need to extend those types of credits that can make a difference in our urban centers. I visited with Pastor Hickman whose church was torched—the senior housing project next door to his church was on fire last Monday night. He is rebuilding that senior housing project, but he clearly knows he needs partners from the Federal Government.

We can do a better job. I urge my colleagues to understand we can do this. We must do this. We must rebuild our cities and our communities for a better Baltimore and for the betterment of America's future.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

PROTECTING VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS AND EMERGENCY RESPONDERS ACT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 1191, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 1191) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to ensure that emergency services volunteers are not taken into account as employees under the shared responsibility requirements contained in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

Pending:

Corker/Cardin amendment No. 1140, in the nature of a substitute.

Corker/Cardin amendment No. 1179 (to amendment No. 1140), to require submission of all Persian text included in the agreement.

Blunt amendment No. 1155 (to amendment No. 1140), to extend the requirement for annual Department of Defense reports on the military power of Iran.

Vitter modified amendment No. 1186 (to amendment No. 1179), to require an assessment of inadequacies in the international monitoring and verification system as they relate to a nuclear agreement with Iran.

Cotton amendment No. 1197 (to the language proposed to be stricken by amendment No. 1140), of a perfecting nature.

Cotton (for Rubio) amendment No. 1198 (to amendment No. 1197), to require a certification that Iran's leaders have publically accepted Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

ENSURING TAX EXEMPT ORGANIZATIONS THE RIGHT TO APPEAL ACT—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to Calendar No. 58, H.R. 1314, the bill we will use for trade promotion authority.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 58, H.R. 1314, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for a right to an administrative appeal relating to adverse determinations of tax-exempt status of certain organizations.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, 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. SULLIVAN assumed the Chair.)

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. ERNST). Without objection, it is so ordered.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, as were most Americans, I was very disturbed by the scenes from Baltimore that unfolded on our TV sets across America—a place not too far away from here—during the last couple of weeks. The whole idea of a young man dying in police custody, followed by the confrontations with police and the looting and burning of innocent minority-owned businesses in their own neighborhoods—these are all scenes we would expect perhaps in other countries, somewhere else around the world, but certainly not here at home. But that is what we saw and not just last week but also last summer in Ferguson, MO.

So the question arises: What can we do? What can we do about it? What can we do as individual citizens? What can we do as parents? What can we do as neighbors? And then: What can we do as Members of the U.S. Congress? Perhaps more fundamentally, how can we as a nation unite to address injustice when it occurs? What steps can we take today to help the diverse fabric of this great Nation mend for future generations?

As I indicated, I am somewhat skeptical that Washington, DC, and particularly the U.S. Congress, can wave a magic wand and solve these problems. A lot of this is going to have to be worked out at the local level by communities, by families, by houses of faith, and by civic organizations as well. Obviously, they are closest to the situation. But the Federal Government does, I believe, have a role to play that I will speak about in just a moment. I will just conclude in speaking about Baltimore by saying that our prayers, I know, are with those involved, and I know they are carefully considering how best to move forward and heal as well. But we are doing a great disservice to ourselves and to everyone else so clearly frustrated by the status quo if we isolate Baltimore or Ferguson as just individual instances of civil unrest and if we don't step back and see how they fit into the broader issue of our entire criminal justice system.

I sometimes call myself a recovering judge. I was a district judge for 6 years, which is our main trial court in Texas, and I was on the Texas Supreme Court for 7 years after that. I also served as attorney general. I mention all of that just to say that I have had some exposure in my professional life and in my adult life with our criminal justice system. I have seen how it should work, and I have seen areas where we need to get to work to reform what is broken.

I believe Congress can and must play a role—even a small role; I say small but in a significant way—by correcting injustice where we can and making it less likely that situations such as those we have seen in Ferguson or Baltimore are repeated. While we cannot singlehandedly fix broken families or broken communities or deal with situations at the local level around the country, we can contribute to efforts to remedy the basic instability of those communities and particularly we can start to make real progress in our criminal justice system to lessen the burden on those communities that are struggling with these issues.

I know the chairman of the Committee on the Judiciary, Senator GRASSLEY, is committed to doing what he can, through the Committee on the Judiciary, to pursue criminal justice reform. I am happy to say that under the leadership of Senator GRASSLEY, many efforts are already underway to consider how we can do a better job of rehabilitating offenders, increase public safety, save taxpayers some money, and help rebuild that all-important relationship between law enforcement and local communities.

One example of how we are doing that is a piece of legislation I introduced in February with the junior Senator from Rhode Island, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, called the CORRECTIONS Act, which stands for the Corrections Oversight, Recidivism Reduction, and Eliminating Costs for Taxpayers In Our National System Act. That is why we call it CORRECTIONS, because that is such a long title, but I think it says a lot about what we are trying to achieve.

With about 30 percent of the Department of Justice budget spent on detaining Federal inmates and the costs of Federal prisons skyrocketing, this bill would actually take a number of constructive steps to reform our Federal prison system and would also make better use of taxpayers' money.

For example, the CORRECTIONS Act would allow eligible offenders—mainly low-risk or medium-risk offenders; certainly not high-risk offenders—to earn additional days of good time credit by participating in programs that will help equip them for life outside of prison. Texas is sometimes considered a tough-on-crime State, and that is true. After awhile, though, we realized we

also need to be smart on crime because virtually all of the people incarcerated in our prisons will eventually someday be released. We need to begin to focus on what we can do to help them—those who want help and who will accept that help—and how we can do a better job of equipping them so they don't end up recommitting, reoffending, and ending up back in prison again. That is what this piece of legislation tries to do.

So the CORRECTIONS Act allows offenders to earn additional days of earned time credit by participating in programs that will prepare them for life outside of prison. Low-risk offenders, for example, could earn up to 10 days of earned time credit for every month in which they are successfully completing programs such as drug rehab, education, work programs, faith-based training, and life skills courses. It is astonishing. I was in East Texas at one part of the Texas prison system where I got to observe some of the prisoners, some of the inmates there attending some of these types of courses. It is shocking how poorly equipped so many of these inmates are for life outside of prison and why it is so important that we try to help those who will accept the help and who want the help to prepare for life outside so they don't end up back inside.

