

is protected by less than a dozen feet of sand. The road provides access for emergency vehicles and it lies on top of the water main. These are not easy concerns for communities with limited resources and lives and livelihoods at risk.

Geo-engineering solutions have been theorized to keep the temperature of the planet in check as a result of global climate change by blocking in various ways the heat of the Sun. These notions may seem somewhat farfetched, but even given that, they will not stop the chemical process of acidification of our oceans. Only curbing global carbon dioxide emissions can do that.

Sadly, our government in Washington these days responds more to dollars than to truth, and the dirty energy dollars are on the march this campaign season. Over the weekend, the New York Times analyzed 138 energy-related campaign ads aired on television. It estimated that over \$153 million has been spent this year to promote coal, argue for more oil and gas drilling, and to attack clean energy. With nearly 7 weeks to go before this Presidential election, 2012 ads promoting fossil fuels are nearly 150 percent higher than 4 years ago, and that is with 7 weeks to go, the peak buying season.

Other disturbing details emerged from the New York Times article. Governor Romney, his PAC, and the RNC have received at least \$13 million in campaign contributions from fossil fuel industry executives or related groups. Governor Romney has accepted \$3 million in contributions from Oxbow, a coal company controlled by William Koch, a brother of David Koch.

Nature could not be giving us clearer warnings. Whatever higher power gave us our advanced human capacity for perception, calculation, analysis, deduction, and foresight has laid out before us more than enough information to make the right decisions. These God-given human capacities provide us everything we need to act responsibly if only we will.

But the polluting special interests appear to rule here. The party of Theodore Roosevelt, the great conservationist; the party of President Nixon, who founded the EPA; the party of John Chafee of Rhode Island, who was instrumental in the passage of the Clean Water Act and the Clean Air Act; and the party of Russell Train who, as I mentioned earlier, died this week at the age of 92 after a distinguished career in environmental protection in the Republican Party—that party has now become the servant and handmaiden—perhaps “paid consort” would be a better way to say it given the money involved—of polluting special interests.

All of this money can alter how Congress behaves, and all of this money can influence the laws we pass, but the laws of nature are not subject to repeal no matter how much special interest money flows into campaign coffers. The laws of chemistry don't care about

the filibuster. The laws of physics don't care how Senators vote. Nature will work its will and one day there will be an accounting.

Madam President, I yield the floor, and I note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. MCCASKILL). The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

THE 47 PERCENT

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Madam President, this week the leader of the Republican Party—their candidate for President—was seen in a video speaking at a fundraising meeting with wealthy campaign donors in Florida. In the privacy of the event, Mitt Romney spilled to the donors there what he really thinks about nearly half of the American people. That is almost 150 million people. He disparagingly said 47 percent of Americans support President Obama simply because they do not owe Federal income taxes or they are getting benefits from a government program.

Just to make sure there is no misquote here, this is Mitt Romney's statement. He said:

There are 47 percent who are with him—

“Him” being President Obama

who are dependent on government, who believe that they are victims. . . . my job—

Mitt Romney says—

is not to worry about those people. I'll never convince them that they should take personal responsibility and care for their lives.

This is coming from the leader of the Republican Party, a man who is running to represent every American—all 310 million—from the Nation's highest office. These comments are disturbing coming from anybody, but coming from him they are a disgrace. In plain English, he says that if you do not pay Federal income tax or you receive a government benefit, then you do not take responsibility personally for your life.

So who are these 47 percent for whom Mitt Romney and his Republican friends feel such contempt? They are parents who work hard every day to give their families a better future. They are seniors who helped build this country and now depend on Social Security to keep food on the table. They are veterans who risked their lives in Iraq or Afghanistan. As it says on this chart, “Who Mitt Romney Says Doesn't ‘Take Personal Responsibility And Care For Their Lives.’” Working families with children, senior citizens, veterans. Mitt Romney seems to think they are a bunch of lazies just taking money from the wealthy. So today I want to take a closer look at some of these Americans who Mitt Romney

says do not take personal responsibility and care for their lives.

Let's first look at working families. He says:

I'll never convince them that they should take personal responsibility and care for their lives.

