

an 11-percent popularity rating, because people want to put on their special deals so they can say some statements in a campaign, when we should be focused on small business. We can all say then we helped save this country from another economic collapse because we actually invested in the people who build jobs, who work every single day. As we sit here and wrangle over a couple of amendments, they are trying to make their businesses survive.

I was not planning to speak. I just got a little agitated. Again, as a new Member I get so frustrated with all these political gimmicks they want to add on the bills when we should be focused on one thing. Small business is what we need to protect. I have been in the small business world. I have taken out these 7(a) loans that SBA does. I have dealt with the 504 loans. I have seen the impact in my State, tripling the amount of small business loans because we made adjustments in the Recovery Act that you are now trying to extend. It works. It actually creates real jobs.

For us to sit down here and have the other side come down and say we are killing time—they are killing small business every day.

I got a little agitated. I wanted to come down and say my piece. As a person who had my first business license at the age of 16 and still continue to have business licenses today—my wife is a small business owner—we understand what businesses go through.

When the chairman of the Finance Committee talked about the 179 depreciation, accelerate it, that is a huge benefit. If you can write off \$250,000 in the first year and put in the 30-percent tax bracket, that is a \$75,000-plus savings, hard cash now that small businesses can generate and put into their businesses. I don't know how many people on the other side have been in small businesses and have had to struggle and deal with their bankers and deal with tax returns and all that. I have. These provisions will make a difference and create jobs, not only today but in the future.

I commend the chairwoman for what she is doing. I agree, it is a simple solution. Let's move on, save our businesses, save our country, and protect the jobs we need to have in this country.

I will stop there before I go on.

Ms. LANDRIEU. I wish to speak for 2 minutes to close this out.

I thank the Senator from Alaska who has been very forceful in his advocacy for this bill and for lending the experience he has had, before he was a Senator, as a small business owner to help strengthen this bill.

I want to be very clear. As this bill stands right now, this was a bipartisan bill when it came out of the Small Business Committee and the Finance Committee and it still is a bipartisan bill. The only two changes that have been made to this bill we are going to

vote on tomorrow—the only two that were made to this bill—No. 1 was a LeMieux-Landrieu amendment that added a \$30 billion small business lending fund that was voted on on the floor of this Senate by 60 Senators, a voluntary small business lending fund that goes only to small community banks so they can turn around and lend money to Main Street. That is it.

In addition, the Senator was smart enough to also ask for, and it was in that amendment, an antifraud provision to save the taxpayers money from people trying to defraud the Federal Government by not using their credit cards in the right way when they pay for Medicaid and Medicare services. That is an added benefit to the taxpayer.

The third piece of this amendment, to be very clear, was an expansion of an export provision that Senator SNOWE and I jointly put on the bill that the Senator did with Senator KLOBUCHAR. So all three aspects of the LeMieux-Landrieu amendment were jointly supported by Republicans and Democrats and debated for 12 hours on this floor, voted on with 60 votes.

The other amendment that was added to this bill in late night negotiations, which was in public view and public record because it was done at about midnight in public view, was that the leader said—at the request of both Senator from Arkansas, Senator LINCOLN, and the Senator from Georgia, Senator SAXBY CHAMBLISS—he was going to put in a \$1.2 billion disaster loan provision for farmers, not all but many of whom are small businesses.

I know you might say why is that on this bill. This is a small business bill and that is a farming issue. It is an issue important to Members on both sides. There are not going to be that many bills passed between now and the next few days.

Ms. LANDRIEU. The farmers are an important constituency. They have broad-based support. So that is on this bill. That is it; the bill as it came out of Finance, the bill as it came out of Small Business with those two amendments—one put in by the leader on the request of Democrats and Republicans, another one added by a public vote, by the Members of this body. This is a very good bill.

I do not understand why we cannot have eight or five or three. But I want the small business community out there to know, they need to fight for this bill in its current form. We can have a debate on nuclear policy on an energy bill. We can have a debate on tax extenders on the extenders bill. We can have a debate on Tax Code changes on a finance bill. But this is a very bipartisan, strongly supported, broad-based small business bill that is going to affect every Member in a positive way.

I see my friend from Rhode Island. I do not want to take any more time, so I will yield the floor.

