosures to Congress of post-crash assessments. If the FAA goes and investigates a crash, you have to notify Congress of that information. Why? We want to stay more on top of that information. It requires an identification of safety trends. I have no doubt that we are going to hear—when it comes back as these annual reports for the next several years—that this issue of human interaction in a technology cockpit is going to continue to be the largest safety trend issue, just as it is going to be in the automotive area and just as it is going to be in transportation.

Those are just some of the highlights of a very comprehensive safety reform legislation.

I want to thank my colleague Senator WICKER for his help, his leadership, his most recent report on whistleblower activity, and helping us get this legislation over the goal line.

I also, as I said, want to thank, again, those families. Our hearts and sympathies are still every day with you as you continue to face moving forward. We are not going to forget. We are going to continue to put safety as the biggest priority for us here in the U.S. Congress and continue to move

forward on a process that puts the individual engineers on the line responsible for safety to make sure everyone continues to listen to their directives and their recommendations.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

REMEMBERING ALLAN WEBER

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, I rise out of respect and in memory of Gove County Sheriff Allan Weber, who served his community faithfully over the last two decades.

Allan was born and raised on his family's farm near Park, KS, and he went on to marry Connie, his high school sweetheart. The couple has three children—Andrea, Brandon, and Cory. To those who know Allan, it was always clear that his family meant everything to him. His many grandchildren were his pride and joy.

In 1996, he ran for Gove County sheriff and served his community faithfully for over two decades since first elected. Gove County is out in Western Kansas. It is flat. It is the prairie. It is windy. It is hot in the summer and cold in the winter. It is farmers and ranchers. It is often a struggle to earn a living in Gove County. I know the county well. Despite those challenges, it is made up of people who work hard, care for each other, and try to make good lives for themselves and their families.

In rural areas like Gove County, the sheriff oftentimes wears multiple hats, and Sheriff Weber was no different. In addition to serving as sheriff, he was also the public information officer and the emergency operations center community liaison.

Kansans also never fail to step up to help their neighbors in hard times, and Allan did the same. After the tragic death of a neighboring county's sheriff, he stepped up to serve as the interim sheriff in Sheridan County, making him the first person ever to serve two counties as sheriff at the same time—a first in Kansas's history. He saw his brothers and sisters in blue as an extended part of his family, and he held them in the highest regard.

His colleague in law enforcement, Sheriff Tim Morse of Jackson County, which is on the other side of the State, wrote this:

Kansas has lost a great sheriff. Gove County Sheriff Allan Weber has spent the last couple of months fighting COVID-19 in a Denver hospital. Today, Sheriff Weber was escorted back to Gove County by Colorado and Kansas Highway Patrols along with countless Kansas Sheriffs and law enforcement officers for one last time . . . Sheriff Weber was an honorable man who was respected by all. He will be greatly missed.

He respected those in blue, and those in blue respected him.

He was a dedicated public servant both in his home community and at the State level. He served the Kansas Sheriffs' Association on its board and as its president. I talked to the Kansas Sheriffs' Association today, and they wanted me to recognize Sheriff Weber's

professionalism and his dedication and that he served as president of the Association for two consecutive terms, which is a rare circumstance and speaks to his effectiveness in the role and the admiration that his colleagues held for him.

His community also loved and respected him. They came together to welcome him home one last time with an honor parade down Highway 212, in Quinter, this past Saturday night, with hundreds of cars and people lined up to recognize his service and sacrifice over a lifetime.

Connie, his wife, said:

It was such a beautiful homecoming. I know he was bursting with pride and love. After the November election, when he woke up in the intensive care unit, I told him he was sheriff for the next 4 years, and he gave me a small smile and nodded his head. He loved the Gove County community's mind and was always ready to give the ultimate sacrifice if he had to. There were times that his heart broke doing his job, but he did what was right. He lived life day-to-day and enjoyed it and everyone. He worked hard and loved gently. He will be missed by many.

The outpouring of love, support, and shared memories on their Quinter Community Facebook page has been constant and speaks to the interconnectedness of a small community.

I should tell you that the population of Gove County is about 2,612, and the county seat of Gove has a population of 70. It is in places like Quinter, like Gove, and like Gove County where the sheriff is known by everyone, and the sheriff is interwoven into the life of the community and the county.

