

hopeful the Senate will agree with me on a bipartisan basis that Judge McShane is qualified to serve as the U.S. district court judge for the District of Oregon.

As I indicated, Judge McShane has a heart for people, a head for the law, and a high-minded sense of justice. We have a long history in our State, as I think the President pro tempore of the Senate is aware, of some of those who have been part of our network of distinguished judges, and I have every confidence Judge McShane will join that list.

I thank Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman LEAHY and Ranking Member GRASSLEY for advancing Judge McShane's confirmation through the committee. I also wish to thank Leader REID and Minority Leader MCCONNELL for bringing this nomination to the floor, and I look forward to the vote we will have later today.

I hope my colleagues, on a bipartisan basis, will vote to confirm Judge Michael McShane as U.S. district court judge for the District of Oregon.

I yield the floor and note the absence of a quorum.

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. STABENOW. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is now closed.

AGRICULTURE REFORM, FOOD, AND JOBS ACT OF 2013

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to the consideration of S. 954, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 954) to reauthorize agriculture programs through 2018.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I wish to thank our majority leader, Republican leader, and all the Members for allowing us in the Senate to move forward today on this very important bill. I want to thank my ranking member Senator THAD COCHRAN for his friendship and his leadership. I want to thank all of the members of the committee for working together to write this important legislation. Also, I want to thank our staffs on both sides of the aisle. We have excellent staffs who have worked together, and I know we will continue to work together as we move this legislation through.

Our bill, the Agriculture Reform, Food, and Jobs Act of 2013, is critical

to the 16 million Americans whose jobs rely on a strong agricultural economy. Agriculture has been one of the bright spots as our economy is getting back on track. In fact, it is one of the few areas where we actually have a trade surplus, where we are exporting more than we are importing. This means jobs for us in America.

The farm bill is a jobs bill. It is a jobs bill, a trade bill, a reform bill, a conservation bill, and it is a kitchen table bill. Thanks to the farm bill, families all across America will sit down around a table tonight and enjoy the bounty of the world's safest, most abundant, and most affordable food supply. Those who need temporary help to feed their families during an economic crisis will get help as well. This is a bill that reflects our best values as Americans.

It is easy to take agriculture for granted. It is easy for many of us to forget the food we eat doesn't come from the supermarket, as some folks may think. The food we eat comes from the skill and the efforts of the men and women who work hard from sunrise to sunset, day in and day out, to put food on our tables. Too often I believe we take them for granted as well. Most of us don't have to worry about how many days it has been since the last rainfall or whether it is going to freeze in May after the fruit trees are blooming. Most of us don't have to worry about decisions and weather conditions around the world and how they affect our livelihood here at home.

That is why we have what we call the farm bill. We have a farm bill because farmers are in the riskiest business in the world. We saw that last year as our country was in the grip of the worst drought in generations. We saw this as ranchers had to cull their herds because they couldn't get enough food or water for their cattle. We saw all across the country that farmers lost their crops in late spring freezes that wiped out cherry and apple crops in Michigan and other parts of the country. That is why the top goal of the agriculture reform bill is risk management. We are reforming farm programs, ending direct payments and other subsidies that have no relationship to risk and instead giving farmers market-based risk management tools. That is the hallmark of this farm bill.

We want to make sure a farm that has been passed on for generations doesn't face bankruptcy because of a drought or other events outside the farmer's control. We also want to make sure that when there is a drought we are conserving our precious soil and water resources. When it comes to conservation, the farm bill is risk management for the whole country. Conservation programs in the farm bill make sure our soil doesn't blow away and our waters aren't polluted by runoff.

In many parts of the country last year we had a drought that was worse than the Dust Bowl, but we didn't have a dust bowl. We didn't have out-of-control erosion, and that is because the

farm bill did what it was supposed to do in conservation. Soil stayed on the ground. It is easy to take that for granted as well.

The farm bill is our country's largest investment in land and water conservation on private lands, and the farm bill gives farmers tools to strengthen wildlife habitat. I had the opportunity this weekend, with my gracious host, the Senator from Mississippi, to visit a wildlife preserve program and wetlands preserve program, and Senator COCHRAN is responsible for those parts of the farm bill. We had an opportunity to go out on a beautiful piece of flat land in the Mississippi delta and see where ducks were coming back, quail were coming back, and habitat was beginning to flourish because of efforts to support these important resources for the future. The farmer involved in the property said he felt he was in partnership with the USDA and making a commitment for his children and future generations through conservation. This is a real source of pride for us as we look at this 5-year farm bill.

I am pleased the bill before us includes a new historic agreement between conservation groups and commodity groups around conservation and crop insurance. These folks from very different perspectives sat down together, listened to one another, and worked out an agreement that will preserve land and water resources for generations to come.

The farm bill helps farmers improve 1.9 million acres of land for wildlife habitat. Healthy wildlife habitat and clean fishable waters are not only good for our environment but they also support hunting, fishing, and all the other great outdoor recreation which benefits our economy and creates jobs. We just plain have fun doing it in Michigan. In fact, outdoor recreation supports over 6 million jobs alone. That is a big deal.