This legislation would allow these eligible prisoners to use this good time credit to spend the final portion of their sentences in home confinement or a halfway house. Half-way houses have worked over time as a transition from prison to life in communities, and they work very well. Also, technology can even allow home confinement for nonviolent, low-risk prisoners who have earned the right to a less confining circumstance on the backhand of their sentence. This may sound like a little thing, but it is important for several reasons.

First of all, inmates need to learn valuable skills that can transfer to a lifetime of community engagement, instead of returning to a lifetime of crime. Second, it allows them to reconnect sooner with their families and the communities that need them most. Finally, this makes financial sense. It costs about $5,000 a year to keep a low-risk prisoner in home confinement, and it cost $30,000 a year to keep them in prison.

I am not one of those who say, well, we just need to save money, so let's throw public safety to the wind. That is not what this does. We focus first on public safety as we must, but we also try to be smart about it—not just tough on crime. We try to be smart on crime. The great thing is that we actually have States such as my State that have experimented with this sort of approach with great success. Texas has actually, over recent years, closed three prison systems. Crime has not spiked, and, in fact, many inmates who have taken advantage of this program have become resocialized and integrated back into society. So we actually know. Rather than the Federal Government trying to mandate for the entire Nation and adhering to some new experiment, we actually have the laboratories of democracy—otherwise known as the States—under our Federal system, trying things out to see if they will work, and we learn from that if we can. This is an area where we can learn, and we should.

So I look forward to working with Chairman GRASSLEY and our members of the Judiciary Committee to get the CORRECTIONS Act passed. The last time it was considered, last year, it passed overwhelmingly on a bipartisan basis through the Judiciary Committee.

As I said, fortunately, Chairman GRASSLEY has made this a priority, and he has put together a bipartisan effort to look at some other consensus ideas that we might add to this prison reform bill, such as sentencing reform. Honestly, that is a little bit more controversial, because I am not one for just cutting sentences on the front-end indiscriminately or arbitrarily. We need to make sure we are smart about sentencing reform. I think this consensus-building effort that Chairman GRASSLEY has undertaken will help us get in the right place. There are a number of targeted sentencing reforms I think we could all support to help address failures in our criminal justice system.

So we should not let the divisive, controversial proposals stand in the way of making real bipartisan progress on the issue of criminal justice reform. But this is sort of a chronic problem we have had around here when we try to do comprehensive everything. When we try to do comprehensive everything, we make mistakes. We also make it almost impossible to do, because there are so many different moving parts. It is complicated, and many people remain skeptical about its chances of succeeding. But when you have something such as the CORRECTIONS Act, which brings to the Federal level the successful pilot programs that have been undertaken in the States, it just makes sense that this should be the place we should start. Indeed, that is why it has such broad bipartisan support.

In order to make sure that the conversation about criminal justice reform extends to issues beyond prison reform and sentencing, there is another step the junior Senator from Michigan, the senior Senator from South Carolina, and I introduced just last week. This is another idea, because we realize the time that Congress has in our capacity, both on the floor and in committee, to deal with this complex topic in a thoughtful and deliberate way. So we need some help, and what we have introduced is something we call the National Criminal Justice Commission Act, which would create a commission to provide a top-down review of our entire criminal justice system.

After completing a review of the system, this bipartisan commission would work for a unanimous recommendation on how to strengthen it. Congress could—much as it did with the 9/11 Commission—take bits and pieces of it. We wouldn't need to embrace all of it—or any of it, for that matter. But at least we would have the good and thoughtful work product of some experts who would be able to make recommendations to us in a number of areas.

I was just at a meeting where somebody asked about the overcriminalization of a regulatory state, and that is a real problem. The fact that you can commit a crime without even intending to commit a crime if you happen to violate some regulation is a real problem. There are a number of areas I think we need to look at. As our attention was riveted by what happened in Baltimore and Ferguson, I think those incidents are symptoms of a much bigger challenge, and I think this commission would help us focus on building consensus and producing actionable results.

Importantly, the continuing dialogue and commission process will help us strengthen the relationship between law enforcement and communities and help us to build on consensus items such as the CORRECTIONS Act. I think the CORRECTIONS Act is a good place to start, and the National Criminal Justice Act, the consensus-based sentencing reform—all of these measures will help us improve our criminal justice system. It will help bring down some of the tension we witnessed across the Nation, and help us, again, be smart when it comes to dealing with our criminal justice system.

I hope my colleagues will join me in this important effort. I think this is the kind of big idea of a big challenge which will resonate with the people we represent in our States and across the country. When they see us coming together on a bipartisan basis and actually trying to solve problems, I think they feel that we are finally listening to them and doing what we should be doing here in the Senate.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. TILLIS). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

IRAN NUCLEAR AGREEMENT REVIEW ACT

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, for the past couple of weeks, we have been talking about very important things on the floor of the Senate. One of the most

important has been the possible deal with Iran over the country's nuclear program. I believe an agreement that could stop Iran's efforts to get nuclear weapons would be enormously significant. Making sure the American people are involved in this process is also extremely important. There is bipartisan agreement on both of those things. We are still debating the Iran sanctions review act simply because it is so important. The debate has been going on.

This bill goes a long way toward protecting the right of the American people to have a say on any deal and the right of Congress to review the specifics of that deal. I know there are Senators who have ideas for how to make this bill even better. I had an amendment last week, and I appreciated the chance to debate the amendment and to have a vote on it. That is the important part of this process. It is a big reason why the Senate has been so much more productive, I believe, this year than it was under the previous majority leader.

Under Republican leadership, Senators of both parties have gotten back the right to really represent our constituents—something we were elected to do. We have gotten back the right to work through committees, the right to offer amendments and to make our case on the floor.

Republicans and Democrats agree that the bill before us right now is important. Congressional review of any Iranian deal is absolutely essential. We also agree that a nuclear-armed Iran would be a global threat to everyone everywhere. Republicans and Democrats in the Senate know it would be better to have no deal at all than to have a bad deal. Even President Obama has said that.

The concern many Americans have right now is that the deal the President seems prepared to sign is nowhere near strong enough. When I go home to Wyoming every weekend, as I did this past weekend, the people I talk with don't believe Iran has earned the right to be trusted. They are very concerned that the President is ready to sign a very bad deal. I think those concerns are absolutely justified. Iran has avoided scrutiny of its nuclear program for years. What has happened to make the President think all of a sudden that Iran will come clean? I have not seen anything happen out there.

