

Again, the facts, as I show them here, show a flat temperature. And those facts are pretty much undisputed.

Now we have all these allegations that say: Well, extreme weather. The problems from CO₂ and greenhouse gases are causing extreme weather. We all heard that when Hurricane Sandy hit the northeast. We don't normally have one in the northeast, but it hit the northeast, and it was fairly strong. It was not an exceedingly powerful hurricane, but it did a lot of damage for people who have been living on the water and weren't prepared for it. It did a lot of damage.

Al Gore, former Vice President, recently asserted "all weather events are now affected by global warming pollution." Senator BARBARA BOXER, chairman of our committee—the EPW Committee—said Superstorm Sandy is "evidence of climate change mounting around us."

In January of this year, before the Senate EPW Committee, the administration's top wildlife official Dan Ashe declared there were "more frequent and severe storms, flooding, droughts and wildfires." This is the top person in the wildlife department. He said we have "more frequent and severe storms, flooding, droughts and wildfires." And he, therefore, supported President Obama's climate action plan. So I wrote him and asked him to provide any data he had personally evaluated that would support his claim. He testified before a U.S. Senate committee. I asked him if he had any data to back it up. And, of course, he didn't.

Dr. Holdren, the top science adviser in the country, also declared the President will talk about "the connection between the increasing frequency and intensity of droughts and climate change when he speaks tomorrow. He has actually repeatedly talked about the connection between climate change and extreme weather."

Well, what do we know about that? We have had experts before our committee to discuss that very subject. Dr. Roger Pielke, who is a climate impacts expert, agrees with the view that global warming is partly caused by human emissions. He testified in the EPW Committee last year. He talked to us. He talked about this very issue—extreme weather—and here is what he said:

It is misleading, and just plain incorrect, to claim that disasters associated with hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, or droughts have increased on climate timescales either in the United States or globally.

He said it is not true. It is misleading. It is false. Dr. Roy Spencer of the University of Alabama at Huntsville also testified before our committee last year saying:

There is little or no observational evidence that severe weather of any type has worsened over the last 30, 50 or 100 years.

The American Enterprise Institute looked at the data on this question and this is what they found:

In brief, tornado, hurricane and cyclone activity are at historically low levels, wildfires

are in a long-term decline except in government forests, there is no trend in sea-levels related to increases in greenhouse gas concentrations, the record of the Arctic ice cover is ambiguous, there is no drought trend since 1895, and the same is true for flooding over the past 85 to 127 years.

When I asked Dr. Holdren—the President's science adviser—about this, he responded: "The first few people you quoted are not representative of the mainstream scientific opinion on this point."

That was a baseless accusation, as he had no data to dispute their information. Hurricanes, tornadoes, droughts, and floods are measured every year. We have objective data.

Dr. Pielke went back and examined the hurricanes—with category 5 being the strongest, down to 1 being the least—and categorized them 50-plus years, and we are not having more or bigger hurricanes, we are not having more floods, we are not having more tornadoes. We had an outbreak of very severe tornadoes a few years ago in Alabama, but the data would indicate clearly that nationwide we are not having more. We have always had tornadoes, and this one did a lot of damage and got a lot of coverage, but it was not a trend. I was sort of surprised to see this idea.

There are a lot of things I think we can do which would move us in the right direction where we could have compromise, and maybe nuclear energy would be one which we have support on both sides of the aisle for and would be good for the environment and good for energy and keep costs at a reasonable level without any pollution. So there are a lot of things we can do.

As we discuss the hundreds of billions of dollars in costs which are being imposed on our economy as a result of some of the ideas to deal with climate change and extreme weather, I asked my colleagues: Would you please check the data; is it truly so that we are having more hurricanes, tornadoes, droughts, or floods? Dr. Pielke says no. Let's see somebody dispute those numbers. They haven't been disputed.

Is it true the temperature is increasing faster than was predicted even 5 years or 10 years ago? The IPCC data doesn't show it and neither does any other objective data. So I asked the EPA Administrator to submit some data to show me if that is true: Do you have any? If so, won't you ask the President to quit saying that? Shouldn't the President lead us and tell the truth about the situation?