We also continue our support for specialty crops, fruits, vegetables, and those crops that make up about half of the cash receipts of our country. Organic agriculture is a growing part of agriculture. We expand farmers markets in local food hubs to encourage schools and businesses to support their local farmers by purchasing locally grown food and creating more local jobs. We expand the availability of fresh fruits and vegetables that are so essential in schools and community food programs.

We also strengthen rural development financing for small businesses. Once you get outside of the cities in Michigan and all across our country, every single community in Michigan, outside of our big cities, gets support for jobs through something we call rural development, financing for small businesses, for water and sewer projects, road projects, housing efforts for families, a whole wide variety of things we do through this economic arm in the USDA called rural development.

We also expand the energy title to encourage support for new jobs in biobased manufacturing, which is an exciting new effort. In addition to biofuels, we now can use agricultural products and byproducts to replace petroleum and other chemicals in manufacturing. There is a huge new opportunity for jobs, as well as supporting our environment by doing these things. There is no doubt that the farm bill is a jobs bill.

This bill also continues to focus on the issue that has taken so much of our time this year, last year, and the year before, and that is cutting the deficit and getting our Nation's fiscal house back in order. We get rid of unnecessary subsidies such as the Direct Payment Program that sends a check to folks regardless of whether they are even farming a particular crop anymore, streamlining programs to cut redtape, and cracking down on fraud and abuse. In fact, we eliminate over 100 different programs or authorizations that either were duplicating something else or didn't make sense to do anymore. I think that is the way we ought to be cutting spending and creating savings.

Altogether, including the cuts that took effect already this year, we are able to cut spending by about \$24 billion. That is more than double the cuts proposed by the Simpson-Bowles Commission and last year's Gang of Six that worked on deficit reduction. And I want to underscore that this is four times—four times—more than is required by the arbitrary across-the-board sequestration cuts. So we in agriculture take a back seat to no one in our commitment to doing our part in making tough decisions and setting priorities to reduce the deficit.

This bill represents the most significant reform of American agriculture in decades, in my judgment. We are putting caps on payments to farmers and closing loopholes that allowed people who were not actually farming to receive payments. We are strengthening crop insurance, which we heard from farmers was the No. 1 risk management tool for them. It is important we strengthen it and protect it as we move through this process.

The agriculture reform bill includes disaster assistance for our ranchers and farmers as well who cannot receive crop insurance—livestock owners and others in areas that cannot receive crop insurance.

We made sure our food assistance programs are accountable, that there is integrity in our programs, so we continue to build on the integrity that is already there by cracking down on abuses and misuse. We made sure our changes would not remove one single needy family. It is not about hurting folks, it is about making sure there is not abuse, and that is what we address.

Let me say when we look at crop insurance, it is there for disasters for our farmers, and it goes up when there are a lot of disasters. That is when there is

cost. Then it goes down when things are going better, and it is the same for food assistance for families. Costs go up during bad times, as we have seen over the last number of years, but now CBO tells us those costs are going down. Why? Because the economy is getting better and people are able to go back to work. That is how it is supposed to work, and that is how it is working.

Last year we in the Senate passed a farm bill with strong bipartisan support. We didn't take the 16 million Americans who work in agriculture for granted, we didn't take our land and water resources for granted, and we stood for families all across the country who had fallen on hard times.

Unfortunately, at that time the House of Representatives did not follow our lead. They allowed the farm bill to expire at the end of last year, which is why we are here again working through this process.

I appreciate the way we have gotten to this point in a bipartisan way. We have worked very hard to make sure every part of agriculture is addressed in terms of their needs and the risk management tools in this bill.

I thank my colleague from Mississippi Senator COCHRAN, who is the ranking member of our committee. He and his staff have worked diligently and in a bipartisan way, and that has allowed us to get to this point. So I thank him for that.

I am looking forward to working with colleagues to pass this bill as soon as possible, and we look forward to working with colleagues on amendments throughout this week.

I see my distinguished colleague, our ranking member, is here, and I will turn to him in just a moment. I do want to place one amendment in order at this point, and then we can proceed with our discussions. This is an amendment we have cleared on both sides on behalf of Senator CANTWELL.

AMENDMENT NO. 919

Mr. President, I call up amendment No. 919.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the amendment.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Michigan [Ms. STABENOW], for Ms. CANTWELL, proposes an amendment No. 919.

Ms. STABENOW. I ask unanimous consent that further reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To allow Indian tribes to participate in certain soil and water conservation programs)

At the end of subtitle F of title II, add the following:

SEC. 25 _____. SOIL AND WATER RESOURCE CONSERVATION.

(a) CONGRESSIONAL POLICY AND DECLARATION OF PURPOSE.—Section 4 of the Soil and Water Resources Conservation Act of 1977 (16 U.S.C. 2003) is amended—

(1) in subsection (b), by inserting “and tribal” after “State” each place it appears; and

(2) in subsection (c)(2), by inserting “, tribal,” after “State”.

(b) CONTINUING APPRAISAL OF SOIL, WATER, AND RELATED RESOURCES.—Section 5 of the Soil and Water Resources Conservation Act of 1977 (16 U.S.C. 2004) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)(4), by striking “and State” and inserting “, State, and tribal”;

(2) in subsection (b), by inserting “, tribal” after “State” each place it appears; and

(3) in subsection (c)—

(A) by striking “State soil” and inserting “State and tribal soil”; and

(B) by striking “local” and inserting “local, tribal,”.

