

detect, treat, understand, intervene in and, where appropriate, prosecute elder abuse, neglect and exploitation.

With more than 76 million baby boomers retiring over the next three decades, we cannot wait any longer for this legislation to pass. Older Americans deserve nothing less. I know that it is extremely important to folks back home in Utah.

In closing, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation so we can provide older Americans the same protections that we provide to our children and victims of domestic violence. Because we are not aging gradually, our response must be immediate—we cannot afford to wait for another Congress to end without approving this legislation.

Ralph Waldo Emerson once said, men are respectable only as they respect. May we strive to be more respectable people by showing respect to those who deserve it the most: our older Americans.

Thank you, Mr. President. I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Arkansas.

OLDER AMERICANS MONTH

Mrs. LINCOLN. Mr. President, each May, our Nation pays tribute to the contribution older Americans have made to our great country as many communities all across our great Nation come together to celebrate Older Americans Month.

Having grown up in eastern Arkansas in a small community, the daughter of a farmer, I was within walking distance of both my grandparents. I learned incredible lessons from them that I still carry with me today. I imagine there are many of my Senate colleagues who can stop and think about a wonderful memory of growing up with grandparents or maybe an older aunt or uncle who lived nearby, perhaps it was a favorite schoolteacher or a mentor in the community or in their neighborhood.

The pride and dedication older Americans have had for our country was impressed upon me from a very early age, from all of those different figures in my life—my grandparents, obviously, but also from wonderful teachers, as well as neighbors, those who shared their stories with me, they shared their values with me, they helped me become the person I am today. Whether it was hearing about my grandfathers' service in World War I—both of them having served as infantrymen in World War I—or maybe it was the jar my grandmother left on the mantelpiece that stored the coins during the Great Depression or the story of my neighbor who, during World War II, flew over "the hump" and did tremendous feats in World War II, so many people who have affected my life. Again, I am sure that if any Senator takes the time, they will remember their lives have been affected as well by an individual just like that.

Even though I didn't know it, I was a caregiver at an early age when it was one of my and my cousin's tasks to take dinner, nightly meals over to our grandparents' house. Later in my life, when my grandmother was ill and lived with us in our home and I shared a room with her, that time spent with my grandparents and with others, other elderly people in my community and in my neighborhood—they were priceless for both of us. Not only was I able to give something of my energy and my experiences in the current time, but it was wonderful also for her, my grandmother, who lived with us, because she was able to share her experiences and values with me, and I was able to learn so many of life's lessons from her and from the others in my community.

Today's world is so much different. Even though we no longer live within walking distance of our parents or grandparents, my husband Steve and I make a very conscious effort to ensure that our children spend quality time with their grandparents. It seems appropriate, then, during Older Americans Month that I rise this morning to draw attention to a piece of legislation that I and my good friend and colleague from Utah, Senator HATCH, who has been on the Senate floor earlier this morning, have introduced that seeks to protect millions of older Americans. It is the Elder Justice Act.

I also want to note that Chairman KOHL and ranking member GORDON SMITH of the Senate Special Committee on Aging have been champions of this legislation as well, and I certainly appreciate all they do in bringing about both support as well as knowledge of this piece of legislation.

I have been a cosponsor of the Elder Justice Act since it was originally introduced in 2002, and I helped pass a version of this bill out of the Senate Finance Committee in 2004, in 2005, and again in 2006. Unfortunately, the Elder Justice Act has yet to become law despite the fact that our Nation continues to grow older and despite the fact that the tragedy of elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation continues.

It is hard for any of us to imagine that our elderly loved ones would be victim to those types of actions, the abuse or neglect or exploitation that exists in this country. We have held hearings on elder abuse for almost 25 years. Yet not one single Federal employee works full time on this issue. We are beginning to make progress. I encourage all my colleagues to join me, not only in this month when we celebrate the wonderful heritage of older Americans, but to ensure that we move a piece of legislation that will protect them.

The House of Representatives recently held its first hearing on this issue in 17 years—thanks to the hard work of Congressman RAHM EMMANUEL and PETER KING—and the Elder Justice Act is currently going through the committee markup in that body. In ad-

dition to adding cosponsors, we are looking for opportunities to pass this legislation this year in the Senate.