President Obama and his team have been too willing to negotiate without conditions and too hesitant to take the strong stand that I believe must be taken. The President never wanted these economic sanctions in the first place. He said the sanctions would ruin his chances of negotiating a deal at all. Remember that? Well, Congress insisted anyway. Those sanctions did not drive Iran away; it is the sanctions themselves that brought Iran to the negotiating table. Now the President admits that the sanctions, which he opposed, were a good idea. He still wanted to get rid of them as quickly as possible.

The President wanted members of his administration to do all of the negotiating in private, and he wanted to decide by himself what is best. Republicans and Democrats both said that Congress needs to review any deal before getting rid of the sanctions—the sanctions imposed by Congress. We said that he does not have the right to make such important decisions about sanctions imposed by Congress. He does not have the right to eliminate them by himself.

It is very important that we keep asking questions about any potential deal, questions such as, what exactly is the Obama administration agreeing to on sanctions relief? I mean, it is interesting. Iran has said that the final deal must remove all of the economic sanctions on day No. 1. The administration has said that the sanctions will be lifted in phases and only if Iran complies with different steps along the way. Well, which is it? There is a big difference between what the President is saying and what Iran is saying.

The administration already gave Iran sanction relief from sanctions under the interim agreement in 2013. We saw how that turned out. It has given Iran access to $12 billion in much needed hard currency since then. The Obama administration has been unclear on exactly how much actual additional currency it plans to release under the final agreement. Tens of billions? I heard a number as high as over $100 billion with sanctions relief. Well, once the rest of the sanctions are lifted, how can we make sure Iran does not use the money to support terrorists who want to attack us, who want to attack America? Iran has a long history of supporting terrorists such as Hamas and Hezbollah. Is that where the money is going to go? I do not believe Iran is going to use the money to build roads or hospitals or schools.

What about Iran's plans for their nuclear program? Now Iran says they want to do nuclear research for peaceful purposes. Have our negotiators made any progress on holding Iran to its word on that specific point?

Back in November of 2013, Iran signed a framework agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency that was supposed to address the possible military aspects of Iran's nuclear program. It named 12 specific areas where Iran was going to address those concerns. The Director General of that organization, the International Atomic Energy Agency, now says that Iran has addressed only 1 of the 12 it promised to address—only 1 of 12 things it was supposed to do under the last deal from 2013. What has changed since then to make President Obama and the Obama administration think Iran is going to comply with this deal? Why should we suddenly trust Iran now? What is there in the agreement that will force Iran to do what it says it will do?

Congress needs to keep a very close eye on any final agreement. Whatever happens, a deal with Iran must be enforceable, it must be verifiable, and it must be accountable.

We know President Obama is looking to finish out his time by polishing his legacy. Congress needs to make sure this deal is about protecting America and protecting Americans, not protecting the President's diplomatic legacy. The stakes are too high. So far, there are too many unanswered questions.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SCOTT). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. President, I rise to speak on my amendment to the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act, to bolster Congress's role in monitoring Iran's ballistic missile and defensive weapons activity. I hope this amendment is agreed to. It has been written, rewritten, and rewritten again to try to fit the concerns of the majority, the minority, everybody concerned.

My amendment simply requires the President to make an addition in his semiannual report to Congress, including to the Finance Committee, of which I am a senior member, on any weapons sold, leased or lent by any country to Iran, which are currently prohibited under the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1929—and sophisticated air defense systems.

In 2010, the United Nations Security Council, including Russia, a permanent member of the security council, passed a new round of sanctions on Iran's nuclear program. Resolution 1929 prohibits Iran from investing abroad in uranium mining, related nuclear technologies or nuclear-capable ballistic missile technology, and prohibits Iran from launching ballistic missiles, including on its own territory.

That same year, Russia finalized a weapons sale with Iran on the S–300, much publicized today—the S–300 air defense system, which is not currently sanctioned by the United Nations. However, to provide a working partnership and cooperation, then-Russian President Dmitry Medvedev placed a halt on the sale. Unfortunately, the situation and agreement has now changed dramatically. Today, we are contending with President Vladimir Putin.

Sophisticated air defense systems, such as the Russian-produced S–300, have the capability of shielding Iranian missile facilities from oversight and airstrikes. This poses a real threat to global security, not to mention peace in the Middle East and, as a consequence, all throughout the world.

To prevent this threat, we must ensure our intelligence community is doing everything in its power and capability to ensure the greatest threat in

an unstable region, Iran, is not getting help from nations looking to boost their economy through weapons sales, regardless of the impact.

News reports now confirm Russia is preparing to sell Iran billions in sophisticated weaponry. News reports are one thing. However, it is imperative our intelligence community keeps the administration and the Congress briefed fully and on a timely basis on this national security threat.

One month ago, reports revealed Russia's intention to sell the S–300 to Iran. I was alarmed when I asked my colleagues what they knew about the immediacy of this sale before it was made public in news reports—more specifically, members of the Select Committee on Intelligence—and it was apparent no one in the Senate had been fully briefed.

I cannot imagine any of my colleagues not wanting to know who is and who may be planning to arm Iran or why the administration would not be willing to share this information with the Congress—and know it themselves. Our intelligence community can and surely must do better.

By requiring President Obama, and future Presidents as well, to provide Congress with timely, actionable intelligence on Iran's weapons systems, my amendment ensures that Congress can make informed decisions with regard to our national security.

For Congress to support an agreement, Congress must be kept informed. If a nuclear agreement with Iran has even the slightest chance of preventing a nuclear Iran, then we must be vigilant, at least to ensure that other nations are not arming Iran and putting our allies in the region—Jordan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the Gulf States, and, more especially, Israel—at increased risk.

My amendment strengthens this bill by ensuring Congress obtains oversight and intelligence on every country, especially Russia, regarding weapons sales to Iran.

So I ask my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to consider this amendment and to join me in supporting increased oversight on all of Iran's weapons activities.

I yield back the remainder of my time.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. TOOMEY). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to speak for up to 20 minutes as in morning business.

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

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I am here for the 98th time to urge this body to stop sleepwalking through history. Climate change is real, it is already harming the United States, and it is time for the Senate to wake up and address this threat.

