

Perez, and that is why I will be voting against him today.

As for Gina McCarthy, I have no doubt she is a well-meaning public servant. We had some good conversations when she came to visit my office earlier this year. But as the head of EPA's air division, she is overseeing the implementation of numerous job-killing regulations. These regulations, along with others promulgated by the EPA, have had a devastating effect in States such as mine.

They have helped bring about a depression—depression with a “d” in parts of Eastern Kentucky.

And there is no reason to expect a course correction from Ms. McCarthy if she were to be confirmed as Administrator.

In fact, one assumes she would be expected to carry forward the President's plan to impose, essentially by executive fiat, even more destructive policies—policies similar to those already rejected by a Democrat-controlled Congress.

As someone sent here to stand up for the people who elected me, I cannot in good conscience support a nominee who would advance more of the same, someone who is not willing to stand up to this administration's war on coal.

And remember, this “war” talk that is not me saying that. “A war on coal is exactly what's needed.” That is what one of the White House's own climate advisors said just the other week.

All of us—Republicans especially—believe in being good stewards of the environment. But Washington officials have to be rational and holistic in their approach. They cannot, as this administration seems to think, simply do whatever they want, regardless of the consequences for people who do not live or act or think the same way they do.

I do not blame Ms. McCarthy personally for all of the administration's policies. But I believe the EPA needs an Administrator who is ready to step up and challenge the idea that the livelihoods of particular groups of Americans can simply be sacrificed in pursuit of some ivory tower fantasy. That kind of nominee—the kind of nominee I can support—is one who is willing to question the status quo and to make Kentuckians part of the solution.

OBAMACARE

Later today, the President is scheduled to deliver a speech on Obamacare.

He is expected to say that, because of Obamacare, Americans can expect checks in the mail.

Sounds great, doesn't it? Free money.

But, as they say, most things in life that sound too good to be true very often are.

And, in this case, it is not so much that people will be getting free money, as that most people will be paying many dollars more for their healthcare and maybe—just maybe—getting a few bucks back.

In other words, if you are a family in Covington facing a \$2,100 premium in-

crease under Obamacare, then, really, what would you rather have: a check for \$100 or so or a way to avoid the \$2,100 premium increase in the first place?

I think the answer is pretty obvious.

I think most Kentuckians would agree that this is just another sad attempt by the administration to spin them into wanting a law they do not want.

And there is this to consider: Even though we expect the President today to tout about \$500 million worth of these types of refunds, what he will not say is that next year Obamacare will impose a new sales tax on the purchase of health insurance that will cost Americans about \$8 billion. That is a 16 to 1 ratio.

So if the administration is concerned with saving people money on their health care, I have some advice for them.

Work with us to repeal Obamacare and start over—work with us to implement common-sense, step-by-step reforms that can actually lower costs for Kentuckians. Because jacking up our constituents' health care costs is bad enough, but to try to then convince them the opposite is happening—that they have actually won some Publishers Clearinghouse sweepstakes, well, it is just as absurd as it sounds. It is really an insult and I know Kentuckians aren't going to buy it.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business for 1 hour with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with the majority leader controlling the first half.

The Senator from Colorado.

AURORA THEATER SHOOTING

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. President, I rise today to mark a somber milestone. Nearly 1 year ago, Colorado and the Nation were shocked by the horrific scene at an Aurora movie theater. Even before the sun rose that Friday, July 20, 2012, we began hearing of a senseless mass shooting that took the lives of 12 people and injured 70 more.

Today I want to mark the anniversary of this tragedy and to honor the strength that so many Coloradans have shown—both on that day and in the weeks and months since.

The Aurora theater shooting shook us, it shocked us, it outraged us, but, as I said one year ago, it did not break us. Even today we are seeing that the

legacy of this terrible tragedy is not the horror of that day but, rather, the courage and resilience of the people who have refused to let this event define their lives.

Take, for example, 18-year-old Zack Golditch, who endured surgery and weeks of recovery so he could continue with his football career and become a repeat state discus champion. The Denver Post recently named him the winner of their Adversity Conquered through Excellence award and this fall he will begin his freshman year as an offensive lineman at CSU.