I thank my colleague from Washington State who may speak on this and other subjects.

She has been extraordinary. And she knows. She has built a small business that turned out to be quite a big business—very successful. So she has been there before, and she understands what businesses need, the kind of capital they need to grow.

I thank both Senators, particularly the Senator from Rhode Island for his tremendous support.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BEGICH.) The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, shortly I will be going into the closing script for the evening. But before I do that I wanted to first commend the Senator from Louisiana for her tenacity on the subject, Senator CANTWELL of Washington State, Senator MERKLEY of Oregon, and others who have been equally determined. But Senator LANDRIEU has been the front and center voice, and it has been impressive to watch her in action. I wish her success and pledge her my complete support.

ENERGY

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, before I go to the closing script, I just want to take a moment to express my sorrow and dismay that we appear to have walked away from doing anything serious about our energy posture and the hazard that carbon pollution is creating in our climate and in our atmosphere during the remainder of this Congress.

People will tell you differently, and there clearly has been a massive campaign of misinformation and disinformation funded by very powerful special interests. But I think the facts are pretty clear. History will judge us whether we are right or wrong. But I feel safe in history's judgment that if we do not act seriously to do something about our energy picture, there are real consequences coming. There are real consequences coming.

In my home State, you can go to Johnston where there are nurseries, and some of them have been owned for generations. For the first time a few years ago we had a winter bloom. A cherry tree in my yard in Providence bloomed in January. It has not happened before. I spoke to some of the nursery owners, again, going back generations; no recollection of that ever happening. Of course, you start blooming fruit trees out of season, you can put that crop in peril.

If you go out to Narragansett Bay you will see that the winter water temperature of Narragansett Bay has climbed about 4 degrees. That may not seem like much to us who do not live in those waters, but as Perry Jeffries, who is a very distinguished marine biologist at the University of Rhode Island, told me years ago, that is an ecosystem shift. Our fishermen have seen

that ecosystem shift. They used to trawl for winter flounder, a very productive crop in Narragansett Bay. That is almost gone. The population has crashed 90 percent, by press reports. Now they catch scup instead. There is nothing wrong with scup, but it does not pay what winter flounder does, and it has had a real effect on that industry.

If you go out more broadly into our oceans, you go up to the Presiding Officer's home State of Alaska, into the far North, and you see ice caps that have been there for as long as the memory of the Native Alaskans runs. They have been there for as long as the memory of man runs. Now they are receding and disappearing and changing the entire arctic ecosystem.

If you go down to the Southern Ocean and the tropical coral reefs that are the nurseries of the oceans, they are bleaching, they are dying, they are going. Many are gone. If you go way offshore, you find garbage gyres in the Pacific the size of Texas and things we have dumped that are trapped out there.

You find a dead zone in seas around the world, where there simply is not the oxygen left to support life. Wherever you go, you find the acidification of the ocean. The ocean is more acid right now than it has been in 8,000 centuries, and 8,000 centuries is a long time.

We are gambling with some very dangerous consequences when we are not doing something about an ocean whose acid level is the highest it has been in 8,000 centuries. Science tells us that there have been ocean die-offs before. Very bad things can happen.

We need to take prudent action now, and it is not as if this is a choice just between a dangerous future that we need to guard against and costs that we need to impose on society now to protect against those dangers. I would be happy to have that conversation. I think it is still important because those outyear concerns for our grandchildren, our great-grandchildren are so serious that it merits a little bit of effort now and maybe even a little bit of economic pain now to spare them disaster.

But, in point of fact, when you make these investments in a new green, renewable economy, you actually win. It is not lose now to win later, it is win-win because we advance our green economy, we claw back the advantage that the Chinese, the Indians, and others—the European Union—are running away from us right now because we have not adapted our policies to the needs of the moment. You create jobs, thousands and thousands, hundreds of thousands of jobs.

You reduce our deficit; that was the calculation. You clearly enhance our national defense—there is literally no dispute about that—and you take a vital step toward energy independence so we are not in that terrible cycle of funding people who wish us harm and do us harm. Those are all wins.