Abuse of our senior citizens can be physical, it can be sexual, it can be psychological, or it can be financial. The perpetrator may be a stranger, it may be an acquaintance, it may be a paid caregiver, it might be a corporation and, sadly, even a spouse or another family member. We have an obligation to the older Americans of this country not to sit around for another 25 years but to come up with the solutions that already exist for so many other Americans. Elder abuse happens everywhere and at all levels of income and in all geographic areas, whether you live in an urban area or out on a county road in rural America. No matter how rich you are, and no matter where you live, no one is immune. When we say no one is immune, it means none of our loved ones are immune from this horrific act.

Congress must make our seniors a priority and pass the Elder Justice Act as soon as possible. This bill represents a consensus agreement developed by the Elder Justice Coalition, a national coalition of 547 members, including 226 organizations and 321 individuals, dedicated to eliminating elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation in this great country of ours. This bill reminds us that Congress has already passed comprehensive bills to address child abuse and violence against women but has continued to ignore the fact that we have no Federal law enacted to date on elder abuse.

We have made great strides. I know, as cochairman of the Senate Caucus on Missing and Exploited Children, we have made great strides in how we can better protect our children from exploitation and from all the different fears and dangers that are out there. Why would we not want to do this for the wonderful elderly people of this country who have given all of us so very much?

Every older American has the right to enjoy his or her golden years free of abuse and neglect. As Americans age—and I know and many of us know from personal experience—they want to maintain their independence and their dignity and their pride. It is very difficult when they become exploited or abused or neglected. It is hard for them to reach out and ask for help and care, particularly of their children. It is not something easy for them to do. It is why we have the responsibility in the Senate to do something about elder abuse.

The Elder Justice Act will enhance our knowledge about abuse of our seniors in all of its terrible forms. It will elevate elder abuse to the national stage. We cannot solve this problem if we do not understand it, we do not know how it occurs, and we do not begin to use the tools we have already to protect the seniors of this country. Too many of our seniors suffer needlessly. Each year anywhere between

500,000 and 5 million seniors in our country are abused. They are abused, neglected, or exploited, and, sadly, most of those abuses go unreported.

This historical problem will only worsen as 77 million baby boomers begin to age. The Elder Justice Act confronts elder abuse in the same way we combat child abuse and violence against women—through law enforcement, public health programs, and social services at all levels of government. We are not talking about reinventing the wheel, we are talking about using what we have learned in the abuse of children and in the abuse of women and applying those tools to one of our greatest blessings, the elderly of this country.

The bill also establishes research projects to assist in the development of future legislation. The Elder Justice Act will take steps to make older Americans safer in their own homes, in nursing home facilities, in neighborhoods all across this country. It enhances the detection of elder abuse, and it helps seniors recover from abuse after it happens. It increases collaboration between Federal agencies and between Federal, State, local, and private entities, law enforcement, long-term care facilities, consumer advocates, and families to prevent and treat elder abuse.

I urge my colleagues, all of them, to remember those individuals in your life, certainly in your communities, and others who have given so much to this country, whether it was somebody years ago who helped to build this great Nation through education as a teacher, perhaps, an educator; maybe it was building our economy in this country by building a great company or a great effort there; perhaps it was a soldier from years past who defended the rights of this country and our freedoms today. Look back and consider the special people in your life, such as an elderly neighbor or a grandparent. I know there is not a day that goes by in my life that I don't think about those people who have so tremendously affected my life, who have taught me values, and who have shared stories with me, who have helped me become who I am. Each one of us needs to stop and think of those individuals.

Maybe it was a teacher in the first grade. Maybe it was a coach. Maybe it was a music instructor. Maybe it was a Sunday school teacher. Maybe it was a police officer. I think of all those different people who have made a difference in my life, and I want to ensure that as a nation we respect their safety and their ability to live in this country with dignity and security.