I don't suppose we know enough now to answer this question conclusively either way, but I would say there has been a lot of exaggeration and a lot of hype. The American people are feeling the crunch already in their electric and gasoline bills, and manufacturing costs are going up as a result of these efforts to stop storms, which seem to be down, to stop a rise in temperature which doesn't seem to be rising right now. We will have to evaluate overall what the right thing to do is as a nation, but I

think it is time for us to be a bit more cautious, to be less alarmist, and to focus more on the science of the situation.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

SEXUAL ASSAULT

Mr. LEVIN. Madam President, the Senate takes another step forward in combating sexual assault in the military. Thanks to the leadership of Senators McCASKILL, AYOTTE, FISCHER, and others, we can improve legislation which adds important new protections for victims of sexual assault and strengthens our ability to investigate and prosecute these crimes.

This legislation we will be voting on bolsters and improves upon the provisions to combat sexual assault which were included in the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2014. Among the reforms included in that bill and are now law were provisions which make it a crime to retaliate against a servicemember for reporting a sexual assault; that require every servicemember who reports a sexual assault to get a special victims' advocate who works for them, not for the command or for the court; and also this recently enacted law requires a higher level review of decisions not to prosecute an allegation of sexual assault.

The reforms in the bill we will be voting on shortly are significant additions to that recently enacted law. First, this bill will be making an important change in how we prosecute sexual assault crimes by amending the Military Rules of Evidence to eliminate what is known as the good soldier defense, which has allowed servicemembers to argue that their good military performance is evidence of their innocence when charged with a crime. The military culture has been too slow to grasp the painful truth that even a successful professional can also be a sexual predator. This important reform in the bill we are considering will help to alter that culture.

The bill also strengthens oversight of commanders' decisions on prosecution. Under reforms we passed last year, any decision by a commander not to prosecute a sexual assault case is reviewed by the next highest authority in the chain of command. When that decision contradicts a recommendation to prosecute from the commander's senior legal adviser, that review is done by the service Secretary, the highest civilian authority in each military service. The bill we are now going to consider would require the same review if a commander's decision not to prosecute conflicts with the recommendation of the senior prosecutor who would try the case.

The bill also strengthens victims' input into prosecution decisions. The reforms we passed last year require that every victim of a military sexual assault be provided with a special victims' counsel—an attorney who works

not for the commander or the court but for the victim. The bill before us requires that these victims' counsels advise victims on the advantages and disadvantages of seeing their case prosecuted in a military court or in a civilian court. The bill also requires that when victims express a preference for one or the other, that preference be given great weight.

The bill before us includes other important new protections for sexual assault victims. For example, it allows victims of a sexual assault who leave the military to challenge the terms or the characterization of their discharge. The bill requires a confidential process enabling victims to seek a review of discharge decisions in order to look for possible instances of retaliation for their having reported a crime.

The bill we will soon vote on also includes an important new provision to boost accountability for commanders. It requires their performance appraisals analyze whether they have established a command climate in which sexual assault allegations are properly and fairly handled and in which a victim can report a sexual assault without fear of reprisal or ostracism.

These and other provisions in the McCaskill-Ayotte-Fischer bill add further weight to the important reforms included in the National Defense Authorization Act we adopted and was enacted very recently. The bill we will be voting on contains real important reforms which deserve not just our support and our votes but our thanks to Senators McCaskill, Ayotte, Fischer, and others for crafting these additional reforms because they will surely make a major contribution in protecting the troops who protect us.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Madam President, I rise in support of S. 1917, the Victims Protection Act of 2014, and S. 1752, the Military Justice Improvement Act of 2013.

I have worked on this issue for years, and I am tired of lip service and empty promises of zero tolerance policies. Sexual assault in the military and service academies continues to rise. The data speaks for itself. Roughly 26,000 sexual assaults took place in the military last year.

I am so proud of the seven women on the Armed Services Committee who led this effort. And I appreciate the fine men who supported them, especially Chairman CARL LEVIN.