The science that links carbon pollution to global warming is nothing new. It dates back to President Lincoln. In the century and a half since, we have measured changes in the climate that scientists virtually unanimously say are caused by our burning of fossil fuels. Atmospheric carbon is now measured at 400 parts per million—higher than ever in our species' history. Our oceans are warming and acidifying. Those are measurements again. We are experiencing the warmest years ever recorded. More measurements. And rising seas are lapping at our shores. In Rhode Island, we measure nearly 10 inches of sea level rise since the 1930s. These are all measurements, not projections. These are facts, not theories.

If we do not act soon to cut carbon pollution, we can reasonably expect the consequences to be dire. Yet, the fossil fuel industry continues its crafty, cynical campaign of denial and delay. Big Coal, Oil and Natural Gas, and related industries, such as the Koch brothers' companies, profit by offloading the costs of their carbon pollution onto the rest of us. They traffic in products that put health and safety at risk, and they don't tell the truth about their products. Sound familiar? Well, it should because the fossil fuel industry is using a familiar playbook, one perfected by the tobacco industry. Following this same playbook, Big Tobacco fought for more than four decades to bury the truth about the health effects of its product.

Well, the government has a playbook, too. It is called RICO, the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act. The elements of a civil racketeering case are simple. The government must allege four things: The defendants No. 1 conducted No. 2 an enterprise No. 3 through a pattern No. 4 of racketeering activity. Conducting means everything from directing to aiding and abetting the activity. An enterprise can be any form of association or a common scheme. Pattern means continuity of the scheme and—for civil RICO particularly—the prospect of ongoing conduct. Racketeering activity simply means a violation of designated Federal laws, including the Federal mail fraud and wire fraud statutes.

In 1999, the U.S. Department of Justice filed a civil RICO lawsuit against the major tobacco companies and their associated industry groups. The government's complaint was clear: The tobacco companies ''have engaged in and executed—and continue to engage in and execute—a massive 50-year scheme to defraud the public, including consumers of cigarettes, in violation of RICO.''

Big Tobacco spent millions of dollars and years of litigation fighting the government, but finally, through discovery, government lawyers were able to peel back the layers of deceit and see what the big tobacco companies really knew all along about cigarettes.

In 2006, Judge Gladys Kessler of the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia decided the case. In a nearly 1,700-page opinion, she found the tobacco companies' fraudulent campaign amounted to a racketeering enterprise. According to the court:

> Defendants coordinated significant aspects of their public relations, scientific, legal, and marketing activity in furtherance of the shared objective—to . . . maximize industry profits by preserving and expanding the market for cigarettes through a scheme to deceive the public.

The parallels between what the tobacco industry did and what the fossil fuel industry is doing now are striking. In fact, we can go back and reread those judicial findings about tobacco, substitute the words ''fossil fuel,'' and exactly describe what the fossil fuel industry is up to. That is without the benefit of discovery, where litigants get to demand the production of documents and take the depositions of potential witnesses and require answers under oath. What a treasure trove that would produce.

We know that the prospect of action on climate change is a business risk for fossil fuel companies. Serious action on climate—a transition to clean, low-carbon energy—threatens to cut into polluters' market and profits. The match between the fossil fuel industry and Big Tobacco is pretty good in terms of the business risk presented if the public were to be really aware of the harm. They have a motive to deceive.

We know that in the case of both tobacco and fossil fuels, the industry joined together in a common enterprise and coordinated strategy. Remember the finding in the tobacco case that defendants coordinated significant aspects of their public relations, scientific, legal and marketing activity in furtherance of the shared objective. How about the fossil fuel industry?

In 1998, as the Clinton administration was building support for international climate action under the Kyoto Protocol, another group was up to something else. That group was the fossil fuel industry, its trade associations, and the conservative policy institutes that often do the industry's dirty work with clean faces. They met at the Washington office of the American Petroleum Institute. Their plan? To organize a scheme to create doubt about climate change and to undermine public support for American participation in the Kyoto agreement.

A memo from that meeting was leaked to the New York Times. The memo documented the polluters' plans for a multimillion-dollar public relations campaign to undermine climate science. What was the project's goal? To ensure that—and I will quote the memo here—''a majority of the American Public, including industry leadership, recognizes that significant uncertainties exist in climate science, and

therefore raises questions among those (e.g. Congress) who chart the future U.S. course on global climate change.''

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have the memo printed in the RECORD at the conclusion of my remarks.

If anything, the fossil fuel industry's climate denial scheme has grown even bigger and more complex than Big Tobacco's. The shape of the fossil fuel industry's denial operation has been documented by, among others, Drexel University Professor Robert Brulle. Brulle's follow-the-money analysis shows how the fossil fuel industry perpetuates climate denial through a complex network of organizations and funding that is designed to obscure the fossil fuel industry's fingerprints. It is quite a beast.

This is the climate denial beast. Polluter money and dark money are its lifeblood. PR front groups are its organs, and lies and obfuscation are its work. Look at the complex interconnection of the beast's major players. The green diamonds are the big funders—the Koch-affiliated foundations, the Scaife-affiliated Foundations, the American Petroleum Institute. The blue circles are the who's who of tea party, libertarian, and front groups who have wittingly or not become the flacks for the fossil fuel industry—the Heartland Institute, the Hoover Institution, the Heritage Foundation, the Cato Institute, and the Mercatus Center, to name just a few. Think how much trouble someone must have gone to to set all this in play. Think how important the purpose would have to be to them to take all that trouble.

What was the purpose of this network? To quote directly from Dr. Brulle's report, it was ''a deliberate and organized effort to misdirect the public discussion and distort the public's understanding of climate.'' That sounds a lot like the judge's findings in the tobacco racketeering case: ''Defendants have intentionally maintained and coordinated their fraudulent position on addiction and nicotine as an important part of their overall efforts to influence public opinion and persuade people that smoking is not dangerous.''

The coordinated tactics of this network, Dr. Brulle's report states, ''span a wide range of activities, including political lobbying, contributions to political candidates, and a large number of communication and media efforts that aim at undermining climate science.'' Compare that to the findings in the tobacco case: ''Defendants coordinated significant aspects of their public relations, scientific, legal, and marketing activity in furtherance of the shared objective.''

So that is the beast, and big money flows through it.