(c) SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION PROGRAM.—Section 6(a) of the Soil and Water Resources Conservation Act of 1977 (16 U.S.C. 2005(a)) is amended—

(1) by inserting “, tribal” after “State” each place it appears; and

(2) by inserting “, tribal,” after “private”.

(d) UTILIZATION OF AVAILABLE INFORMATION AND DATA.—Section 9 of the Soil and Water Resources Conservation Act of 1977 (16 U.S.C. 2008) is amended by inserting “, tribal” after “State”.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I now take the opportunity to turn to my friend, a great agricultural leader in the Senate.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Mississippi.

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I am flattered by the kind remarks of the distinguished Senator from Michigan and am pleased and honored to serve with her on the Senate Agriculture Committee. She chairs that committee with a sense of responsibility for the subject matter, which is very important to our Nation's farmers and all consumers in America as well, but also to the fellow members of our committee—Republicans and Democrats—who serve on the committee and who have worked together to put a bill before the Senate that continues to authorize programs of the Federal Government that benefit landowners and those who work to conserve the resources of soil and water that help nurture our great agricultural sector that produces a bountiful amount of fruits and vegetables and marketable commodities that are sold in international trade at competitive prices.

It is a great success story. I am tempted to say a great American success story because it truly is. It is the backbone of our Nation's economy. So it is serious business at the same time it provides jobs, food to eat, grain to harvest, to export, and cotton and the fibers that come from it that clothe and dress millions of people in our Nation and around the world. So bringing this bill to the floor is a point of achievement, and with gratitude we point out the leadership of the distinguished chairman.

We have enjoyed her strong leadership and her keen sense of awareness of how to manage legislation such as this and present it to the Senate, as she has just done, and that is quite impressive. We are very fortunate to have her serving in this capacity.

We have recommended a bill that contains some major reforms of the farm programs that come within the jurisdiction of our committee. For example, the bill reduces authorized spending by \$24 billion. It includes \$6 billion in sequestration cuts. These represent real savings. We know we have been confronting a deficit crisis, a fiscal policy management crisis, and this bill does its part.

With the authority it has over the law governing the subject matter, we have moved to eliminate direct payments to farmers, which has amounted in the past to \$40 billion. There are reforms in this legislation of the crop insurance title. The bill recommends adoption of reforms that limit payments to producers. Conservation programs have been streamlined in this legislation and consolidated.

The committee has crafted reforms in the nutrition title to eliminate waste, fraud, and abuse in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. These are big challenges, and these challenges have been met with a recognition that there are people who need the support of programs such as this—schoolchildren who are attending school and getting the benefit of a reduced price and, in some cases, free meals at school. This has made major contributions to the quality of work and the degree and level of education that children are able to absorb and benefit from, and it is tied to these programs.

The committee has dealt with conservation, as I have mentioned, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, and throughout the bill we see reflected a broad bipartisan level of support and an approach that accommodates interests represented by all the members of our committee. So I think we have produced, with the leadership of the chairman, a responsible but fair bill, and I am pleased to recommend to the Senate that it should approve the bill. It deserves our support.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss one of the most important and significant reforms of our Nation's agriculture in decades. The Agriculture Reform, Food, and JOBS Act of 2013, known around here as the farm bill, is the product of months and months of policy discussions and late-night deliberations, with special thanks to the chairman of the committee, Senator STABENOW from Michigan, and the ranking member, Senator COCHRAN of Mississippi. I thank them both for their good work, and also a special thanks to Katharine Ferguson in my office for her good work on this legislation.

There is a reason people across the country—farmers and business owners, faith leaders, and county commissioners—are paying attention to this legislation. It is a farm bill, it is a food bill, it is a nutrition bill, it is an eco-

nomic development bill, it is a rural development bill, and it is a conservation bill all in one. In my State one out of seven jobs is related to food and agriculture. To keep our economy moving forward, the farm bill must remain a priority in Congress.

We did our job last year on this legislation. Unfortunately, the House of Representatives didn't, but I think this year it will when we pass overwhelmingly a similar bill to the one which passed by a vote of 64 to 35 last year.

The bill saves more than \$20 billion while maintaining important investments in conservation and nutrition, renewable energy and agricultural research, which is so important to my State, to rural development, to broadband, and all that farm legislation can in fact do for rural development.

In the last 2 years the Senate has considered reform bills that have done more than any farm bill literally in 20 years. We have eliminated direct payments and recoupled eligibility for crop insurance with the expectation that farmers do right by the land.

The work of Chairwoman STABENOW and Ranking Member COCHRAN in committee to keep that coalition together, linking crop insurance with conservation, was especially important. We set tight limits on the amount of support any individual producer can receive.

There is obviously more that can be done, but this bill takes important strides in reforming our farm program. It will increase efforts to improve water quality in Lake Erie—one of the five Great Lakes with the greatest body of fresh water anywhere in the world. It is even perhaps more important to the State of Michigan, the chairwoman's State, than even mine. It will help small towns such as Bryan, Bucyrus, and Bellaire make strategic economic development investments to jumpstart their local economies.