I hope all my colleagues will consider however those special people were in their lives, who helped support their dreams, provided wisdom, perhaps, and advice throughout their development—there are millions out there—and each one of us needs to take the time to remember them. It is time for Congress to pass comprehensive legislation to

address elder abuse and protect those in their twilight of life.

I urge my colleagues to take a look in this month of May, when we look in respect and admiration to the older Americans of this country, and provide the kind of law that we have provided for children and for women to protect them from abuse and exploitation.

Mr. President, I yield the floor. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ENERGY

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, a few weeks ago, I came here and said that each week I was going to give a talk on the floor about another piece of the puzzle of why it is so important to pass climate change legislation this year; about how we cannot wait as we see tremendous changes to our environment and our way of life. We need to act and we need to act now.

Last summer, I took a trip to Greenland with other members of the Environment and Public Works Committee to see firsthand the effects of global climate change. One of the scientists traveling with us described Greenland as a canary in the coal mine when it comes to global warming.

Greenland has lost an amount of ice in 1 year equal to two times all the ice on the Alps. People in Greenland are planting potatoes in places where they used to run sled dogs on the ice. What we saw on that trip only confirmed for us what the scientific community has now asserted in an overwhelming consensus. Average global temperatures are up 1 degree in the last century. Now, that does not sound like much, but to put it in perspective, they are only up 5 degrees since the height of the Ice Age.

The EPA forecasts an increase of 3 to 8 degrees for the next 100 years. It is up 1 degree in the last century, estimated 3 to 8 degrees in this 100 hundred years. Ice caps are melting, ocean levels are rising, and glaciers are shrinking.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has concluded there is irrefutable evidence of climate change on every continent, with risks to several species and the danger of increasing violent weather events.

When I arrived in the Senate a little over a year ago, people were still debating whether climate change was real; was it actually happening? The debate is over, the facts are in, and now we are finally debating solutions.

I am proud to say it is science that has affected our actions and that this shift in our thinking is because there are people now in this Chamber who

are willing to look at and talk about the science.

Last year in the Energy bill, we raised fuel economy standards for cars and trucks and other vehicles for the first time in years and years, for the first time in decades. The new standard will boost fuel efficiency by 40 percent and cut millions of tons in carbon emissions. And, most importantly, as we look at how much gas costs, it is going to save the average family, depending on how many children they have, something like \$1,000 a year.

So this is not only about environmental issues, this is about economic pocketbook issues as well. In the farm bill agreement the conferees approved last week and this Senate passed, we have important incentives to move farmers toward the next generation of clean, renewable biofuels, using cellulosic crops that can be grown on marginal farmland with minimal chemical input.

This is the next generation of biofuels; using other parts of the corn, looking at switchgrass, prairie grass, things that actually are consistent with conservation and can be good for our environment and can help to wean us off our dependency on foreign oil. Instead of investing in the sultans of Saudi Arabia, we can be investing in the farmers and the workers of this country.

Now it is time for us to take the next crucial step in energy and conservation policy: enact strong, comprehensive climate change legislation, the Lieberman-Warner bill, that will come before the Senate in a few weeks.

I referred a moment ago to our trip to Greenland last summer. But today I wish to discuss a second trip I took recently, that is, around my State, visiting many small towns in the State of Minnesota.

I visited the campus of the University of Minnesota-Morris, where they are building a biomass gasification plant. It turns farm and forest byproducts into gas and produces electricity. Within a year or two, it will meet the heating, cooling, and electricity needs for the entire campus without burning any carbon-emitting fossil fuels. I visited southwestern Minnesota, where I have been many times, where there is a sprawling windmill farm on the rise of land called Buffalo Ridge. You can see towering turbines for miles, and they are now supplying a significant share of Minnesota's power needs—in fact, with the standard enacted on a bipartisan basis by our State legislature, 25 percent by 2025 for renewable energy of all kinds for the provision of electricity. In tiny Starbuck, MN, 10 people left their jobs to join a solar panel factory manufacturing solar panels to make electricity from the Sun. These projects are reducing our dependence on fossil fuels and cutting our emissions of greenhouse gases.

The point I wish to discuss today as part of this week's discussion is that they are creating good jobs. I mention