Brulle's report chronicles that from 2003 to 2010, 140 foundations made 5,299 grants totaling $558 million to 91 organizations that actively oppose climate action. For decades, the tobacco industry did the same thing. In the tobacco case, Judge Kessler found that the ''defendants took steps to fund research designed and controlled to generate industry favorable results, and to suppress adverse research results.''

Look at the recent affair with Dr. Willie Soon, a scientist who consistently publishes papers downplaying the role of carbon dioxide emissions in causing climate change. Through the Freedom of Information Act, we know that Dr. Soon has received more than half of his funding from oil and electric utility coal interests. His fossil fuel backers include the American Petroleum Institute, ExxonMobil, the Charles G. Koch Foundation, and the Southern Company. Most recently, he has been getting his funding through Donors Trust, the dark money identity-laundering operation that anonymizes corporate and polluter money. By the way, the biggest mark in the whole beast is right there, and that is Donors Trust.

The manipulation of science is pretty egregious. Some of Dr. Soon's research contracts gave his industry backers a chance to see what he was doing before he published it. Some of these contracts even had clauses that promised Dr. Soon's fossil fuel backers would receive ''an advance written copy of proposed publications...for comment and input.'' The New York Times reported that in correspondence with his fossil fuel funders, Dr. Soon referred to the scientific papers he produced as ''deliverables.'' Deliverable, indeed.

The fossil fuel industry has had to work against mounting evidence to cover up the risks for as long as possible; The same with Big Tobacco. Again, to quote Judge Kessler's decision in the tobacco case, ''Despite overwhelming evidence from a wide range of disciplines including statistics and epidemiology, pathology and chemistry, clinical observation and animal experimentation, as well as their own internal research, Defendants continued to claim 'no proof' and continued to attempt to create doubt about the scientific findings.''

The Federal racketeering complaint opened up discovery into the files of the tobacco companies and showed finally and unequivocally that for decades the tobacco industry knew about smoking's harm while it continued public relations campaigns to deny that smoking was harmful. Discovery is a powerful tool. Sanctions for hiding evidence from a court are steep. So time and again, it is discovery that finds the real smoking guns in corporate records. Remember when New York's attorney general discovered internal emails from analysts at Merrill Lynch that showed the company promoting stocks to its customers that they internally described as ''junk''?

The fossil fuel industry is engaged in a massive effort to deny climate science and deceive the American public. They have been at it for years, and the clearer the science becomes, the harder the polluters fight. Gary Wills used to work for William F. Buckley at the National Review and recently described this effort as ''their kept scientists, their rigged conferences, their sycophantic beneficiaries [and] and their bought publicists.'' Imagine what a little discovery into the beast would reveal about the schemes and mischief of the climate denial apparatus, about what they are telling each other in private while they scheme to deceive the public.

The truth will eventually come to light. It always does. But here in the Senate, we should not wait for a court case before taking action. The evidence is clear. We have a legislative responsibility to address climate change and to do that now. The facts are clear as day right before our eyes, despite the fossil fuel industry's efforts to deceive and deny, despite their persistent big political spending and bullying. We just have to wake up to the facts and to our duty.

I yield the floor.

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

The material below contains a memo by the API from April 1998.

MEMO

From: Joe Walker
To: Global Climate Science Team
Cc: Michelle Ross; Susan Moya
Subject: Draft Global Climate Science Communications plan

As promised, attached is the draft Global Climate Science Communications Plan that we developed during our workshop Last Friday. Thanks especially to those of you who participated in the workshop, and In particular to John Adams for his very helpful thoughts following up our meeting, and Alan Caudill for turning around the notes from our workshop so quickly.

Please review the pan and get back to me with your comments as soon as possible.

As those of you who were at the workshop know, we have scheduled a follow-up team meeting to review the plan in person on Friday, April 17, form 1 to 3 p.m. at the API headquarters. After that, we hope to have a ''Plan champion'' help us move it forward to potential funding sources, perhaps starting with the global climate ''Coordinating Council.'' That will be an item for discussion on April 17.

Again, thanks for your hard work on this project. Please e-mail me, call or fax me with your comments. Thanks.

Regards,

JOE WALKER.

GLOBAL CLIMATE SCIENCE COMMUNICATIONS

ACTION PLAN

SITUATION ANALYSIS

In December 1997, the Clinton Administration agreed in Kyoto, Japan, to a treaty to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to prevent what it purports to be changes in the global climate caused by the continuing release of such emissions. The so-called green house gases have many sources. For example, water vapor is a greenhouse gas. But the Clinton Administration's action, if eventually approved by the U.S. Senate, will mainly affect emissions from fossil fuel (gasoline, coal, natural gas, etc.) combustion.

As the climate change debate has evolved, those who oppose action have argued mainly

that signing such a treaty will place the U.S. at a competitive disadvantage with most other nations, and will be extremely expensive to implement. Much of the cost will be borne by American consumers who will pay higher prices for most energy and transportation.

The climate change theory being advanced by the treaty supporters is based primarily on forecasting models with a very high degree of uncertainty. In fact, its not known for sure whether (a) climate change actually is occurring, or (b) if it is, whether humans really have any influence on it.

Despite these weaknesses in scientific understanding, those who oppose the treaty have done little to build a case against precipitous action on climate change based on the scientific uncertainty. As a result, The Clinton Administration and environmental groups essentially have had the field to themselves. They have conducted an effective public relations program to convince the American public that the climate is changing, we humans are at fault, and we must do something about it before calamity strikes.

The environmental groups know they have been successful. Commenting after the Kyoto negotiations about recent media coverage of climate change, Tom Wathen, executive vice president of the National Environmental Trust, wrote:

''. . . As important as the extent of the coverage was the tone and tenor of it. In a change from just six months ago, most media stories no longer presented global warming as just a theory over which reasonable scientists could differ. Most stories described predictions of global warming as the position of the overwhelming number of mainstream scientists. That the environmental community had, to a great extent, settled the scientific issue with the U.S. media is the other great success that began perhaps several months earlier but became apparent during Kyoto.''

Because the science underpinning the global climate change theory has not been challenged effectively in the media or through other vehicles reaching the American public, there is widespread ignorance, which works in favor of the Kyoto treaty and against the best interests of the United States. Indeed, the public has been highly receptive to the Clinton Administrations plans. There has been little, if any, public resistance or pressure applied to Congress to reject the treaty, except by those ''inside the Beltway'' with vested interests.

