

Hirono	McConnell	Schatz
Hoeben	Menendez	Schumer
Inhofe	Merkley	Scott
Isakson	Mikulski	Sessions
Johanns	Moran	Shaheen
Johnson (SD)	Murkowski	Shelby
Johnson (WI)	Murphy	Stabenow
Kaine	Murray	Tester
King	Nelson	Thune
Kirk	Paul	Toomey
Klobuchar	Portman	Udall (CO)
Landrieu	Pryor	Udall (NM)
Leahy	Reed	Vitter
Lee	Reid	Walsh
Levin	Risch	Warner
Manchin	Roberts	Warren
Markey	Rockefeller	Whitehouse
McCain	Rubio	Wicker
McCaskill	Sanders	Wyden

NOT VOTING—1

Enzi

The nomination was confirmed.

VOTE ON CARLIN NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will be 2 minutes of debate equally divided in the usual form prior to a vote on the Carlin nomination.

Who yields time?

The majority leader.

Mr. REID. Madam President, we hope this is the last vote of the day—at least the next vote we hope will be by voice. There could be other votes procedural in nature this afternoon. We hope not, but you never know. I am not going to agree to anything.

I yield back our time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, all time for debate has expired.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of John P. Carlin, of New York, to be an Assistant Attorney General?

Mr. PORTMAN. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second? There appears to be a sufficient second. There is a sufficient second. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

The result was announced—yeas 99, nays 1, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 95 Ex.]

YEAS—99

Alexander	Donnelly	Leahy
Ayotte	Durbin	Lee
Baldwin	Enzi	Levin
Barrasso	Feinstein	Manchin
Begich	Fischer	Markey
Bennet	Flake	McCain
Blumenthal	Franken	McCaskill
Blunt	Gillibrand	McConnell
Booker	Graham	Menendez
Boozman	Grassley	Merkley
Boxer	Hagan	Mikulski
Brown	Harkin	Moran
Burr	Hatch	Murkowski
Cantwell	Heinrich	Murphy
Cardin	Heitkamp	Murray
Carper	Hirono	Nelson
Casey	Hoeben	Paul
Chambliss	Inhofe	Portman
Coats	Isakson	Pryor
Coburn	Johanns	Reed
Cochran	Johnson (SD)	Reid
Collins	Johnson (WI)	Risch
Coons	Kaine	Roberts
Corker	King	Rockefeller
Cornyn	Kirk	Rubio
Crapo	Klobuchar	Sanders
Cruz	Landrieu	Schatz

Schumer	Tester	Walsh
Scott	Thune	Warner
Sessions	Toomey	Warren
Shaheen	Udall (CO)	Whitehouse
Shelby	Udall (NM)	Wicker
Stabenow	Vitter	Wyden

NAYS—1

Heller

The nomination was confirmed.

VOTE ON LU NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MANCHIN). Under the previous order, there will be 2 minutes of debate equally divided in the usual form prior to a vote on the Lu nomination.

Mr. KAINE. Mr. President, I ask that all time be yielded back.

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

All time is yielded back.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Christopher P. Lu, of Virginia, to be Deputy Secretary of Labor?

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motions to reconsider are considered made and laid upon the table.

The President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will resume legislative session.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

PROTECTING VOLUNTEER FIRE-FIGHTERS AND EMERGENCY RESPONDERS ACT OF 2014

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 3979, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 3979) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to ensure that emergency services volunteers are not taken into account as employees under the shared responsibility requirements contained in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

Pending:

Reid (for Reed) amendment No. 2874, of a perfecting nature.

Reid amendment No. 2875 (to amendment No. 2874), to change the enactment date.

Reid amendment No. 2876 (to amendment No. 2875), of a perfecting nature.

Reid amendment No. 2877 (to the language proposed to be stricken by amendment No. 2874), to change the enactment date.

Reid amendment No. 2878 (to amendment No. 2877), of a perfecting nature.

Reid motion to commit the bill to the Committee on Finance, with instructions, Reid amendment No. 2879, to change the enactment date.

Reid amendment No. 2880 (to the instructions) amendment No. 2879), of a perfecting nature.

Reid amendment No. 2881 (to amendment No. 2880), of a perfecting nature.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. KAINE. Mr. President, I rise to talk about a whole series of issues—including unemployment insurance and the minimum wage—that are designed to help Americans attain economic mobility and get a fair shot to move up in the way our economy is designed to work.

This morning the Budget Committee had a hearing entitled “Opportunity, Mobility, and Inequality in Today’s Economy.” We heard from three very strong witnesses, including Nobel laureate Joseph Stiglitz. We talked about important topics central to understanding the long-held American dream: If you work hard and play by the rules, you should be able to support your family, provide an opportunity for your kids, and have a fair retirement. But for too many—as the Presiding Officer knows—opportunity and mobility are especially hard to find and income inequality is growing.