The bill continues efforts to make sure all Americans have enough to eat and access to affordable, healthy, and fresh food.

This is a forward-looking bill, and I was pleased to support it in committee and hope to work with Senate colleagues of both parties in the coming days to make slight improvements as it moves forward.

The centerpiece of the bill's deficit reduction efforts is rooted in reform of the farm safety net. The era of direct payments made annually regardless of need is over.

Across Ohio and the Nation we have heard crop insurance is the most important tool farmers have for managing risk, so this bill improves and preserves crop insurance. We know what that meant last year, particularly as drought hit States such as Ohio and, more severely, States west of my State.

Farmers have said they want a leaner, more efficient market-oriented farm safety net. Taxpayers deserve that too. Last year, Senator THUNE, a

Republican from South Dakota, and Senators DURBIN and Lugar and I proposed the Aggregate Risk and Revenue Management Program, ARRM, streamlining the farm safety net to make it more market oriented.

Instead, the new Agriculture Risk Coverage Program will work with crop insurance to provide farmers the tools they need to manage risk—making payments only when farmers need them most. This program is market oriented, relying on current data. It is more responsive to farmers' needs and is more responsive to taxpayers.

The bill reforms a number of longstanding unjustifiable practices. For the first time this farm bill ends payments to landowners who have nothing to do with farm management. It ends payments to millionaires and puts a firm cap on how much support any farmer can receive from the direct farm support programs each year. This so-called conservation compliance provision reflects a landmark agreement put forward by a number of key commodity and conservation interests and stakeholders.

People who are going to receive federally subsidized crop insurance need to show they are meeting basic conservation requirements. Again, the days of subsidies without conditions and subsidies without responsibility are over. It is an example of what can happen when groups with different perspectives—the commodities farmers and the conservationists—come together to listen to each other. By re-linking crop insurance subsidies with good environmental practices, this bill makes our farm safety net more defensible and protects our natural resources.

As I said, this farm bill takes great strides toward better, leaner, smart farm policy, but it is also a work in process. A key difference between this year's bill versus the one we passed last year is the inclusion of the Adverse Market Payments Program—the AMP Program—that, to be candid, is something important to southern growers but not in line with what I believe Ohioans want to see and what I hear from Ohio farmers.

I worked closely with colleagues from the middle of the country to make sure this AMP Program is as market-oriented as possible, but it was a battle not wholly won and something I want to see modified. We cannot have farm programs in one part of the country become more market-oriented while others do not.

The Agriculture Reform, Food, and Jobs Act supports farmers but also provide a lifesaving safety net to American families who have fallen on hard times. The SNAP program now serves 47 million Americans, more than half of whom are children and seniors. Along with unemployment insurance, SNAP is the primary form of assistance we provide Americans who have fallen on tough times. Just understand and be certain that many of these families are people with full-time and part-

time jobs who simply do not make enough money to get along.

Some of my colleagues will point out the rapid increase in SNAP enrollment over the past few years. This is to be expected since it mirrors the downturn in the economy, the unemployment levels, and the fact that for 10 years most people in this country have not had a raise. As costs go up, it hits the lowest income people the hardest. That is the biggest reason people have relied on food stamps. This is evidence that SNAP is working. As our economy is recovering, SNAP enrollment will decrease.

More telling is that today some 50 million Americans still live under the Federal poverty level. The number of Americans who rely on SNAP tells me we should not be gutting, we should not be undercutting, as a number of my colleagues in the House of Representatives want to do. We should not be cutting Federal nutrition programs. What we should be doing is enacting better economic policies that create jobs and reduce inequality and enable Americans to put food on the table without assistance.

This bill cuts \$4 billion from SNAP. That is already \$4 billion too much. I appreciate the chairwoman's efforts to make that \$4 billion cut as painless as possible in terms of benefits SNAP beneficiaries receive. Again, most of these—a huge number of these SNAP beneficiaries are in working families. A huge number of them are children. A huge number of them are senior citizens. It goes without saying that a bill with the level of the cuts to SNAP—some \$20 billion included in the House bill—will not get my support and will not pass muster in the Senate.

While we also work to preserve SNAP, we can make sure our nutrition programs are smarter. The farm bill makes important strides toward aligning our food and our farm and our economic policy. Agriculture has always been an important engine of economic growth. I said at the outset that one out of seven jobs in my State is related to agriculture and food. Shortening the supply chain benefits farmers and families, meaning that the more people eat what is grown locally, the better it is for the economy, the better it is for their health, and the better it is for the environment. It helps keep money in the local economy and helps build the economy, especially of rural communities in my State and across the country.

This farm bill affects every American every day. It is a deficit reduction bill, it is a jobs bill, and it is a bipartisan economic relief bill. I again commend Chairwoman STABENOW and Ranking Member COCHRAN for their work in drafting this legislation. I especially appreciate the staff of individual members of the committee, their staffs, for their work.

I urge my colleagues to work together and break the impasse that keeps us from making progress on this legislation.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. Before the Senator from Ohio leaves, I want to thank him. He has been an invaluable member of our committee. We would not have the agricultural risk coverage portion and the yield loss coverage portion in this bill were it not for his work, he and Senator THUNE working together. We used their bill as the basis for this.