Or Marcus Weaver, who was shot twice but now hosts a weekly radio show in Denver that spotlights great Americans who are making a difference in the community. Marcus also works with his church to help people who have struggled through addiction or incarceration and now travels the country inspiring others with his story and pushing them to take charge of their lives.

These are just two of the countless examples of the perseverance of people who were affected by the Aurora shooting. Zack and Marcus's strength defines us as Americans. That is something in which we can take great pride.

It is the kind of strength we honor in remembering this tragedy now a year later. In particular, we look back and honor young men like 26-year-old Jon Blunk and 24-year-old Alexander Teves who sacrificed their lives to protect their friends. And then there were the countless police and other first responders who rushed to the scene to care for the wounded and to stop the shooter before he could injure others.

Colorado has known too many tragedies these past several years. From the Aurora theater shooting to wildfires in Colorado Springs, Fort Collins and elsewhere that have threatened and destroyed entire communities and left hundreds of our friends and neighbors without homes.

We have seen the same spirit of sacrifice and resilience, as firefighters and community members have banded together to fight the Black Forest Fire, the West Fork Complex Fire and the other blazes that have threatened entire communities across Colorado this year.

This Saturday, on the 1-year anniversary of the Aurora theater shooting, let's take time to remember those we have lost and to honor the resilience of our neighbors who press on with their lives, undaunted by this terrible act.

In that spirit, I want to read into the RECORD the names of the twelve people who lost their lives one year ago. We must never forget these names: Matt McQuinn, Micayla Medek, Jessica Ghawi, Gordon Cowden, Jesse Childress, John Larimer, Jonathan Blunk, Veronica Moser-Sullivan, Alex Sullivan, Alexander Teves, Rebecca Wingo, and Alexander Boik.

I hope that we can draw strength from the tragic loss of those 12 wonderful, beautiful people and that it leads

us to redouble our efforts to be better people—to be more understanding to our friends and more loving to our families and to aspire to live our lives with the courage that the people of Aurora and Colorado have shown over the course of this last year.

I think that the leaders here in Washington could learn from their courage. The victims of Aurora have not let setbacks stop them from achieving great things and making their community a better place to live. They, in fact, have refused to allow the word “victim” to define them.

Of course, we still have work to do to prevent future mass shootings. There are many commonsense steps that we can and must take to reduce senseless gun violence. But today is not a time for a policy debate. Today is a day to remember the victims, to honor the heroes from that terrible day last year, and to commit ourselves to never forgetting their memory.

The ACTING PRESIDENT *pro tempore*. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, let me commend the Senator from Colorado for his critical reminder to all of us about how you can get up each day and never know what life brings to you, but to remember not that the people so senselessly lost their lives, but the courage and passion they have left for all of us. I thank him for that important reminder.

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. I thank the Senator.

PEREZ NOMINATION

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I want to speak briefly about our vote today to confirm Thomas Perez as our next Secretary of Labor, and I want to touch on a couple of reasons, of separate reasons, this particular confirmation is so important for this body and for our country.

First, something we have talked about for several days here is providing the President and his administration with the team he needs to help our country grow, for our economy, our families, and communities in every one of our home States. Filling the position of Labor Secretary could not be more important. We all rely on the Department of Labor to do a lot of important work for American workers and American businesses—providing critical workforce development and job training services to help get people back to work or into better jobs, making sure we have high workplace safety standards, improving conditions and opportunities for women, and helping our service men and women find good jobs when they come home. Our country and our economy are stronger when the Department of Labor has a talented, qualified leader at the reins.

That brings me to the second reason why this vote is so important, and that is the tremendous nominee we have before us today. In Thomas Perez, the President has nominated someone who

will bring passion and integrity and a lifetime of experience to this very important position. Like so many Americans, Mr. Perez comes from very humble beginnings. He is a second-generation American who put himself through college by collecting trash and working in the university dining hall. Since that time, he has spent his career fighting for working families, protecting our important civil rights laws, and turning around troubled agencies.

