

The bills will be placed on the calendar.

Mr. VITTER. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

The senior Senator from Louisiana.

MOMENT OF SILENCE FOR THE VICTIMS OF THE DEEPWATER HORIZON TRAGEDY

Mr. VITTER. Madam President, I rise today to solemnly observe the 5-year anniversary of the Deepwater Horizon oilspill, also known as the BP disaster. It was a major and deeply tragic incident that resulted in the loss of 11 lives in the Gulf of Mexico and beyond that really devastated the gulf region.

I wish to start where we should always start—by remembering in a solemn and prayerful way the 11 men who lost their lives in the incident. They were Donald “Duck” Clark, 49, of Newellton, LA; Stephen Ray Curtis, 40, of Georgetown, LA; Gordon Jones, 28, of Baton Rouge, LA; Roy Wyatt Kemp, 27, of Jonesville, LA; Keith Blair Manuel, 56, of Gonzalez, LA; Jason Anderson, 35, of Midfield, TX; Adam Weise, 24, of Yorktown, TX; Aaron Dale Durkeen, 37, of Philadelphia, MS; Karl Kleppinger, Jr., 38, of Natchez, MS; Dewey Revette, 48, of State Line, MS; and Shane Roshto, 22, of Liberty, MS. We lift up those men and their families in our prayers, and we will continue to keep those men whose lives were lost and continue to keep their families in our fervent thoughts and prayers.

While 5 years have passed, the effects of the Deepwater Horizon tragedy are still felt today in communities all along the gulf coast. The terrible and unnecessary loss of life, the harming of our precious coastal ecosystems, and the persisting economic burdens serve as a constant reminder of the failures that led to the spill, as well as the lessons learned in the 5 years since.

Poor industry and government oversight and the failure by many involved to enforce safety regulations were largely responsible for multiple mistakes leading up to the tragedy. As a result, we have learned many lessons on how to prevent future accidents such as this. The first is that the lives and safety of the men and women who work in this field are absolutely paramount and need to be kept so, and the Federal and State safety standards overseeing them should reflect that as a priority.

Changes are needed, and the Federal agencies that oversee and regulate the offshore energy industry must communicate clearly with State and local governments and impacted industries. They must also do a better job of en-

forcing strong, necessary safety and environmental standards.

It is also important that we prevent the administration or any future administration from having knee-jerk reactions to incidents such as this. Each gulf coast community remembers the devastating effects of the offshore drilling moratorium that followed the disaster—something that was completely unnecessary, including in the opinion of so many experts. Once the Obama administration imposed this unnecessary drilling moratorium, that decision had crippling results for Louisiana and Gulf State economies. When accidents such as this spill happen, there needs to be a calculated, logical, and immediate response in order to replace ineffective regulations with rules that focus on preserving lives and protecting the environment. It is imperative that we prevent shortsighted Federal mandates and thoughtless regulations that hinder regional recovery and destroy local economies instead.

We also learned that there needs to be a clear and specific judicial penalty process in place in order to ensure that claims can be efficiently filed and finalized in order to let those who are affected by such disasters return to some sense of normalcy, day-to-day normalcy, and economic normalcy as quickly as possible. This should include insuring responsible parties such as BP are timely in paying their judicially and statutorily mandated fines and penalties. There is absolutely no excuse that 5 years later gulf residents, in many cases, are still waiting for the responsible parties to fulfill their legal obligations, including under the RESTORE Act.

As we remember the Deepwater Horizon tragedy today, let us renew our commitment to work on all of these matters and to finish the work that is left to do as our gulf coastlines and economies continue to recover.

Thank you, Madam President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

Mr. CASSIDY. Madam President, 5 years ago today, 11 Americans were lost when the Deepwater Horizon exploded off the gulf coast. I would like to name them. This is hard. These were the people we grew up with. I apologize for being emotional, but these are our neighbors, and so to remember them—Jason Anderson 35, Midfield, TX. Jason had two kids, and his wife Shelley said that Thanksgiving was his favorite holiday.

Aaron Dale “Bubba” Burkeen, 37, of Philadelphia, MS. He passed on his wedding anniversary and 4 days before his birthday. He was married with two children.

Donald Clark, 49, of Newellton, LA. Husband to Sheila with four kids. He was a fisherman. To honor him on the anniversary of his death, his family says a prayer and releases balloons over a lake in his favorite color, which is sky blue.

Stephen Ray Curtis, 40, of Georgetown, LA. Stephen was married and the father of two teenagers.

Gordon Jones of Baton Rouge, LA. Gordon was 28. His wife was Michelle. His son Max was born 3 weeks after Gordon passed. An oak tree was planted on the LSU campus on the path where he ran.

Roy Wyatt Kemp, 27, of Jonesville, LA. He was married to Courtney and father of one child.

Karl Kleppinger, Jr., 38, of Natchez, MS. He was a veteran of the first gulf war and the father of one.

Keith Blair Manuel, 56, of Gonzalez, LA. Keith had three daughters, was a big fan of LSU sports, and had football and basketball season tickets.

Dewey A. Revette, 48, of State Line, MS. His wife was Sherri. They had been married for 26 years.

Shane M. Roshto, 22, of Liberty, MS. He was the youngest of the men who died. His wife was Natalie, and his son is Blaine.

Adam Weise, 24, of Yorktown, TX. Adam drove 10 hours to Louisiana every 3 weeks to work on the rig. He was a high school football star and spent his off time hunting and fishing.

We pray that the families find peace in the memories of their sons, husbands, and fathers.

The spill was the worst in our Nation’s history, and while the consequences of this spill are still seen, it is our task to live forward and, in so doing, honor the memory of these men and provide a better future for their families.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that there be a moment of silence to honor their memory.

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

(Moment of silence.)

Mr. CASSIDY. Thank you, Madam President.

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.

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

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

FIVE-YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF THE DEEPWATER HORIZON TRAGEDY

Mr. NELSON. Madam President, it is 5 in the afternoon. Exactly 5 years ago, at 5 p.m., the crew of the Deepwater Horizon mobile oil drilling unit began what is called a negative pressure test of the Macondo prospect oil formation. A cascade of menacing events followed the first failed test.

At around 9:40 that evening, drilling mud began gushing out onto the rig. The well had kicked. The crew activated the rig’s blowout preventer 1 mile below the surface of the Gulf of Mexico, down at the bottom of the gulf.