We are now 20 women total in the Senate. We disagree on some issues, even the bills before us. But we agree on the goal of providing more prosecutorial tools to punish criminals, ensuring fairness in the process, and getting help to victims.

The 2013 National Defense Authorization Act, NDAA, included more than 30 reforms addressing sexual assault in the military. They include: 13 prosecutorial reforms, 5 reforms to improve reporting of crimes, 10 reforms to improve victims services, and 2 reforms to expand the training of first responders.

This is a historic piece of legislation that takes a serious and significant step towards addressing this issue.

However, our work is not done. That is why I support Senator McCaskill's and Senator GILLIBRAND's bills to further reform our military justice system.

Senator McCaskill's bill builds on the provisions included in the 2013 NDAA by providing additional support to victims. It prevents defendants from using a good military character defense unless it is relevant to the crime. And it ensures these improvements also apply to the service academies which are also dealing with the epidemic of sexual assault.

I also support Senator GILLIBRAND's bill which would take the job of deciding which crimes to prosecute out of the hands of commanders and, instead, give it to independent military prosecutors with expertise in these crimes.

This approach has value for victims, commanding officers, and the accused. Victims are assured of a fair process. Commanders are given an independent source on an issue that they might not have expertise or experience. And those accused of sexual violence get legal protections through the process.

These two bills take another step towards cracking the code on addressing sexual assault in the military. Our men and women in uniform face enough stresses on the battlefield. We can't allow sexual violence to be another one.

I urge my colleagues to support these bills.

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. COLLINS. 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 remarks of Ms. COLLINS pertaining to the introduction of S. 2100 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Ms. COLLINS. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT ANNIVERSARY

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, it was just one year ago last week that victims of violence, members of law enforcement and those committed to working against domestic and sexual violence celebrated the signing of the Leahy-Crapo Violence Against Women Act reauthorization and the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act. The signing of this important legislation on March 7 last year was an enormous accomplishment for a divided Congress, which came together to pass meaningful and historic legisla-

tion that protects all victims. One year later, we honor those victims and survivors by renewing our commitment to our shared goal of ending domestic and sexual violence.

Our bipartisan effort last year is making lives better today. The new nondiscrimination provisions we fought so hard to protect are ensuring that all victims, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity, have access to lifesaving programs and cannot be turned away. As I have said many times, "a victim is a victim is a victim." While some called for us to cast the most vulnerable groups among us aside and pass a watered down bill, I am proud that we held firm in our beliefs. This could not have been done without the leadership and commitment of Senator CRAPO and Senator MURKOWSKI, who fought within their caucus to preserve a fully inclusive reauthorization and stood with me in the Senate to protect all survivors. In the House, Congressman TOM COLE was a critical voice in calling for the particularly urgent need to address abuse on tribal lands. I thank them today, as I did 1 year ago, for their dedication and their partnership.

Every week, we are learning more about the impact of this important law. Last month, the Department of Justice launched a pilot project in which three tribes—the Umatilla, the Pascua Yaqui, and the Tulalip—will begin to exercise their authority to prosecute non-Indian offenders who commit acts of domestic violence against an Indian on tribal land. Until now, non-Indian abusers were essentially immune from prosecution, a fact they would use to terrorize their victims. This new authority marks the beginning of the end of those days and is a watershed moment in our commitment to end the epidemic of violence against Indian women that has for too long been ignored. We fought hard to ensure this provision remained in the bill and it will save lives. Attorney General West and deputy associate attorney general Hirsch deserve praise for making careful implementation of the Leahy-Crapo Violence Against Women Act a top priority.

Less than 2 weeks ago, the Department of Homeland Security announced it was taking additional steps under our VAWA reauthorization to prevent the sexual assault and abuse of immigrants in our detention facilities. This was in response to a provision in the VAWA law requiring that all DHS facilities comply with the Prison Rape Elimination Act to prevent sexual abuse and assault. There is still much work to be done to protect immigrant women, and I look forward to continuing to work with DHS to ensure that they are doing all they can to protect those in their custody. I also remain committed to passing legislation to increase the number of U visas available for immigrant victims of violence. That powerful law enforcement