Moreover, from the political viewpoint, it is difficult for the United States to oppose the treaty solely on economic grounds, valid as the economic issues are. It makes it too easy for others to portray the United States as putting preservation of its own lifestyle above the greater concerns of mankind. This argument, in turn, forces our negotiators to make concessions that have not been well thought through, and in the end may do far more harm than good. This is the process that unfolded at Kyoto, and is very likely to be repeated in Buenos Aires in November 1998.

The advocates of global warming have been successful on the basis of skillfully misrepresenting the science and the extent of agreement on the science, while industry and its partners ceded the science and fought on the economic issues. Yet if we can show that science does not support the Kyoto treaty—which most true climate scientists believe to be the case—this puts the United States in a stronger moral position and frees its negotiators from the need to make concessions as a defense against perceived selfish economic concerns.

Upon this tableau, the Global Climate Science Communications Team (GCSCT) developed an action plan to inform the American public that science does not support the precipitous actions Kyoto would dictate, thereby providing a climate for the right policy decisions to be made. The team considered results from a new public opinion survey in developing the plan.

Charlton Research's survey of 1,100 ''informed Americans'' suggests that while Americans currently perceive climate change to be a great threat, public opinion is open enough to change on climate science. When informed that ''some scientists believe there is not enough evidence to suggest that [what is called global climate change] is a long-term change due to human behavior and activities,'' 58 percent of those surveyed said they were more likely to oppose the Kyoto treaty. Moreover, half the respondents harbored doubts about climate science.

GCSCT members who contributed to the development of the plan are A. John Adams, John Adams Associates; Candace Crandall, Science and Environmental Policy Project; David Rothbard, Committee For A Constructive Tomorrow; Jeffrey Salmon, The Marshall Institute; Lee Garrigan, environmental issues Council; Lynn Bouchey and Myron Ebell, Frontiers of Freedom; Peter Cleary, Americans for Tax Reform; Randy Randol, Exxon Corp.; Robert Gehri, The Southern Company; Sharon Kneiss, Chevron Corp; Steve Milloy, The Advancement of Sound Science Coalition; and Joseph Walker, American Petroleum Institute.

The action plan is detailed on the following pages.

PROJECT GOAL

A majority of the American public, including industry leadership, recognizes that significant uncertainties exist in climate science, and therefore raises questions among those (e.g. Congress) who chart the future U.S. course on global climate change.

Progress will be measured toward the goal. A measurement of the public's perspective on climate science will be taken before the plan is launched, and the same measurement will be taken at one or more as-yet-to-be-determined intervals as the plan is implemented.

VICTORY WILL BE ACHIEVED WHEN

Average citizens ''understand'' (recognize) uncertainties in climate science; recognition of uncertainties becomes part of the ''conventional wisdom''

Media ''understands'' (recognizes) uncertainties in climate science

Media coverage reflects balance on climate science and recognition of the validity of viewpoints that challenge the current ''conventional wisdom''

Industry senior leadership understands uncertainties in climate science, making them stronger ambassadors to those who shape climate policy

Those promoting the Kyoto treaty on the basis of extent science appears to be out of touch with reality.

CURRENT REALITY

Unless ''climate change'' becomes a non-issue, meaning that the Kyoto proposal is defeated and there are no further initiatives to thwart the threat of climate change, there may be no moment when we can declare victory for our efforts. It will be necessary to establish measurements for the science effort to track progress toward achieving the goal and strategic success.

STRATEGIES AND TACTICS

I. National Media Relations Program: Develop and implement a national media relations program to inform the media about uncertainties in climate science; to generate national, regional and local media coverage on the scientific uncertainties, and thereby educate and inform the public, stimulating them to raise questions with policy makers.

Tactics: These tactics will be undertaken between now and the next climate meeting in Buenos Aires/Argentina, in November 1998, and will be continued thereafter, as appropriate. Activities will be launched as soon as the plan is approved, funding obtained, and the necessary resources (e.g., public relations counsel) arranged and deployed. In all cases, tactical implementation will be fully integrated with other elements of this action plan, most especially Strategy II (National Climate Science Data Center).

Identify, recruit and train a team of five independent scientists to participate in media outreach. These will be individuals who do not have a long history of visibility and/or participation in the climate change debate. Rather, this team will consist of new faces who will add their voices to those recognized scientists who already are vocal.

Develop a global climate science information kit for media including peer-reviewed papers that undercut the ''conventional wisdom'' on climate science. This kit also will include understandable communications, including simple fact sheets that present scientific uncertainties in language that the media and public can understand.

Conduct briefings by media-trained scientists for science writers in the top 20 media markets, using the information kits. Distribute the information kits to daily newspapers nationwide with offer of scientists to brief reporters at each paper. Develop, disseminate radio news releases featuring scientists nationwide, and offer scientists to appear on radio talk shows across the country.

Produce, distribute a steady stream of climate science information via facsimile and e-mail to science writers around the country.

Produce, distribute via syndicate and directly to newspapers nationwide a steady stream of op-ed columns and letters to the editor authored by scientists.

Convince one of the major news national TV journalists (e.g., John Stossel) to produce a report examining the scientific underpinnings of the Kyoto treaty.

Organize, promote and conduct through grassroots organizations a series of campus/community workshops/debates on climate science in 10 most important states during the period mid-August through October, 1998.

Consider advertising the scientific uncertainties in select markets to support national, regional and local (e.g., workshops/debates), as appropriate.

NATIONAL MEDIA PROGRAM BUDGET—$600,000 PLUS PAID ADVERTISING

II. Global Climate Science Information Source: Develop and implement a program to inject credible science and scientific accountability into the global climate debate, thereby raising questions about and undercutting the ''prevailing scientific wisdom.'' The strategy will have the added benefit of providing a platform for credible, constructive criticism of the opposition's position on the science.

Tactics: As with the National Media Relations Program, these activities will be undertaken between now and the next climate meeting in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in November 1998, and will continue thereafter. Initiatives will be launched as soon as the plan is approved, funding obtained, and the necessary resources arranged and deployed.