He has also been the champion of rural development. We have investments in rural development we would not have had without his involvement, as well as other efforts in the energy title and throughout the bill. I thank him. We are very lucky to have him as a member of the committee.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Mississippi.

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCAIN. 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.

The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to call up the Feinstein-McCain amendment No. 923 and make it pending.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection?

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I just indicated to the Senator from Arizona that while I have no objection to having a vote on his amendment, I ask that he not proceed with his request at this time. We have an amendment that is pending, and we also have a number of crop insurance amendments we want to do together. I will not object to voting on his amendment, there is no attempt not to do that, but at this point I do object to having his amendment as the pending amendment.

I ask my colleague through the Chair if he would be willing to work with us. I will commit to having a vote on his amendment. This is not an attempt to not vote on his amendment. The ranking member and I have talked, and we are certainly committed to voting on the Senator's amendment; however, we would like to have an opportunity to set up how we will be voting on a series of amendments.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, if I heard the Senator correctly, she committed to a vote on this amendment, correct?

Ms. STABENOW. That is correct.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to engage in a colloquy.

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

Mr. MCCAIN. Does that mean we would vote on this early on?

Ms. STABENOW. I don't know the exact timing of the vote. There is no attempt to delay. We are just getting started at this point. I will be happy to work with the Senator from Arizona. We are certainly not trying to postpone it to be the last vote. We can certainly do it earlier rather than later, but we would like to have some flexibility to look at a group of amendments we might vote on which relate to the same subject area.

I believe I can speak on behalf of the ranking member in saying we are committed to a vote on the amendment and want to work with Senator MCCAIN as to a time.

Mr. MCCAIN. I thank the distinguished manager.

Since I have the floor, I would like to make a brief statement about the amendment. I understand the objection, and I would rely on the good offices of the manager of the bill, as well as the ranking member, that we would have a vote early on in regard to this amendment and not at the last minute when we are trying to complete the votes on the amendments to the bill.

The amendment by Senator FEINSTEIN and me would eliminate taxpayer-subsidized crop insurance for tobacco. The Congressional Budget Office estimates this amendment would save taxpayers \$333 million. Again, that is the estimate of the Congressional Budget Office.

It might surprise Americans to know that despite efforts to end traditional farm subsidies for tobacco producers, government handouts for tobacco lives on in the form of highly subsidized crop insurance. Since 2004 we have spent more than \$276 million on insurance subsidies for tobacco. This is in addition to the \$10 billion financed under the tobacco buyout law the Congress passed a decade ago. That law was paid for by assessments on cigarette manufacturers, and it was meant to wean tobacco growers from farm subsidies by buying out their growing quotas. Well, it turns out that Joe Camel's nose has been under the tent all this time in the form of these hidden crop insurance subsidies.

As my colleagues know, crop insurance in general has a dubious reputation as a "safety net" for farmers because it largely insures against revenue loss instead of crop loss due to weather or pests. According to the Congressional Research Service, taxpayers spend about \$14 billion a year to subsidize about 60 percent of the cost of crop insurance premiums. The Federal Government also reimburses private crop insurance companies for about 25 percent of their "administrative and operating" costs.

We have identified eight types of tobacco that are eligible for crop insurance: tobacco Maryland, tobacco flue cured, tobacco fire cured, tobacco dark air, tobacco cigar wrapper, tobacco cigar filler, tobacco cigar binder, and

tobacco burley. All of these crops remain extremely profitable even without their old farm subsidies.

According to reports by the Wall Street Journal and CNBC, tobacco is 10 times more profitable than corn and most American tobacco is exported. In fact, the value of American tobacco is at a 10-year high since Congress ended traditional tobacco subsidies. It makes no sense to subsidize tobacco insurance considering how well the free market system is working for tobacco producers.

I will have a longer statement on this, Mr. President.

Last year the eight separate tobacco insurance products cost \$34.7 million in taxpayer subsidies. The USDA—Department of Agriculture—data shows that more than \$276 million in taxpayer subsidies has been spent on this tobacco subsidy program since 2004.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, cigarette smoking adds \$96 billion to domestic health care expenses and costs the American economy \$97 billion in lost productivity annually. Secondhand smoke adds another \$10 billion in health care costs and lost productivity.

Clearly, we should be doing nothing to subsidize production of tobacco. I am not saying we should ban the growth of tobacco in America; that is a decision farmers and the market make. But for us to continue to subsidize when these enormous costs are borne by the American people in terms of our health and our economy—it is time we ended it.

I thank the distinguished manager and ranking member for their commitment to having an up-or-down vote on this amendment.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. STABENOW. 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.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I would like to take a moment this afternoon to talk about the importance of crop insurance as a risk management tool. I think we will probably have a lot of discussion on the floor about crop insurance, but, as I said, as a matter of policy, we are moving away from direct subsidies. We certainly have not subsidized tobacco growers for a long time, and I would not support doing that.

In general, we are moving away from that into an insurance model where the cost is shared between the Federal Government and growers. We want as many growers as possible to purchase crop insurance rather than have a disaster and then want us to pass a disaster assistance bill. I might add that we didn't have to do that this last time

around despite the worst drought in 50, 60, 70 years because the crop insurance worked this last year. Crop insurance covered the losses. It is a very important public-private sector process and partnership.