There are people on this floor who would come and object. We did not have one Republican vote. Not one. Not one. But I think we should have had the fight anyway. I think it is an important fight to have. I think history will look back on this day, and when they are looking at the consequences of our heating planet, of all of the changes in our economy and our habitat in our home States that will accrue, and they look back and say: Why did you do nothing, it will be very hard to have an answer.

I think it would be better to answer: Well, at least we tried. Frankly, I think because the American public is so clearly behind this, if we had taken this to the Senate floor and we had a real fight, if we had the White House behind us and ready for a fight, if the environmental community was willing to put their resources behind this moment and stand up at the same time and join that fight, and if all of the hundreds and thousands of green businesses out there were willing to go to their elected officials and say: This is good for the economy, good for our jobs, good for development, it will help put us back in the fight against China and India and the European Union, I think we could have won. I truly think we could have won.

We probably would have started with maybe 50 Democratic votes. I would hope a few more, but I think once we engaged and all of that pressure came and the logic of the debate began to happen and the magic of the Senate of real debate, of ideas clashing, of back and forth right here in the Chamber began to happen, I think we could have gotten to it.

But even if we had not, we should not have walked away. We should not have just rolled up our tent, given up, and walked away because some fights are worth having even when you lose.

There is a plaque near the pass at Thermopylae where, many years ago, a very small band of Spartans held off the Persian Army for a while. Eventually, they were all killed. There is a burial mound where their bodies rest. On the burial mound there is a plaque. The plaque says: Go tell the Spartans, stranger passing by, that here, faithful to their laws, we lie.

It has been 2,000 years since those Spartans died at the Thermopylae Pass. Today on the Senate floor, a Senator from Rhode Island can talk about what they did that day. If they had said: Gosh, there are an awful lot of Persians there; I do not know if this is such a great idea; we probably are not going to win today; we will just head up into the hills for a while and see how this all works out, well, maybe they would have lived another 10 or 15 years, but they would have lived in shame. They would have lived with a little cloud of disgrace on their consciences for the rest of their days. And 2,000 years later, no one would ever have heard of them. No one would ever have thought of them. There is some-

times value in having a fight even when you cannot win. And if there is value in having a fight when you cannot win, my God, there is value in having a fight when you can.

I think it was worth trying. So I am going to keep pushing and coming to the Senate floor and urging my colleagues to ramp up and let's take on this fight. We have to do it together. We need to have a strong majority of our caucus because not one Republican is prepared to join with us on this issue. Not one.

We have to have the support of the White House. They have to be ready to have a fight. They have to be willing to enter into a fight in which they are not guaranteed a victory. But the principle I believe is, if you set as your own limit that you will not get into any fight you are not guaranteed to win, you are going to miss out on the most important fights of your day. That is no place to be when the stakes are high. So here we are, and there the plaque lies: Go tell the Spartans, stranger passing by, that here, faithful to their laws, we lie.

We could have had a moment. It brings a little bit of goose bumps to my skin to say those words. To think that the sacrifice of those men that many thousands of years ago is still something in our minds, in our history, and in our consciences, I would hope that the day will soon come when we have a similar fight right here and, win or lose, our grandchildren, and our great-grandchildren, looking back on this day when we let them down, will at least know that we tried; that faithful to their benefit, faithful to their good lives, we tried.

NORTHERN ILLINOIS FLOODING

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, Illinois, over the weekend, had torrential rains hit our State. They took a terrible toll on already strained water and flood control systems across Illinois. In a matter of hours, Chicago and northwestern Illinois were pounded by nearly record amounts of rainfall. An estimated 60 billion gallons of rain fell on Chicago Friday night. I was driving in. I was there. My wife was struggling to come in from Washington, and it took her all night to make it to Chicago. It led to flash flooding, a lot of evacuation, and lot of property damage.

The rain actually started Thursday night. By Friday morning, we had 6 inches of rain and flood conditions. Another intense rain began again on Friday and didn't let up until Saturday morning. In Joe Daviess County, at the northwest corner of our State, more than 12 inches fell during the course of the weekend. Roads are closed in Joe Daviess, bridges are out, and the county—along with several other counties in the region—have declared a state of disaster as they focus on cleanup and restoring basic services.

Yesterday, I talked to Mayor Larry Stebbins of Savannah and to Sheriff