

We ought to get rid of these false promises and we ought to do the very best we can to clean up our environment in every possible way we can without destroying the energy and the energy capacities we know we have and loosen all the jobs that would come with that. That is the conversation the American people want to hear, and I hope eventually that is a conversation we can have in the Senate.

This is an issue where my colleagues are very sincere. I don't want to disparage any of them. On the other hand, in many respects they are sincerely wrong and they are costing America its greatness.

One of the problems I have with our current President is that I don't believe he believes in American exceptionalism, and he is doing so many things that are destroying our exceptionalism. The rest of the world knows it, but our folks here in America are having a rough time grasping it. I think it is a desire to always treat everybody well, to try to support our Presidents, which certainly we ought to try to do, but there is a reason we are starting to slip.

There is a reason the average wage in this country has gone down \$4,000 to \$5,000. There is a reason why, according to the Joint Committee on Taxation of just a few years ago, 51 percent of the American people are not in the process of paying one dime of income taxes. I am the last one to want them to pay income taxes, those who shouldn't, but, my gosh, you can't run a country this way. We are going to have to start facing the music that the greatest country in the world is losing its nerve, it is losing its verve, and there is no excuse for it. No other country in the world can even compare with us. So why are we doing things that are making us less and less and less and less?

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.

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 Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST— H.R. 3521

Mr. VITTER. Madam President, I rise to again advocate that we move forward, we come together across the aisle as Democrats and Republicans to agree on what we do agree on and to do some things constructively—specifically, to help veterans across our country.

There are 27 community-based VA clinics that are on the books at the Veterans' Administration ready to go. The VA is ready to break ground, move forward, and build these expanded community-based clinics to serve areas around the country and veterans

around the country in a much better way. I am particularly interested because 2 of those 27 clinics are in Louisiana, in Lafayette and in Lake Charles.

All of these clinics have gotten stuck in the mud through several rounds of bureaucratic delay at the VA—funding delays, authorization delays, and a dispute about whether moving forward with these clinics was kosher under the budget rules. We have solved all of those problems. We have figured out solutions to all of those problems that satisfies everyone. The House of Representatives has taken those solutions, put them together in a bill and passed it overwhelmingly out of the House with over 400 votes in support—virtually unanimous. Now we are on the Senate floor and all we have to do is take that bill, adopt a simple noncontroversial amendment and pass it through the Senate. No one in the Senate disagrees with the substance of this bill. No one disagrees with the substance of the amendment we would add to this bill. No one disagrees with the importance of moving forward with these 27 VA clinics. Yet we are still finding it difficult to move this simple noncontroversial matter through the Senate. Why? Because, quite frankly, some of our colleagues who have a much bigger, broader veterans package want to hold this hostage for their veterans package. While I applaud their sincerity, I applaud their passion, I think we should agree on what we can agree on and move forward with what we agree on. Let's not get bogged down and defeat 27 very important community-based veterans clinics because there are major and sincere disagreements about the much broader package.

I also think it will build good will to resolve some of those issues and come forward with a compromise version of a larger package if we do that. In that spirit, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 3521, which was received from the House; that my amendment, which is at the desk, be agreed to; that the bill, as amended, be read a third time and passed and that the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. SANDERS. Reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. Madam President, I appreciate the interest of Senator VITTER in this very important issue. Senator LANDRIEU of Louisiana shares his concern, as do Senators from many States in this country because, as Senator VITTER indicated, this bill will authorize the VA to enter into 27 major medical facility leases in 18 States and Puerto Rico. So this is, in fact, a very big issue.

But as Senator VITTER knows very well, 2 weeks ago this very same provi-

sion was part of a comprehensive veterans bill supported by the American Legion, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Disabled American Veterans, the Vietnam Veterans of America, the Paralyzed Veterans of America, the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, and virtually every veterans organization in this country because the veterans community is facing a host of problems.

Senator VITTER points out one problem. He is right. But there are many other problems. I say to my friend, we could have resolved this problem 2 weeks ago if I could have had four more Republican votes, including his, to pass this legislation.

What this bill does, and the reason it is supported by millions of veterans all over this country, is that it addresses the major problems facing our veterans community. I say to my friend from Louisiana, and any other Senator, if you are not prepared to stand with veterans in their time of need, don't send them off to war. If you don't want to pay for the care veterans need, don't send them off to war and then tell us it is too expensive to take care of them.

The legislation that again is supported by virtually every major veterans organization in this country, expands the caregivers program, improves and expands dental care, provides advanced appropriations for the VA—something many of us feel is terribly important—takes a major step to end the benefits backlog, deals with the very serious problem of in-state tuition assistance for post-9/11 veterans, and addresses the horrible problem that women and men in the military face when they are sexually assaulted. We address that issue as well.

This legislation also addresses the issue of reproductive health. We have 2,300 men and women who served in Iraq and Afghanistan and who were wounded in the war in such ways they are unable to have babies. They want families but can't have babies, and so we help address in this bill that issue; whether through in vitro fertilization, adoption or other ways to help them have families. That is what this legislation does.

So I look forward to working with my colleague and friend from Louisiana to get that legislation passed or to sit down and work on a compromise piece of legislation.

I would say to my friend from Louisiana, today you can be a hero. Today you can get your concern passed and the concerns of veterans all over America by supporting my unanimous consent request to pass the bill that came up 2 weeks ago.

Mr. President, I object to Senator VITTER's proposal.