What kind of contemptuous statement is that? We are talking about nearly 150 million people.

Millions of parents across the country work long hours, struggling to put food on the table and clothes on their children's back. A family of four making as much as \$46,000 a year often will not owe any Federal income taxes. So these families would be part of the 47 percent of Americans whom Mitt Romney accuses of being lazy and irresponsible. These families deserve our support, not our scorn. They did not ask anybody for a handout, and they certainly do not deserve Romney's condemnation.

Let's now look at another group of Americans who by Mitt Romney's definition are victims who do not take responsibility for their lives: senior citizens.

More than half of those who do not pay Federal income or payroll taxes are senior citizens on fixed incomes. He says, “I will never convince them that they should take personal responsibility and care for their lives.” People showing some age, they ought to take personal responsibility for their lives. Romney seems to think that because these seniors depend on Social Security they are not willing to take personal responsibility for their lives. Mitt Romney has no business lecturing these people, these Americans about personal responsibility.

These seniors worked, paid taxes their whole lives, fought to defend our Nation's freedom, and built the greatest middle class the world has ever known. It is Mitt Romney who needs a lesson from them about personal responsibility.

Let's look at another group of Americans that Romney has dismissed, troops and veterans. When we send our troops into harm's way, their combat pay is not taxed. When veterans come back injured, physically and emotionally, we don't ask them to pay taxes on their disability benefits. Should they pay taxes on these benefits in order to be honorable in Mitt Romney's eyes?

I believe they have already given their country more than their share. If you look at this picture, it tells you so much. In that hug a returning veteran gets, glad to see his family, they are glad to see him standing straight, able to communicate. Romney says, “I can never convince them that they should take personal responsibility and care for their lives.” Imagine that, for him to make statements such as that to include veterans. We give our veterans government benefits that they earn through their service. They get education benefits tax free under a new GI bill. Many receive health care from the VA and some get housing assistance.

Never convince them that they should take personal responsibility and care for their lives?

What would Mitt Romney say to veterans who do not owe Federal income taxes or receive a government benefit? We have seen the tape. He says: They are victims who could never be convinced to take personal responsibility for their lives. Mitt Romney must have known many who served in Vietnam during his period of maturity. Did he think of them who served in Vietnam as not doing their share, not taking personal responsibility?

I am a veteran. I take offense at that. These men and women risked everything fighting for our freedoms and our rights, and we ought to do everything we can to support them. These heroes know a great deal more than Mitt Romney about personal responsibility and sacrifice. Mitt Romney was simply saying what many in today's Republican Party truly believe. He has pulled back the curtain on their agenda. He has revealed the stark choice facing the American people. America deserves better than a Presidential candidate who dismisses the contribution that half—47 percent, to be more precise—of our fellow Americans make—they get derision and disrespect. That is hardly appropriate for a Presidential candidate to be saying.

He, after all, seeks the job that puts him in charge of the whole 310 million people in America. And yet he has the audacity to say these people are not worthy of honor, worthy of thanks, worthy of their contribution to this country? All this time it was thought that Mitt Romney just did not get it. But it turns out worse than that. He just does not care. He knows what he is saying, and he says it deliberately. He just does not care.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado.

THE FARM BILL

Mr. BENNET. Madam President, I wanted to come to the floor today to speak on a different subject, which is to demonstrate my support for the Sportsmen's package compiled by Senator TESTER from Montana. I know the bill was discussed on the floor last night and the request to pass this package of bipartisan bills was objected to, which is horribly unfortunate. I hope we are going to have the opportunity to vote on the measure before we leave town.

Sportsmen and women are an essential part of the fabric of our country, the fabric of my home State of Colorado. This community supports millions of jobs and contributes billions of dollars annually to our economy, and they are often the drivers of our most important conservation initiatives across our rich landscape.

While serving on the Senate Agriculture Committee, I have enjoyed working with sportsmen to craft a re-

vamped conservation title in the farm bill. Some people forget that the farm bill conservation title is the largest single legislative vehicle for the programs and resources that help us conserve private land all across this country, all across the western United States. It enhances vital wildlife habitat across the country. Sportsmen have always played a vital role in crafting that bipartisan title. That was exactly the way they participated this time as well.