One of my concerns about carving it up, having limits or removing one crop over another is that we have been moving away from a general policy of insurance. Going down the road, I think that would have a lot of implications and farmers in general would have great concern about that.

I have a tremendous amount of sympathy and, in fact, agreement with the distinguished Senator from Arizona. I sympathize with what my colleague was saying about tobacco as far as the harm to health and so on. When we look overall at crop insurance, the good news is that less than 1 percent of that whole program—I think substantially less than 1 percent—covers tobacco, so that is a good thing.

The larger question for farmers and all of us across the country is, Are we going to make a commitment broadly to the No. 1 risk management tool for them? Are we going to make sure that as we say we are not going to do subsidies anymore, we listen to what they are saying about having a crop insurance system?

There are parallels between that and flood insurance. So as people are proposing various limits on crop insurance, I think it is important to ask would we put that on other types of insurance, such as flood insurance risks or other things. Insurance deals with risks, and it is more about encouraging farmers to have a stake in the game and to be able to cover part of that risk with their own dollars rather than other types of policies we have debated about subsidies.

As we go forward, there will be a lot of different discussions about crop insurance, and I would ask colleagues to join with us in resisting efforts to eliminate or limit what is a public-private insurance system that is, frankly, working very well.

We are so proud that all of the farm organizations and commodity groups—just about all of them—come together to work with the conservation groups and environmentalists. They say that together they are going to both support an insurance model—a risk management model broadly as a matter of policy for agriculture—and they are also going to support linking that to conservation packages. So as a farmer receives that partnership—the piece we kick in—with that brings a commitment for conservation practices for our land, our soil, our water, and so on.

This is very important. This was not the case in the last farm bill or the farm bill before. We have not seen that kind of link, and now they have come together and said they support crop insurance broadly as an insurance model without limits that have been proposed by various people. In return for that, whether it is a very large farm or a

small farm, the broad public benefit of having conservation compliance outweighs much of what we are hearing about in terms of the limits being proposed. In terms of the public good, we should have crop insurance that gives this alliance of crop insurance and conservation compliance.

This is a historic agreement, and I stand by that agreement with all of the Members. I believe that whether we are talking about large farmers or small farmers, this is a very important policy, and we need to have conservation compliance involved across the board in our efforts as we expand crop insurance.

We will have a lot of discussion and a lot of debate on this issue. I think it is very tempting to look at one particular crop—certainly a crop that has a lot of health risks related to it and that we have a lot of concerns about in other venues—and say let's just eliminate one crop.

The challenge with that, of course, is as a policy for insurance, there will be deep opposition and concern coming from agriculture—from farmers, large and small, across the country—about starting down that road no matter how noble the cause in terms of the concern about the risks of that particular crop. So we look forward to more discussion, but I think it is very important to put a broad lens on this. We have moved away from subsidies that come regardless of good times or bad, whether they are needed or not, and have moved to a system where we are asking farmers to put some skin in the game. We are saying: You have to get crop insurance; you have to be a part of paying for it, and you don't get any help unless there is a disaster; there is no payout unless there is a disaster. As we move to that broad cornerstone, I hope we can keep that in place and not see efforts that will weaken it around the edges.

Mr. President, 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.

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

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

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Madam President, I further ask unanimous consent to speak for perhaps as long as but probably shorter than 20 minutes as in morning business.

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

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Madam President, every week that we are here, I try to remind the body of the damage carbon pollution is doing to our atmosphere and oceans, try to awaken us to our duty. I have done it more than 30 times now. I have tried to kick out the underpinnings of any argument that the deniers could stand on.

I have kicked out the scientific so-called denial argument, which actually properly belongs in the category of falsehood, not argument. I have kicked out the economic denial argument, pointing out that in a proper market, the costs of carbon must be in the price of carbon. I even tried to kick out the religious denial argument, showing that the belief that God will just tidy up after us, however stupidly we behave, runs counter to history and counter to Biblical text.

So today let's take a crack at the political argument. How wise is it for the Republican Party to wed itself to the deniers and proclaim that climate change is a hoax?

Make no mistake, that is the Republican position. The consensus Republican position and the default Republican position is that climate change is a hoax. It has been said right on this floor and in committees and, as far as I know, not one Republican Senator has stood afterwards in this Chamber to say: Wait a minute. Not so fast. That is actually not the case. Any Republican Senator who disagrees, please, come to the floor and articulate a Republican position other than that climate change is a hoax.

This Chamber looks relatively empty, but on C-SPAN lots of people are watching, and lots of Republicans are watching. Yet not one Republican, over all 30 speeches, has ever gotten back to me, even quietly on the side, to say: You know what. This is really getting serious. Let's see if we can work on this together.

An iron curtain of denial has fallen around the Republican Party. So let me respectfully ask my Republican colleagues: What are you thinking? How do you imagine this ends?

More than 95 percent of climate scientists are convinced that human carbon pollution is causing massive and unprecedented changes to our atmosphere and oceans. You want to go with the 5 percent, and you think that is going to be a winning strategy?

Moreover, it turns out that a lot of those 5 percenters are on the payroll of the polluters. You know that. It is public knowledge. Some of those payroll scientists are the same people who denied acid rain, who denied the dangers of tobacco.