So many of his friends and family have remarked on Allan's contagious smile, how ornery he was, but, most importantly, as to the selfless way he served people. Those of us in public service ought to look to Allan as a role model in that selfless service of others. Sheriff Allan Weber embodied so many values in Kansas—faith, family, fellowship, service, and good old-fashioned hard work. He will be missed by many.

Robba and I extend our deepest sympathies to his family—both his loved ones, which includes one of my staff members, Chelsey Ladd, his cousin, and his brothers and sisters in blue.

May God bless Allan Weber. May we praise him for the life he lived, and may we look to him as a role model to try to do what he has done.

I offer my condolences and respect, on behalf of the U.S. Senate, to the family of Sheriff Allan Weber.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KENNEDY). The Senator from Maine.

CORONAVIRUS

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, later tonight, the Senate will vote on comprehensive legislation to fund the government throughout the remainder of fiscal year 2021 and to provide additional, long-overdue funding to address the ongoing emergency needs of our country during the persistent COVID-19 pandemic.

I am proud to have helped lead a bipartisan, bicameral coalition that lit-

erally worked night and day to develop a commonsense plan that provided the foundation for this final agreement.

There are many important components of the package before us, including assistance for struggling families; additional funding for testing, vaccine distribution, and healthcare providers; resources to help our schools operate safely in a COVID environment; and aid for the Postal Service and for airlines, airports, mass transit, and motor coach companies that keep our country moving.

I come to the floor tonight, however, to focus on one aspect of the agreement, and that is the extension and expansion of the Paycheck Protection Program, better known as PPP.

As the Presiding Officer well knows, the PPP has been a critical lifeline for more than 5 million small employers, at one point helping to sustain the jobs of upwards of 50 million Americans. It was one of the most successful programs in the CARES Act. It was so successful that it went through the initial allotment of money in just 13 days, and then we had to pass additional legislation replenishing it.

In the State of Maine, the PPP has provided nearly \$2.3 billion in forgivable loans to 28,000 small businesses—that is 3 out of 4 of the small businesses in my State—and has helped sustain more than 250,000 jobs.

In its original form, the program provided one-time loans sufficient to support 8 weeks of payroll, plus a limited amount to help cover certain overhead expenses. All of this was completely forgivable as long as the borrowers retained and paid their employees and kept within the other parameters of the program. Our whole purpose was to help our small businesses save jobs and pay their workers, keeping the employer-employee relationship alive so that they could reopen and Americans could quickly return to work when the pandemic subsided.

When Chairman MARCO RUBIO and I, together with Senators BEN CARDIN and JEANNE SHAHEEN, put the PPP together at the onset of the national emergency, none of us could have imagined that the pandemic would still be forcing shutdowns and curtailing operations and that extreme mitigation measures would be necessary these many months later. Yet, sadly, the virus is still spreading, and many of the steps taken to fight it, although they may be necessary to protect public health, threaten catastrophic damage to many of our small businesses and their employees—small businesses that have now spent their PPP loan funds but are still unable to return to normal operations.

I talked with a restaurant owner in Bangor, ME, where I live, who told me that he, because of the size of his restaurant and to comply with the public health spacing and social distancing guidelines, can only have four tables a night. Because the Governor of Maine has imposed a 9 p.m. curfew, he can't turn over those tables to compensate

for the reduced number of people he can serve at one time. It is so tough, and I could hear the pain in his voice when he talked about having to lay off some of his longstanding staff in order to just stay alive.

That is why the \$284.5 billion provided in this bill to extend and expand the PPP is so vital. The program improvements in this bill are the result of months of work on the part of Chairman RUBIO, Ranking Member CARDIN, Senator SHAHEEN, and myself. I am pleased to see that so much of the Continuing the Paycheck Protection Program Act that Chairman RUBIO and I introduced this fall is reflected in this final bill.

The final bill also reflects the very hard work that our bipartisan, bicameral coalition put into assistance to small business. Senator JEANNE SHAHEEN and I had countless meetings, Zooms, and phone calls to work out the details in conjunction with the rest of the members of our group.

I would like to take a moment to outline a few of the key features that are included in this package.

First, the bill will allow the hardest hit small businesses to receive a second forgivable PPP loan. To ensure that assistance is targeted to those most in need, eligibility for these second loans is generally limited to small businesses with 300 or fewer employees that have seen their gross revenues drop by 25 percent in some quarter this year compared to an identical quarter in 2019.

