

PEPFAR started in Namibia in 2004, Minister Kamwi explained, nearly one in four pregnant women in Namibia were infected with HIV, yet only a handful of them could access treatment. The circumstances were dire, and it was clear something needed to be done. The visionary leadership of President George W. Bush and the Congressional Black Caucus, especially the late Congressman Donald Payne Sr. and Congresswoman BARBARA LEE, led to the establishment of the program in 2003 with an initial \$15 billion to fight HIV and AIDS worldwide.

Today, thanks to the ongoing, bipartisan U.S. commitment to PEPFAR, hope has replaced despair, life has replaced death, and productivity has replaced illness and disability. PEPFAR is the largest commitment by any nation to combat a single disease internationally, and it has saved and improved millions of lives. Today Namibia's mother-to-child HIV transmission rate at 6 weeks is less than 3 percent. Thanks to PEPFAR, Ms. Msangi, is healthy enough to help treat and counsel HIV patients, and her daughter Faith was born HIV-free, representing the best of what this remarkable program has to offer.

This bipartisan program is a tremendous success, having exceeded every one of its initial goals. PEPFAR directly supports nearly 5.1 million people on antiretroviral treatment, and has contributed to a 20-percent reduction in new HIV infections globally. This month, the program reached a remarkable milestone when the one-millionth infant was born HIV-free, thanks to PEPFAR. Thirteen countries have reached a crucial tipping point—where annual new adult HIV infections are below the annual increase in adults on antiretroviral drug treatment. And we are building capacity for recipient nations to address the problem. We have helped improve host country health care delivery systems, and countries are now taking ownership in their responsibility to care for their people.

I authored an amendment to PEPFAR's 2008 reauthorization bill that supports in-country health worker training for people like Ms. Msangi, which U.S. universities and NGOs support along with other elements of the program. Research being done by Maryland institutions—including the National Institutes of Health, Johns Hopkins University, and the University of Maryland—is making a difference globally; and Maryland NGO's like Catholic Relief Services of Baltimore are partnering with us in this global fight.

Yet despite the remarkable progress that these partnerships have produced, we still have challenges ahead of us. According to UNAIDS, an estimated 1.7 million people are dying annually from AIDS-related causes. Global health and development resources are being squeezed due to difficult economic times. And issues of stigma and discrimination continue to limit access to treatment and care to those in need.

The U.S. will continue to lead this global fight, but we need the commitment and leadership of partner countries—reinforced with support from donor nations, civil society, people living with HIV, faith-based organizations, the private sector, foundations, and the Global Fund—in order to see an HIV-free generation in our lifetime.

PEPFAR represents the best of what our government can do when we put aside partisanship for the good of humanity. It represents the very best of America and our commitment to global humanitarian values. It is a testament to the power of thinking big and of dreaming big, and we must continue to do just that to conquer this disease once and for all.

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#### SAFE ACT

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, from the beaches of Rhode Island to the glaciers of Montana, natural ecosystems provide us with life's essentials: clean air and water, crops and timber, recreation and lots of local pride.

Rhode Island's oceans and coasts, for example, are spawning grounds, nurseries, and shelters for nutritious and profitable fish and shellfish. Their natural buffers protect our coastal communities from storms and filter our water. They even provide clean, renewable energy. And, of course, the coastline of the Ocean State boasts world-class beaches.

But climate change threatens to rob us of these essentials. The Government Accountability Office confirms what Americans see with their own eyes: our Nation's ecosystems are at risk from ongoing changes, including—and I will quote GAO: “increases in air and water temperatures, wildfires, and drought; forests stressed by drought becoming more vulnerable to insect infestations; rising sea levels; and reduced snow cover and retreating glaciers.”

This warning comes from a report released last week on climate change adaptation efforts in Federal agencies. Senator BAUCUS and I requested this report because of the risk climate change poses to our natural resources and our natural economy.

Climate change is not something we can fix later, and it is not something that only will happen to future generations, although our children and grandchildren will surely pay a heavier price.

Scientists tell us that the carbon pollution we have already emitted has locked in changes in the coming decades to our atmosphere, oceans, and weather. So while we must take up the challenge to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, we must also begin to adapt, and secure our natural resources against the changes we can no longer avoid.

In this report, GAO examined the U.S. Forest Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Park Service, the National Oceanic and At-

mospheric Administration, and the Bureau of Land Management.

It found that while planning for changes in resource conditions is a main part of the mission of these agencies, addressing the effects of climate change is not. In fact, BLM, which manages 245 million acres of land, has not yet established a climate change adaptation strategy.

That is why Senator BAUCUS and I introduced the Safeguarding America's Future and the Environment Act, or SAFE Act.

The Federal agencies that manage our natural resources are responsible for protecting, restoring, and conserving the natural resources that underpin our economy. The SAFE Act would require those agencies to adopt climate change adaptation plans that are consistent with the National Fish, Wildlife, and Plants Climate Adaptation Strategy released this year by the administration.

Adaptation—to shifting conditions, to catastrophic events, even to full ecosystem shifts—is not easy work, and resource managers are often constrained by existing laws and regulations. The SAFE Act puts all climate adaptation tools and approaches on the table, and includes State, local, and stakeholder participation.

I want to thank Senator BAUCUS for working so hard to protect Montanans, Rhode Islanders, and all Americans.

The SAFE Act has garnered broad support from sportsmen, the outdoor industry, and conservation groups, including American Forests, the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, Defenders of Wildlife, Earth Justice, the National Parks Conservation Association, Natural Resources Defense Council, the National Wildlife Federation, the Outdoor Alliance, Trout Unlimited, and The Wildlife Society.

Noah Matson of Defenders of Wildlife said, “This bill recognizes that responding to climate change isn't just about cutting carbon emissions. It also means ensuring our wildlife and ecosystems are resilient and can withstand the extreme weather and other climate change impacts we are already experiencing. The two go hand in hand for a safe, healthy environment for wildlife, people and future generations.”

I hope the SAFE Act will also garner the support of our colleagues in Congress, and I look forward to working with Democrats and Republicans to pass this important legislation.

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#### FREEDOM, MAINE

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I rise today to wish the town of Freedom, ME, a very happy 200th birthday. The people of Freedom are proud of their hometown and the generations of hard-working and caring people who have made it such a wonderful place to live, work, and raise families.

The name of this town is more than a word; it describes its history. Originally part of the Plymouth Patent,