You still like those odds? Those are the folks to whom you really want to hitch your Republican wagons? You have to know they are not telling the truth. So where does this go? What is the endgame?

Our planet has had a run of at least 800,000 years, with levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere between 170 and 300 parts per million. That is measurement not theory—800,000 years. Homo sapiens have only been around for about 200,000 years, so that 800,000 years—8,000 centuries—takes us back a ways. Madam President, 800,000 years, between 170 and 300 parts per million, and in just the last 50 years, we have blown out of that range and have now

hit 400 parts per million and climbing. You really want to be on the side of “nothing is going on here”? Really?

Have you noticed the floods and wildfires and droughts and superstorms and tornadoes and blizzards and temperature records? Have you noticed those warming, rising seas? Have you noticed species invading new territories and miles of dead pine forests in the Rockies and Arctic sea ice disappearing?

Do you understand that carbon in the atmosphere gets absorbed by the sea and that is a law of science and is not debatable? Do you understand that because they are absorbing the carbon, the oceans are getting more acidic—30 percent more acidic already and climbing?

Do you understand that is a measurement, not a theory? It is one thing to be the party that stands against science. Are you really also going to be the party that stands against measurement? Do you know the measurement is showing the oceans are not just becoming more acidic, they are becoming more acidic at the fastest rate recorded in a geologic record of 50 million years?

Have you not heard about the coral reefs, those incubators of our oceans, bleaching out and dying off, with almost 20 percent gone already worldwide? If you are a denier, look around. Do you think the news is getting better for you?

Let me ask my Republican friends, what is your best bet on whether this climate and oceans problem gets better or worse in the next 20 or 40 years? Seriously. Your party's reputation is on the line here. All the chips. Tell me how you are going to bet. Do you want to bet the reputation of the Republican Party that suddenly this is all going to magically start getting better? Because that is what you are doing right now.

Let me ask you this: What are the young people of today going to think when they are 37 or 57 and it is worse, maybe a lot worse? What are they going to think about the Republican Party then, that you took the 5-percent bet with their futures; that you went with the polluters over the scientists? Young people are already out there asking their universities to divest from coal, as they divested from the evils of apartheid and the dangers of tobacco. Good luck with the youth vote when you lock in with the coal merchants. By the way, the youth vote grows. It grows up and it sticks around.

How is it going to look for the Republican Party when the historical records show, because facts have a funny way of coming out, that the campaign to fool the public on climate change was as phony and dishonest as the campaign to fool the public on acid rain and the campaign to fool the public on tobacco, when the historical record discloses that 5 percent wasn't even real, and was actually a scam paid for by the polluters? You, your great party, with young American's futures

in the balance, took sides with the scam.

If that is the state of play for young voters as they come of age, why would those young people ever trust the Republican Party on anything else ever again?

Speaking of taking sides, have you noticed who is left on your side? The Koch brothers, billionaire polluters; the big oil companies, the biggest polluters in the world; the coal barons with their legacy of pollution, strip mining, mountaintop removal, and safety violations that kill their miners. That is a fine cast to be surrounded by.

But wait, you say, there is more. There is the Heartland Institute, and the Institute for Energy Research, and the American Enterprise Institute, the American Legislative Exchange Council, and the Heritage Foundation. There are many organizations. Right. Like the heads of Hydra, they may look like many, but, as you know, in reality, it is all the same beast. It is all the same scheme. It is all the same money behind the scheme. You can name those front organizations and many more, but none of it is real. They are all part of the same cheesy vaudeville show put on by the big polluters.

Do you, I ask my Republican friends, want to lash yourself to that operation, to go down with that ship? The great Republican Party, the party of Abraham Lincoln and Theodore Roosevelt, branding itself as the one that gave it all to protect a gang of scheming polluters? That is where you are headed.

Look who is on the other side on record against you seeing through that nonsense. How about the Joint Chiefs of Staff, our military leaders? How about the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops? How about NASA? NASA is driving a vehicle as big as an SUV around on the surface of Mars right now. They sent it there. To Mars. They landed it there safely. Now they are driving it around on Mars. Do you think those scientists might know what they are talking about? How about every legitimate American scientific professional society, about 30 strong? How about major American corporations such as Walmart, Ford, Apple, Coca-Cola? How about global insurance and reinsurance businesses such as Lloyds of London and Munich Re, whose businesses depend on accurate risk models?

Indeed, today, Frank Nutter, the president of the Reinsurance Association of America, is reported as saying:

Insurance is heavily dependent on scientific thought. It is not as amenable to politicized scientific thought.

So I ask my Republican friends, whose side do you like in this? In this corner, the Joint Chiefs, the bishops, Walmart, Ford, Apple, Coke, NASA, 30 top scientific organizations, the top insurers and reinsurers, and, by the way, several thousand legitimate others. In that corner, the polluting industry and a screen of sketchy organizations they

fund. Let's be serious. Do you want to bet the reputation of the Republican Party that the polluters are the ones we should count on here? Because that is what you are doing. For what? To protect market share for the polluters. That is your upside. The reputation of the party hangs in the balance and your upside is market share for polluters.