Second, recognizing the severe impact that the COVID-19 mitigation measures have had on our restaurants and hotels, the bill maintains the general terms for the loans for these entities but with an important enhancement. The maximum forgivable loan size for hotels and restaurants is increased to 3.5 times their average monthly payroll costs compared to 2.5 times for other borrowers. This increase in the loan amount will be so critical to the very survival of businesses like Simones' Hot Dog Stand and Restaurant in Lewiston, ME, and the Angler's Family Seafood Restaurant, which has locations in Hampden, Searsport, and Newport. These small businesses all received forgivable PPP loans during the first round, but, faced with continuing dining restrictions and a long, cold winter, they are really worried about their survival and about being able to retain and pay their valued employees.

Third, forgivable expenses under the program are expanded in very commonsense ways. Supplier costs and investments in facility modifications and personal protective equipment needed to operate safely during the pandemic will now be part of the forgivable overhead expenses. This is especially important to restaurants struggling to adapt dining restrictions or to get a high-quality food supply because, through no fault of their own, they have fallen behind on their bills.

Fourth, the bill extends the PPP to small 501(c)(6) organizations that are

not lobbying groups and that have 300 or fewer employees, such as local chambers of commerce and economic development organizations.

Fifth—and I want to give credit to our colleague Senator CRAMER for this concept—the bill greatly simplifies the loan forgiveness process for small borrowers with loans of no more than \$150,000 and directs the Small Business Administration and the Treasury Department to develop a simplified loan forgiveness form for these borrowers. I remember when the first form came out and it was 14 pages long and so complicated that you would need an advanced degree in economics or a CPA to help you figure it out, even if you had a very small loan.

The bill, to guard against fraud and abuse, also provides the SBA with \$50 million in additional audit funding.

Finally, the bill sets aside funding for smaller businesses and borrowers in underserved communities to ensure that they get the help they need through, for example, CDFIs and minority business associations and depository institutions. It also includes \$25 million for the Minority Business Development Agency.

Mr. President, the Paycheck Protection Program is the result of a bipartisan commitment to support our small businesses and their employees, to keep them afloat, the businesses afloat, and the employees paid during this pandemic. It has been by any measure a tremendous success, but many of these hardest hit small businesses require more help now in order to survive, and this bill aims to provide that help.

Before I close, I want to talk briefly about another provision of the bill, and that is the grant assistance provided for live venues, museums, and movie theaters. Let me make clear that I support funding for our community-based live venues. I know they have really been hurt. They have had to cancel their seasons. They have lost all their ticket revenues. They are in real danger.

I have enjoyed these throughout Maine, like the Ogunquit Playhouse and the Center Theater for the Performing Arts in Dover-Foxcroft. They are the heart and soul of our smaller communities.

I was disappointed to see that the final bill had stripped provisions from our bipartisan, bicameral group that we included in our package to try to keep the focus of these grants on these smaller entities. Specifically, our proposal would have limited the grant amounts that related entities could receive to no more than \$10 million and excluded museums with endowments larger than \$75 million—commonsense safeguards. Now, I do appreciate that the legislation sets aside \$2 billion for entities with 50 employees or fewer, but I am concerned that, as drafted, many venues and museums with significant endowments and other resources could be the largest bene-

ficiaries of this section because of the safeguards that were stripped out by the negotiators.

For example, a museum in New York City, say, with a billion-dollar endowment could receive an outright grant as long as the museum has an auditorium and meets the other eligibility requirements. That surely does not seem like an appropriate use of taxpayer dollars to me and was clearly designed to help large city venues that will survive without our help.

Nevertheless, I am pleased to support this package. This COVID relief is vitally needed for our struggling families, for our hard-hit small businesses, for our challenged schools, for our stressed healthcare system, to promote the distribution of the vaccine and more testing, and to help our overwhelmed Postal Service. I urge support for the package.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to complete my remarks before the vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection.

#### YEAR-END ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, with the Senate poised to complete some major business for the country and wrap up a most unusual year, I want to express some gratitude to the men and women behind the scenes who make our work possible.

Passing a historic rescue package and a full-year funding bill would be a serious undertaking even in ordinary circumstances. And, of course, this pandemic year has brought anything but ordinary circumstances to the Senate, just like everywhere else.

For about 10 months and counting, COVID-19 has imposed new challenges on hundreds of people who are already plenty busy enough.