While it is not the reason I am here today—I want to talk about Senator TESTER's bill—I do want to take the chance to say once again that in my view the House of Representatives ought to pass the 5-year farm bill. We passed a bipartisan bill out of this Senate with well over 70 votes, Democrats and Republicans. On the committee we worked together for over 2 years to create the only bipartisan deficit reduction that has happened in this Congress in either the House or the Senate. We got rid of direct payments for producers, which was an important reform. We strengthened the conservation title, as I was saying earlier. There is absolutely no reason the House should not pass this bill.

Over the break, I traveled 2,500 miles around the State of Colorado, rural communities all over my State, and no one wanted to know what was going on in the Presidential election. No one wanted to talk about anything except why can't the farm bill get passed? There has never been a time in modern history that a committee in the House, in this case the House Agriculture Committee, passed out a bill in a bipartisan way and it cannot even get to the floor for a vote. That has never happened before. Something is wrong over there.

I can tell you that my farmers and ranchers in Colorado who are going through the worst drought in a generation want people to knock the politics off and pass this bill. Bipartisan, it is real deficit reduction, and it is a good bill. We are doing an incredible disservice, as I said to our farmers and ranchers, and also our sportsmen by failing to act on this bipartisan legislation.

There was a time in my life when I had the chance to live in Montana for a brief time, Senator TESTER's home State, and I thought of myself as a sportsman then. I used to fish a lot, chopped a lot of wood out there. These days I spend a lot more time on airplanes and chasing my three daughters to soccer games, but some day I will get back there. That brings me to the importance of the package, this package for our Nation's sportswomen and men. The provisions in Senator TESTER's bill represent some of the best bipartisan ideas out there to promote hunting, fishing, and recreational access, bills from both sides of the aisle that have been hanging around here for a long time and now need to get passed. The measure would require that 1.5

percent of annual Land and Water Conservation Funds go to provide public access to lands for hunting and for fishing. I am a huge supporter of the Land and Water Conservation Fund. This provision builds on the fine legacy of that program.

The bill also contains a provision that is homegrown from our sportsmen in Colorado. Section 103 provides certainty and parity for America's bow hunters, that they can cross National Park Service land with their bows to legally hunt nearby lands outside the park boundaries. This access is provided to hunters with firearms but not to hunters with bows.

I started working on this issue over 2 years ago when a Colorado bow hunter encountered a problem. After 14 years of trying, this particular hunter had finally drawn a license to hunt elk in the premium game unit in northwest Colorado. He scouted the unit, found the area he wanted to hunt and he was all set to go until Federal officials told him he could not cross a narrow strip, a very narrow strip, of Park Service land to hunt the BLM land next to it. This is despite the fact that hunters with loaded firearms can cross Park Service land legally and without applying for a permit.

The problem with this particular hunter is what brought this issue to my office. But the broader point of the provision is to provide access for our sportsmen and women. We know that we lose thousands of acres of land every day to development, some of it important wildlife habitat. We need to provide all Americans reasonable access to the land that we have set aside for preservation and wildlife habitat, bow hunters included.

That is why I was pleased to increase funding for the Voluntary Public Access Program when we marked up the farm bill. That is why I am proud to have worked with Senator TESTER to include this provision in his package that I hope we will be voting on soon.

The bow hunting provision was carefully tailored to ensure that hunting of wildlife within Park Service boundaries remains illegal. Yet the measure still provides reasonable access, which is so important to the sportsmen in Colorado and across the country.

I have received a letter of support for the Bennet-Tester bow hunting from Colorado stakeholder groups across the spectrum, including the Colorado Wildlife Federation, the Rocky Mountain Bighorn Sheep Society, Pheasants Forever, and the Bull Moose Sportsmen's Alliance, and the list goes on. I ask unanimous consent to have this letter printed in the RECORD.

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

DECEMBER 7, 2011.

Hon. MICHAEL BENNET,
Senator of Colorado, Russell Senate Office
Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR BENNET: The Credit Card Accountability Responsibility and Disclosure Act of 2009, PL 111-24, permitted concealed carry in the National Parks System