Look, I am willing to do a carbon pollution fee that sets the market in balance and returns every single dollar to the American people. No new agencies; no new taxes; no bigger government; every dollar back; a balanced market with the costs included in the price the way they are supposed to be, which will make better energy choices, increase jobs, and prevent pollution.

Yes, that does mean less market share for the polluters as new technologies emerge—that is actually the point—but every single dollar back in Americans' pockets. By the way, three-quarters of the American people believe climate change is real and that we need to do something about it.

You may have a question for me: Why do you care? Why do you, SHELDON WHITEHOUSE, Democrat of Rhode Island, care if we Republicans run off the climate cliff like a bunch of proverbial lemmings and disgrace ourselves?

I will tell you why. We are stuck in this together. We are stuck in this together.

When cyclones tear up Oklahoma, hurricanes swamp Alabama, and wildfires scorch Texas, you come to us, the rest of the country, for billions of dollars to recover. The damage your polluters and deniers are doing doesn't just hit Oklahoma, Alabama, and Texas; it hits Rhode Island with floods and storms, it hits Oregon with acidified seas, and it hits Montana with dying forests. Like it or not, we are in this together. You drag America with you to your fate.

I want this future: I want a Republican Party that has returned to its senses, is strong, and is a worthy adversary in a strong America that has done right by its people and the world. That is what I want. I don't want this future. I don't want a Republican Party disgraced, that lets its extremists run it off the cliff. I don't want America suffering from grave, economic, environmental, and diplomatic damage because we failed, because we didn't wake up and do our duty for our people, and because we didn't lead the world.

I do not want that future, but that is where we are headed. I will keep reaching out and calling out, ever hopeful you will wake up before it is too late, both for you and for the rest of us.

I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. STABENOW. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Ms. STABENOW. Before we move on to other business this evening in the Senate, I would like to encourage all of our Senators to submit whatever amendments they have so we can begin to work through them. We want to work diligently through the amendments and be able to move, obviously, as quickly as possible within reason to be able to put together votes. We would ask all of our colleagues, if they do have amendments, to let us know what they are and to file them as soon as possible so we can begin working on those amendments.

I believe Senator COCHRAN and I are both in agreement. We are anxious to get going and are looking forward to working with colleagues to vote on and dispose of amendments.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

Mr. COCHRAN. I am pleased to join the distinguished chairman.

I urge Senators who do have amendments to come to the floor and offer those amendments so we can proceed to complete action on this bill in a reasonable amount of time. We don't want to cut everybody off. Everybody has a right to be heard on whatever subject they wish to bring before the Senate.

We do have some Senators whom we know have amendments that are relevant to the issue before us. We are hopeful we can consider all of them and give them the kind of attention they deserve.

Ms. STABENOW. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BALDWIN). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF SHERI POLSTER CHAPPELL TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE MIDDLE DISTRICT OF FLORIDA

NOMINATION OF MICHAEL J. MCSHANE TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE DISTRICT OF OREGON

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to consider the following nominations, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nominations of Sheri Polster Chappell, of Florida, to be United States District Judge for the Middle District of Florida, and Michael J. McShane, of Oregon, to be United States District Judge for the District of Oregon.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will be 30 minutes of debate equally divided in the usual form.

The Senator from Connecticut.

GUN VIOLENCE

Mr. MURPHY. Madam President, it has now been almost 6 months since the horrible shooting in my State of Connecticut at Sandy Hook Elementary where 20 6- and 7-year-old children lost their lives, and another 6 adults, who were protecting them, perished as well.

We all believed we were going to do something about it here on the floor of the Senate. We thought we were going to come to our senses and finally realize it is in part the laws of this Nation that allow for this kind of senseless killing, whether it be in mass numbers in places such as Sandy Hook or Aurora or Tucson or at the Sikh temple in the State of the Presiding Officer or in just the everyday, average gun violence that has become background noise to this Nation.

It is not just about bad people doing bad things; it is also about the laws of this Nation that have allowed for this to happen because we don't have background checks on every gun purchase so that criminals do not get guns. We still allow for dangerous military-style weapons, such as the AR-15 and 100-round drums of ammunition to be carried on the streets of this country. We don't even have a Federal law saying it is illegal to traffic in guns, taking them out of gun shows and gun stores and then going out and selling them on the streets as straw purchasers to people who shouldn't have bought them in the first place. We had 55 votes in the Senate to do something about that, but we didn't have 60 votes, which is the law of the land here these days.

I have promised to come down here every week and do something rather simple, which is to tell the stories of the dozens of people who are killed every single day by guns, because it is their stories that will eventually move this place to action. I know this place has enough empathy, enough compassion to not be so callous as to allow month after month to go by and do nothing about the 4,243 people, as of today, since Newtown who have died in this country at the hands of gun violence.

Let me cite that number again. Since the massacre at Sandy Hook, where 28 people died, including the gunman and his mother, 4,243 people have died due to gun violence.

I want to spend the next couple of minutes before we get back to the debate on these nominations telling the stories of a few of these people.

On May 15, 2013, about a week ago, five different people were shot in Detroit. Halfway through May and there have been 73 shootings in Detroit, MI. Ten people have been killed, with 8 of the shooting victims being 17 years old or younger.

On that day, May 15, five people were shot. A 24-year-old man opened fire