I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 297, S. 1950; that a Sanders substitute amendment, the text of S. 1982, the Comprehensive Veterans Health and Benefits and Military Retirement Pay Restoration Act,

be agreed to; the bill, as amended, be read a third time and passed; and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MANCHIN). The first objection is heard to the request by the Senator from Louisiana.

Is there objection to the request by the Senator from Vermont?

Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, on behalf of 43 Members of the Senate, I object based on substantive disagreements about this very broad-based bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, reclaiming the floor and my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

Mr. VITTER. I think it is really regrettable. The Senator from Vermont and I can talk about the substance. I will be happy to talk about the substance of his big bill. But the bottom line is that 43 Members of the Senate disagree with him about serious substantive issues.

Because there is major disagreement—almost half of the Senate, 43 Members of the Senate—he is going to block moving forward with 27 clinics to serve veterans around the country, about which there is no disagreement. On my bill, as amended, there is zero disagreement on the substance of that bill. Because he can't get his way fully on a bigger package, he is going to take the bat and take the ball, and home plate, first base, second, and third, and go home. I don't think this is the approach and spirit in which the American people want us to work. I think the American people want us to agree when we can agree. I think we should bend over to agree in those instances where we can agree and actually accomplish substantive, concrete things. We would be doing that by moving forward separately with these 27 important community-based clinics. And by the way, I think we would be creating a much better environment to continue to work on a compromised broader package.

I commend this approach again to my friend from Vermont. I think we should come together where we agree. I think we should accomplish what we can and continue to work on a broader package. But taking these 27 clinics hostage is not doing that, is not creating an atmosphere which is conducive to progress on a broader package, and is not properly serving the American people.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I would remind my colleague from Louisiana that the vote on that bill was 56 to 41. This is a 15-vote plurality. There is another person who was not here who would have voted for us on that bill, so 57 votes. But because of a Republican request for a budget point of

order, we need 60 votes. So a strong majority of the Members in the Senate support this comprehensive legislation. We are three votes shy of passing it. I intend to reach out to the Senator from Louisiana and every other Senator to see whether we get these three votes so we can pass the most comprehensive veterans legislation brought to the floor of the Senate in many decades.

This is not a complicated issue. On Veterans Day and on Memorial Day, every Member of the Senate and House goes back to his or her district and tells veterans just how much they respect them and love them and so forth and so on. That is all fine and well. Speeches are important. But at the end of the day, serving our veterans means a lot more than giving speeches. It means voting for programs that will improve their lives.

I will not disagree with anybody who says veterans programs are often expensive. They are expensive. When somebody goes off to war and comes back without any legs, without any arms, losing their eyesight or their hearing or dealing with TBI—traumatic brain injury—or PTSD—post-traumatic stress disorder—or suffering from sexual assault, it is an expensive proposition to make those folks as well as we possibly can. But, as I said earlier, if we are not prepared to support the men and women who come back from war, don't send them off to war in the first place.

So I very much hope I will be successful in working on an agreement with the Senator from Louisiana and some of my other Republican colleagues so we can do what the veterans community wants us to do.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I spoke last night in anticipation of this all-night session that was going to take place. I was not surprised at the general topics that were covered. There are probably five all together that they were stated over and over. I would like to clarify a couple of things that probably are worthwhile this afternoon.

One is my good friend from California—this is a quote, we took it down—said:

When 97 to 98 percent of the scientists say something is real, they do not have anything pressing them to say that other than the truth. They do not have any other agenda. They don't work for oil companies. And I will tell you, as chairman of the environment committee, every time the Republicans

chose a so-called expert on climate, we have tracked them down to special interest funding, those 3 percent. They know where their bread is buttered.

That is kind of an interesting and a timely statement to make because what they are not telling you—and I am talking about the Senator from California and the other Democrats—is that the hedge fund billionaire and climate activist Tom Steyer plans to spend \$100 million through his NextGen PAC. The NextGen PAC is his political action committee. He has made the statement that he is going to be spending \$100 million in the midterm elections of 2014 and is going to be looking very carefully to make sure that all of the Democrats go along with his activist agenda.

That was actually a statement that was made, that has been written up. It is all documented. I am going to submit for the RECORD at this point all of the newspaper articles, the Washington Post, the Washington Times, and others that talk about this climate activist Tom Steyer, who is going to be spending \$100 million in the next election.

What I would like to do is cover the points that were made. As I say, they were made over and over, different people saying them, the same talking points. I am sure Tom Steyer's people had the talking points well prepared and moveon.org and George Soros and Michael Moore and the Hollywood elites and that crowd all had their talking points to sound real good. I noticed that so many of them were reading those points and were not familiar with the issues.

But last night many of my colleagues pointed to weather as the reason for manmade climate change. Yet they failed to quote meteorologists in the speeches. Let me read just what the meteorologists are saying about climate change.

A recent study by George Mason University reported—that was over 400 TV meteorologists—they reported that 63 percent of the weathercasters believe that any global warming that occurs is the result of natural variations and not human activity. That is a significant 2-to-1 majority.

Another study by the American Meteorological Society last year found that of their members, nearly half did not believe in manmade global warming. Furthermore, the survey found that scientists who professed liberal political views were more likely to proclaim manmade climate change than the rest of their colleagues.

I think we can name names here. Certainly one of the more prominent names is Heidi Cullen. She was with the Weather Channel. She spent most of her time with a background of very liberal thinking, liberal agenda, talking about this until she is no longer there anymore. She is now with one of the groups, the very liberal groups.

This is a good one, a lifelong liberal Democrat. His name is Dr. Martin