After much of the Senate worked remotely in April, we came back to work in early May—like the essential institution that we are. Month after month, we have taken smart and careful precautions and remained an exemplary safe workplace. All along, we have not just continued to govern but completed landmark confirmations and historic legislation for the American people. None of this would have been possible without many people beyond the 100 of us with our names on these desks.

I want to thank the Office of the Secretary of the Senate, led by Julie Adams and Mary Suit Jones. This team encompasses everyone from the talented professionals who sit on the dais to the Official Reporters of Debate, to Disbursing and many other offices.

Thanks to our Parliamentarian, Elizabeth MacDonough, who faithfully calls the balls and strikes. She won the admiration of our temporary presider, Chief Justice Roberts, before we reclaimed her as the Senate's own.

Thanks also to Senate Sergeant At Arms—Mike Stenger and Jennifer



Hemingway and their whole team, from the doorkeepers to the IT team that stood up enormous telework capabilities almost overnight, to the workers who clean offices, move furniture, and keep this place running in hundreds of ways.

Our Architect of the Capitol, Brett Blanton, assumed his role just before the pandemic hit. He never missed a beat. His team tackled cleaning in a way that exceeded industry standards, reconceived the food services, and, again, physically kept the Capitol functioning.

Of course, very special thanks are due to our Attending Physician, Dr. Brian Monahan, and the entire team he leads. Believe me, they already had a full-time job caring for Members of Congress and the Supreme Court. We have leaned on Dr. Monahan in countless ways all year long. His expertise and wise counsel have been a credit to the Senate throughout the pandemic.

Here in the Chamber, I want to thank our cloakroom teams, led by Gary Myrick on the Democratic side and Robert Duncan on ours. Duncan had only just stepped into his current role when the crisis began to unfold. He navigated about 10 years' worth of big challenges in his first 10 months in the top job. Thanks to him and his capable deputy, Chris Tuck.

Another key group these past months has been our Rules Committee, led by Chairman BLUNT and his staff director, Fitzhugh Elder. The committee has run point on coordinating many of the changes and adaptations that have helped keep this body safe. They have done an outstanding job without enough recognition or thanks.

We are grateful to the men and women of the Capitol Police, led by Chief Steven Sund, who have stood their posts even when most of the rest of us have worked remotely. They have stood strong during this pandemic, during protests both peaceful and otherwise, and during the other daily operations that they handle with courage and professionalism.

Across the board, I want to thank all of our Senate staff. Both the smaller footprint who have continued physically working at the Capitol and those who kept up their hard work remotely have confronted all kinds of novel challenges. Our institution and our country are grateful to you all.

Last but not least, I want to thank my own team. My personal office, led by departing chief of staff Phil Maxson, has fought every day for Kentuckians' needs and priorities throughout this crisis. Our State offices, steered by Terry Carmack, kept us connected to our constituents in new ways. My communications director, Robert, Steurer, and all their colleagues who staff these operations are invaluable to me and to Kentucky.

Here in the Capitol, my leadership staff has given an incredible amount of themselves to me, to our team, and to the Senate the entire year.

Remember, this is somehow still the same calendar year that began with an impeachment trial, continued through the CARES Act, other major legislation over the summer, a Supreme Court vacancy and confirmation this fall, and finally the all-out legislative sprint since Thanksgiving.

First, my two deputy chiefs of staff. Stef Muchow runs our operations in an incredibly historically complex time to handle operations. She has worn about 10 different hats all year long—as usual. Scott Raab handles policy. He has led his colleagues through a legislative year like no other, from mammoth negotiations and historic rescue packages to our most particular priorities and everything in between. We have all leaned on Scott heavily, and he has been indispensable.

Beneath them, within our operation, are a lot of talented folks I am lucky to have. I want to name them very briefly.

My chief counsel, Andrew Ferguson, offers brilliant advice, from impeachment to policy to the judiciary.

Robert Kareem, my defense policy expert, has brought critical institutional leadership as 2020 tested everything from national security to continuity of government.

Jane Lee handles her massive portfolio—and more besides—with incredible effectiveness and calm under fire, and she sings the best Christmas carols in the office.

Terry Van Doren is a policy master who delivers for Kentucky and the country every time.

Erica Soares and Jim Neill are expert liaisons and advisers who keep me connected inside the Senate and beyond.

Steve Donaldson has been my point man for all things election law during this election year.

John Chapuis is a seasoned Senate veteran who picked quite the time to join our team and cover economic policy.

Jody Wright fights to get good people in good positions with good cheer.

Andy Quinn is a master of words and ideas.