Establish a Global Climate Science Data Center. The GCSDC will be established in Washington as a non-profit educational foundation with an advisory board of respected climate scientists. It will be staffed initially with professionals on loan from various companies and associations with a major interest in the climate issue. These executives

will bring with them knowledge and experience in the following areas.

Overall history of climate research and the IPCC process;

Congressional relations and knowledge of where individual Senators stand on the climate issue;

Knowledge of key climate scientists and where they stand;

Ability to identify and recruit as many as 20 respected climate scientists to serve on the science advisory board;

Knowledge and expertise in media relations and with established relationships with science and energy writers, columnists and editorial writers;

Expertise in grassroots organization; and

Campaign organization and administration.

The GCSDC will be led by dynamic senior executive with a major personal commitment to the goals of the campaign and easy access to business leaders at the CEO level. The Center will be run on a day-to-day basis by an executive director with responsibility for ensuring targets are met. The Center will be funded at a level that will permit it to succeed, including funding for research contracts that may be deemed appropriate to fill gaps in climate science (e.g., a complete scientific critique of the IPCC research and its conclusions).

The GCSDC will become a one-stop resource on climate science for members of Congress, the media, industry and all others concerned. It will be in constant contact with the best climate scientists and ensure that their findings and views receive appropriate attention. It will provide them with the logistical and moral support they have been lacking. In short, it will be a sound scientific alternative to the IPCC. Its functions will include:

Providing as an easily accessible database (including a website) of all mainstream climate science information.

Identifying and establishing cooperative relationships with all major scientists whose research in this field supports our position.

Establishing cooperative relationships with other mainstream scientific organizations (e.g., meteorologists, geophysicists) to bring their perspectives to bear on the debate, as appropriate.

Developing opportunities to maximize the impact of scientific views consistent with ours with Congress, the media and other key audiences.

Monitoring and serving as and early warning system for scientific developments with the potential to impact on the climate science debate, pro and con.

Responding to claims from the scientific alarmists and media.

Providing grants for advocacy on climate science, as deemed appropriate.

GLOBAL CLIMATE SCIENCE DATA CENTER BUDGET—$5,000,000 (SPREAD OVER TWO YEARS MINIMUM)

III. National Direct Outreach and Education: Develop and implement a direct outreach program to inform and educate members of Congress, state officials, industry leadership, and school teachers/students about uncertainties in climate science. This strategy will enable Congress, state officials and industry leaders will be able to raise such serious questions about the Kyoto treaty's scientific underpinnings that American policy-makers not only will refuse to endorse it, they will seek to prevent progress toward implementation at the Buenos Aires meeting in November or through other ways. Informing teachers/students about uncertainties in climate science will begin to erect a barrier against further efforts to impose Kyoto-like measures in the future.

Tactics: Informing and educating members of Congress, state officials and industry leaders will be undertaken as soon as the plan is approved, funding is obtained, and the necessary resources are arrayed and will continue through Buenos Aires and for the foreseeable future. The teachers/students outreach program will be developed and launched in early 1999. In all cases, tactical implementation will be fully integrated with other elements of this action plan.

Develop and conduct through the Global Climate Science Data Center science briefings for Congress, governors, state legislators, and industry leaders by August 1998.

Develop information kits on climate science targeted specifically at the needs of government officials and industry leaders, to be used in conjunction with and separately from the in-person briefings to further disseminate information on climate science uncertainties and thereby arm these influentials to raise serious questions on the science issue.

Organize under the GCSDC a ''Science Education Task Group'' that will serve as the point of outreach to the National Science Teachers Association (NSTA) and other influential science education organizations. Work with NSTA to develop school materials that present a credible, balanced picture of climate science for use in classrooms nationwide.

Distribute educational materials directly to schools and through grassroots organizations of climate science partners (companies, organizations that participate in this effort).

NATIONAL DIRECT OUTREACH PROGRAM BUDGET—$300,000

IV. Funding/Fund Allocation: Develop and implement program to obtain funding, and to allocate funds to ensure that the program is carried out effectively.

Tactics: This strategy will be implemented as soon as we have the go-ahead to proceed.

Potential funding sources were identified as American Petroleum Institute (API) and its members; Business Round Table (BRT) and its members, Edison Electric Institute (EEI) and its members; Independent Petroleum Association of America (IPAA) and its members; and the National Mining Association (NMA) and its members.

Potential fund allocators were identified as the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), Committee For A Constructive Tomorrow (CFACT), Competitive Enterprise Institute, Frontiers of Freedom and The Marshall Institute.

TOTAL FUNDS REQUIRED TO IMPLEMENT PROGRAM THROUGH NOVEMBER 1998—$2,000,000 (A SIGNIFICANT PORTION OF FUNDING FOR THE GCSDC WILL BE DEFERRED UNTIL 1999 AND BEYOND)

MEASUREMENTS

Various metrics will be used to track progress. These measurements will have to be determined in fleshing out the action plan and may include:

Baseline public/government official opinion surveys and periodic follow-up surveys on the percentage of Americans and government officials who recognize significant uncertainties in climate science.

Tracking the percent of media articles that raise questions about climate science.

Number of Members of Congress exposed to our materials on climate science.

Number of communications on climate science received by Members of Congress from their constituents.

Number of radio talk show appearances by scientists questioning the ''prevailing wisdom'' on climate science.

Number of school teachers/students reached with our information on climate science.

Number of science writers briefed and who report upon climate science uncertainties.

Total audience exposed to newspaper, radio, television coverage of science uncertainties.

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—AMENDMENT NO. 1186

Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, I have an amendment to the Iran sanctions bill which is pending. This is amendment No. 1186. I come to the floor to attempt to modify my own amendment simply by taking out section 2 of the amendment. I have given this proposed modification of my own amendment to all of the managers of the bill, majority and minority. They have had it for several hours, and I have discussed it with the managers. All I am seeking is to be able to modify the language of my own amendment, which is already pending. With that in mind, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate resumes consideration of H.R. 1191, the Iran sanctions bill, that I be allowed to modify my amendment No. 1186 with the changes that are at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. CARDIN. Reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, as Senator VITTER has pointed out, right now we are on the motion to proceed to the trade bill. We are not on the Iran sanctions bill. There are continuing discussions taking place on the Iran sanctions bill between Senator CORKER and me in an effort to try to get as many of the amendments that we have been working on cleared as possible. Senator VITTER's request could very well at this point interfere with the maximum number of amendments being considered, and for that reason I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Louisiana.

Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, my request is not going to interfere with anything. That is a bunch of bull. My request is that I be allowed to modify the language of my own amendment which is pending, and it is not going to interfere with any other amendment.

Let's be upfront about what is going on here. It is not an open amendment process. We have been talking about this bill for 2 weeks. We have had two votes on amendments. They are not even talking about amendment votes. What Senator CARDIN is describing is negotiating the language and changing the language of certain amendments so it is agreeable to everyone, including him. That is not an open amendment process. Those are not votes. That is not voting up or down. That is not giving everyone their say and their ability to have votes. That is blocking the gate, blocking the door, and returning to the practices of the HARRY REID

Senate and then holding everybody hostage and demanding the language you want, Senator CARDIN wants, everybody wants, in order for that amendment to even possibly be considered. That is as far from an open amendment process as you can get.

If that is what they are discussing, they might as well stop now because I will object. I want a vote on my amendment. I want votes on other significant amendments. If this is just a game to come to some unanimous consent agreement, some managers' package which they bless, they can stop those discussions right now because I will object.

Again, Mr. President, I think it is reasonable that a Senator get to modify his own amendment. I think that is a pretty minimal request. I will repeat it.

I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate resumes consideration of H.R. 1191, that I be allowed to modify amendment No. 1186 with the changes that are at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, let me point out that but for the fact that Senator COTTON filed an amendment—he had every right to do so, and I am not saying he did not—without Senator CORKER or the leadership or my knowing that he was going to go through that process, Senator VITTER could have modified his amendment. He is being blocked and needs consent because of actions taken by a Republican Senator.

Prior to that action being taken, Senator CORKER and I, working with—I think there were somewhere around 60 amendments filed by Republicans and none by Democrats. This is a bill which passed the Senate Foreign Relations Committee 19 to 0, one which incorporated many amendments of the members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, including the Presiding Officer, who is working with us on this. We worked those out. We are in the process of presenting an additional four amendments for floor action.

When that action was taken by a Senator—who had every right to do it because he was trying to get his amendment considered on the floor—in effect, it blocked other amendments from being considered on the floor. When you have one party filing all of the amendments, it is necessary to have an orderly process for these considerations. We were in the process of doing that, and that was blocked.

Senator CORKER and I regret that we did not have a chance to bring more amendments in an orderly way for consideration on the floor. But the request made by Senator VITTER is to try to get his amendment in a different position than other amendments, and for that reason, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Louisiana.

Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, this is not being blocked by Senator COTTON. Everybody knows that. Senator COTTON made it clear that he would happily agree to get amendments up for a vote. This has been a determined, choreographed effort to close the door during an open amendment process and to demand leverage so that every amendment has to be worked out. Do you know what ''worked out'' means? That means they get a veto and we don't get a vote. That is unreasonable, and that is the exact opposite of an open amendment process.

I am not being blocked by Senator COTTON. I know that. Everybody knows that. We are being blocked by the managers of this bill. I think it is highly regrettable.

As I said, if the end game here is to work out amendments to Senator CARDIN's or anyone else's satisfaction, and they get a veto, they can stop their work on that right now because I am objecting, and I will object. I want a vote.

I thank the Presiding Officer.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I will point out in response to Senator VITTER that we had two record votes on the floor on this bill, and both were amendments that were overwhelmingly rejected. They were not amendments I wanted on the bill. I opposed both of those amendments and Senator CORKER opposed both of those amendments.

When the amendment was offered by Senator COTTON, we were in the process of scheduling another vote on the floor of an amendment that I equally opposed. I have indicated that I will oppose several of the other amendments Members have tried to make pending, but I did not object to votes on those amendments.

I just want to respond to Senator VITTER. Senator CORKER and I did not attempt to block votes on amendments that we don't agree with. We were seeking an orderly way to proceed because, quite frankly, this bill is critically important to our country.

Let's not lose sight of what we are trying to achieve, and that is to block Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon. The best way for us to do that is for this body and the House and the President to speak with a united voice, to give us the strongest possible position in negotiations, and for Congress to carry out its responsibility to review this agreement because it was Congress that imposed the sanctions that brought Iran to the negotiating table. We have a responsibility—in an orderly way—to review that agreement.

The legislation we brought forward—and the Presiding Officer was very helpful in bringing it forward—allows us, in an orderly way, to consider that agreement, if one is reached, so that we can have open hearings in a deliberative way to determine how Congress should act, and that is what this bill does.

I regret that my friend from Louisiana—and he is my friend—feels that any amendment he wants to offer—and there are 60-some other amendments to be offered—that he should be able to bring them up at any time he wants. Quite frankly, this bill is too important for us to use anything but an orderly way to consider amendments. That is what this bill does for the consideration of a potential agreement.

I thank Senator CORKER for his leadership, and the two of us will work together to make sure we complete this bill in an orderly way.

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.

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

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

BULLETPROOF VEST PARTNERSHIP GRANT PROGRAM REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2015

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I am surely going to make a unanimous consent request, and I have notified the Republican leader of this, but before I do, I wish to make a statement on this issue. I am talking about the Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant Program Reauthorization Act of 2015. That is a lot of words, but it is basically talking about the bulletproof vest bill Republican Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell and I first put together 17 years ago. It is a lifesaving grant program.

Senator Nighthorse Campbell and I both had the privilege of serving in various forms of law enforcement. We knew how things had changed. We knew a number of police officers, men and women, who died, were shot to death, who would have lived had they had bulletproof vests. We also knew a lot of them—especially small departments such as those in my State and many in Senator Nighthorse Campbell's State—could not afford them. That could be said of virtually every single State.

The partnership we put together has provided 13,000 State and local law enforcement agencies with nearly 1.2 million bulletproof vests for their officers. When we pass it today, the Senate will move a step closer to ensuring that for the next 5 years thousands of agencies can purchase bulletproof vests for officers serving in their communities.

These are not just empty words or an empty gesture. It is probably the most tangible support Congress can provide to law enforcement officers. It will help put vests on the backs of more than 200,000 police officers and it will save lives.

Just ask the chief of the Woodway, TX, police department, Yost Zakhary. Chief Zakhary testified at a Senate judiciary hearing last year. He brought