There is no shortage of examples to demonstrate what an effective leader Mr. Perez has been throughout his career. He took an Office of Civil Rights at HHS that had been ignored and lifeless and breathed new life into it. He reformed and rebuilt the Department of Labor in Maryland, and he walked into a very troubled Civil Rights Division at DOJ and, by all credible accounts, he returned high performance, professionalism, and integrity to that agency.

In a time when we need to do everything we can to protect and grow our shrinking middle class, Mr. Perez is exactly the right person for this job because in tough times, while we are still recovering from recession, we need strong, experienced leadership at the Department of Labor.

My colleagues here today who support his confirmation from both sides of the aisle are not alone. From his time working at the local and State and Federal level, organizations from Maryland and throughout our country have come out to strongly support him as well. That includes organizations that represent women, the LGBT community, the Hispanic community, and many more.

Finally, throughout his confirmation process, which at times has been very difficult, Mr. Perez has shown nothing but openness, transparency, respect, and the ability to work together and solve problems. That is why I will vote to confirm him today, and I urge all my colleagues to support his confirmation as well.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT *pro tempore*. The Senator from West Virginia.

MCCARTHY NOMINATION

Mr. MANCHIN. Mr. President, I rise today to explain my vote against Gina McCarthy, which I will cast later today or the first of next week, to be Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency. My fight is not with her. My fight is truly with the agency itself, the EPA, and the President who nominated her to head the regulatory agency. That fight is not going to end with the Senate's vote on Ms. McCarthy's nomination. It will not stop there. The fight will continue until the EPA stops its overregulatory rampage and until the President comes up with feasible policies that achieve real energy independence, which is what I think we all wish for.

I don't want anyone to misunderstand me. I have serious disagreements

with many of Ms. McCarthy's views on energy and the environment, but I will say I met her a couple of weeks ago for the first time when she came to my office, and I found her to be earnest, friendly, pragmatic, incredibly intelligent. She is a talented scientist who has dedicated her life to public service. As a matter of fact, she served under Democrats and Republicans alike. I certainly appreciate her pragmatism, her willingness to serve her country, and her stellar bipartisan credentials, an extremely rare quality in Washington these days, as everyone knows.

In fact, it is not hard to imagine this same lady could have been nominated to be the EPA Administrator—if Mitt Romney would have won—by another President from another party. After all, she advised him on climate change when he was Governor of Massachusetts.

My vote goes much deeper than her nomination, her views on energy and the environment or even her job performance for the last 4 years as head of air policy at the EPA. My vote against Gina McCarthy is a vote against the administration's lack of any serious attempt to develop an energy strategy for America's future, which we call an all-of-the-above policy.

We need to develop every source of American-made energy, such as coal, natural gas, nuclear, renewables, wind, solar, biomass, and biofuels. We need it all, and we are responsible to make sure we find a balance between the economy and the environment. Everyone knows it is common sense to use what we have in this country.

We need an all-of-the-above policy that includes nuclear, hydroelectric, biomass, renewables, such as wind and solar, fossil fuels, including oil, natural gas, and coal. I truly believe if we work together and focus on a commonsense approach, we can develop a strong bipartisan energy plan. Such a plan will not only break the power of foreign oil countries and speculators, it will also chart a new and promising energy future for this great Nation and increase our national security and prosperity. Think about that. It will increase our national security and the prosperity of our country.

The President often speaks about an all-of-the-above energy policy, but I have to say that his new global climate proposal amounts to a true declaration of war on one of the above. It is a true declaration of war on coal. In fact, the President plans to use the EPA to regulate the coal industry out of existence.

The coal industry in the United States of America burns 1 billion tons of coal. Eight billion tons of coal is burned in the world today. I don't believe the wind currents or the ocean currents start and stop in North America. If we stop burning every ton of coal and declare war on the economy, it will effectively destroy people's lives and jobs as well as their ability to take care of themselves. There is more coal