David Popp heads my press team. He, Doug Andres, Scott Sloofman, and their whole operation keep my message and the Republican conference's message front and center.

Sarah Steinberg manages my days, and Alex Jenkins manages my office—both with great humor and even greater professionalism.

Moon Sulfab keeps our technology systems running and our spirits high.

I have to mention our healthcare expert Jen Kuskowski, who worked remotely this spring while expecting her baby boy and has been cheering us on while on maternity leave. We can't wait to get her back.

Thanks to Grace Graham and Peter Oppenheim, whom Senator ALEXANDER generously shared from his HELP Committee staff to help us in Jen's absence.

Rounding out our leadership team are crack researchers Robert Utsey and

David Hauptmann; skilled communicators Dylan Vorbach, Valerie Chicola, Suzanne Youngblood, Emily Hauck, and Katherine Grayson.

Our frontline troops, the jacks-of-all-trades who keep everybody in line, are Victoria Mason, Elise Stebick, and Spencer Abraham.

Finally, at the head of this entire team is our fearless leader, our chief of staff, Sharon Soderstrom. Everybody on Capitol Hill and everybody in Washington knows that Sharon is one of the smartest, most dedicated, and most effective staff leaders working at any level in any branch of government. She is my first call and my last call on every subject. She was in the leader's office before I was. She supported both Trent Lott and Bill Frist. So I count my blessings on a daily basis that I am lucky No. 3. Sharon bears the weight of the world on her shoulders and not only delivers but somehow prioritizes lightening everybody else's load while she is at it—a walking master class in leadership.

I am proud of all that we have accomplished for the country in this challenging year, and I couldn't be gladder to be heading into 2021 with these talented professionals at my side. So I thank them, Mr. President. I thank them, one and all.

#### VOTE ON SOSKIN NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Soskin nomination?

Mr. McCONNELL. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. ENZI), the Senator from Georgia (Mrs. LOEFFLER), the Senator from Georgia (Mr. PERDUE), and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS) is necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 48, nays 47, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 288 Ex.]

#### YEAS—48

Alexander	Ernst	Paul
Barrasso	Fischer	Portman
Blackburn	Gardner	Risch
Blunt	Graham	Roberts
Boozman	Grassley	Romney
Braun	Hawley	Rubio
Burr	Hoehn	Sasse
Capito	Hyde-Smith	Scott (FL)
Cassidy	Inhofe	Scott (SC)
Collins	Johnson	Shelby
Cornyn	Kennedy	Sullivan
Cotton	Lankford	Thune
Cramer	Lee	Tillis
Crapo	McConnell	Toomey
Cruz	Moran	Wicker
Daines	Murkowski	Young

#### NAYS—47

Baldwin	Booker	Cardin
Bennet	Brown	Carper
Blumenthal	Cantwell	Casey

Coons	Klobuchar	Schumer
Cortez Masto	Leahy	Shaheen
Duckworth	Manchin	Sinema
Durbin	Markey	Smith
Feinstein	Menendez	Stabenow
Gillibrand	Merkley	Tester
Hassan	Murphy	Udall
Heinrich	Murray	Van Hollen
Hirono	Peters	Warner
Jones	Reed	Warren
Kaine	Rosen	Whitehouse
Kelly	Sanders	Wyden
King	Schatz	

## NOT VOTING—5

Enzi	Loeffler	Rounds
Harris	Perdue	

The nomination was confirmed.  
The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

## LEGISLATIVE SESSION

## MORNING BUSINESS

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

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

UNITED STATES-MEXICO  
ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP ACT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask the Chair to lay before the Senate the message to accompany H.R. 133.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair lays before the Senate the following message from the House:

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Resolved, that the House agree to the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 133) entitled "An Act to promote economic partnership and cooperation between the United States and Mexico," with an amendment to the Senate amendment.

## MOTION TO CONCUR

Mr. MCCONNELL. I move to concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 133.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The motion is pending.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that there be 60 minutes of debate, equally divided between the leaders or their designees; and that following the use or yielding back of that time, the Senate vote on the motion to concur without further motions or amendments in order and that 60 affirmative votes be required to adopt the motion to concur.

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

The Senator from North Dakota.

## UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST

Mr. HOEVEN. North Dakota is an energy powerhouse, and our late-night producers work around the clock to ensure homes and businesses in the Midwest have affordable and reliable access to power when it is needed most. But the PTC, the wind production tax credit, is creating artificially low prices in markets for power generation.

Qualified wind projects are receiving up to 2½ cents per kilowatt hour from the taxpayer. These subsidies distort the market and are forcing out the critical coal-fired baseload generation we need to keep the lights on.

Since Congress established a wind production tax credit in 1992, wind power has been able to transition from an emerging technology to a multibillion-dollar industry that is clearly commercially viable. That is why we worked on a bipartisan agreement in 2015 to phase down and sunset the wind tax credit at the end of 2019.

We had an agreement to do the phaseout, and the wind industry agreed to it. I worked with Senator THUNE and AWEA, the American Wind Energy Association, and others to do it. And they agreed. We had an agreement. That is why we are opposed to extending the PTC and offer an amendment to strike it.

We saw what happened in California over the summer, and we can't afford to have blackouts and brownouts during the coldest of winter weather months. We, instead, must strengthen grid resiliency and reliability by keeping diverse sources of generation available at all times, including when the wind isn't blowing or the sun isn't shining. That means baseload.

Instead of extending the production tax credit, we should be working on making technologies like carbon capture and sequestration commercially viable.

The American Wind Energy Association states on its website that "growth in the wind industry is expected to remain strong when the PTC is fully phased out." Why, then, are we considering another extension of this credit when the leading trade association expects to see strong growth for the wind industry without the credit?

We need to bring back a level playing field for competition in our electricity markets and reverse the trend of taxpayers continuing to subsidize a mature, multibillion-dollar wind industry.

I urge my colleagues to support this amendment and ensure that the wind production tax credit sunsets.

With that, I would like to ask for some words from my cosponsor on the amendment, Senator CRAMER.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. CRAMER. Mr. President, I rise to join my colleague Senator HOEVEN in offering this amendment and urging our colleagues to support the amendment to strip the wind protection tax credit from this massive bill.

I feel like I am living in an episode of the "Twilight Zone," and I wish I could say that I am surprised. But I am not, because here we go again. Despite numerous requests and appeals and deals with the leader and the chairman of the Finance Committee to not jam this body with a 13th extension of the wind protection tax credit, here we are with another one in front of us.

Since the credit's inception in 1992—and for a lot of those years I was a util-

ity regulator—it has always been promised that it would be temporary and would expire. Last year, we got jammed at the last minute with another extension, and, rightfully, the people back home are really, really upset with us. And it didn't sit very well with me either.

That is why, in April of this year, I led a letter to Leader MCCONNELL with colleagues from West Virginia, Wyoming, and Georgia saying it was time to finally level the playing field and get rid of this market-distorting atrocity.

In July, I led another letter to Chairman GRASSLEY with even more colleagues—from West Virginia, Wyoming, Tennessee, Oklahoma, and Pennsylvania—with the same message: Let this credit expire.

Yet here we are again. The requests have fallen on deaf ears, and we have simply been given another pill to swallow with the extension today.

Some in this town have pointed to an extension in carbon sequestration credits like 45Q and 48A, as if they were an equal trade. They are not. Despite years of pleading, the Treasury Department—yes, this Treasury Department—still has not finalized regulations. So an extension of 45Q is moot if there is no way to actually monetize the credit.

Of equal importance, financial investors have said if renewable credits are extended, they will absorb whatever tax appetite exists because they are predictable, and those deals have been done many times.

Just to reiterate, they can't even utilize 45Q because Treasury hasn't finished the regulations 3 years after Congress expanded the credit.

More to the point, while there are some great proposed carbon sequestration projects planned in North Dakota, their benefit is targeted, while in contrast, hundreds of miners and the local communities they have built are being hurt by the extension of the production tax credit. I strongly support carbon sequester projects, but to assume that the potential benefits of 45Q or 48A are equal to the unilateral harm of the wind credit is disingenuous at best.

I have heard from utilities who actually use the wind PTC, but they said they don't need it because the market is so awash with wind credits, they can't even monetize them. It is completely upside down. In fact, the PTC credits are actually taking money away from other clean energy projects like nuclear clean coal, taking emissions-free energy right off the grid.

Just a few days ago, POLITICO said this: The simplest option for tax extenders would be to let all 33 that are scheduled to expire at the end of the year to be renewed.

I have a simpler plan. Let them all expire. K Street wouldn't like it, but it would be one less section in this giant package.

One final point, in all of my time in Congress—and that has been 8 years