I am an optimist. I know the solutions are here if we work to find them, and I want to take a couple of minutes to talk about some of the solutions. First, let’s try to put a human face on the problem of inequality in our economy.

Income inequality in the United States is at a record level. It is higher in the United States than virtually any other developed country. President Obama has called income equality the central challenge of our times. The Presiding Officer and I share a Roman Catholic background. Last week the President was talking to Pope Francis in the Vatican, and they talked about how this is not just an American challenge but a global challenge.

According to the CBO, the average income of a household in the richest 1 percent in this country was nearly 180 percent higher in 2010 than it was in 1979 in real dollars. By comparison, the average income for a household in the middle 20 percent of the income distribution had only grown by about 25 percent—about one in seven—of what the households in the highest income levels had grown.

Since 1979, the top 1 percent of our population’s share of national income grew from 8.9 percent to 14.9 percent. So 1 percent has 15 percent of the national income by 2010, but at the same time the bottom 80 percent of our American population saw their share of national income significantly shrink.

For me the issue is not just inequality because there will always be some inequality. Fate, luck, and health will produce some unequal outcomes. But what I think is great about this country is that while we can see inequality and tolerate some degree of it, what we will not tolerate is people being locked into unequal situations.

We want to have a society where people may be born poor or may have an accident or a fate that will have them in a lower economic status but they can still raise their ceiling and achieve all they can. But in the case of social mobility, the United States is now one

of the poorest performing of the developed countries.

Today a child born into the bottom quintile in the American economic life only has a 7.5-percent chance of ever being in the top quintile. In a country such as Denmark in Europe—and we think of Europe as a more stratified society—that number is nearly double what the number is in the United States.

It is not just inequality, it is mobility. We are not giving people a fair shot, to use the words of the great American singer Curtis Mayfield, “to move on up” to their destination and that place where their dreams can take them if they work hard enough.

What we need to do is embrace strategies that let people move on up and have a fair shot to achieve. We don’t only need to embrace strategies for success, we have to eliminate structures and eliminate barriers that lock people out of economic opportunities that they should be able to achieve similar to anyone else.

One solution is the minimum wage bill that we will start to talk about soon. It is about working Americans who are earning minimum wage or just above minimum wage and how this will affect them.

I think I can safely say the vast majority of Virginians would agree with this proposition: No one who works full time—8 hours a day, 40 hours a week, 52 weeks a year—should live in poverty. But today someone making the minimum wage earns about \$15,000 a year, which is \$3,000 below the poverty level for a family of three. If you are a single mom with a couple of kids—and so many people are raising children on their own—and work full time at the minimum wage, you are below the poverty level.

The minimum wage today is at a historic low. The minimum wage has lost 33 percent of its buying power since its peak in 1968. If the minimum wage in 1968 had just kept pace with inflation, it would be \$10.71 per hour today and not in the \$7 range.

Workers who regularly receive tips are treated even worse. They get paid a subminimum wage—what is called a tipped minimum wage—of \$2.13 an hour. As long as you make \$30 in tips a month, your company can pay you \$2.13 an hour. Overwhelmingly these workers work in restaurants but not exclusively, and similar to other minimum wage workers they are predominately women.

Twenty-eight million Americans will receive an increase in pay if we raise the minimum wage under the bill that is currently before the Senate. It has been reported out of the HELP Committee, and we will take it up soon. More than half of those who will receive a raise are women. The vast majority are adult workers. Over 14 million American children have a parent who will receive a raise if we increase the minimum wage.

The Minimum Wage Fairness Act will boost the minimum wage to about

\$21,000, lifting families above the poverty line. In total—get this—the bill we will hopefully debate and vote on soon is estimated to lift nearly 7 million Americans out of poverty and above the poverty level. What could we do, as we debate, that would have more effect on people’s lives than lifting 7 million people above the poverty level, which we would do if we pass the bill.

Increasing the minimum wage to \$10.10 an hour will increase GDP by nearly \$22 billion as workers spend their raises in local businesses and communities. In Virginia about 744,000 of my fellow citizens will receive a raise. For this reason, business owners whom I talk to—not all but a huge number and especially small business owners—know that the minimum wage increase makes good business sense.

Yesterday I visited a supermarket just across the Potomac in Alexandria. It is called MOM’s Organic Market. They have 11 locations in the DC metropolitan area and Philadelphia. They are contemplating opening another store in New York City. I met with the owner Scott Nash, and I talked to his employees. I asked the employees: How long have you worked here? The answer I got back was 7 years, 8 years, 10 years. They made it their practice to pay their employees a \$10 minimum wage now, and they are going to increase it. They fully support the bill currently pending before the Senate to increase the minimum wage.

Scott Nash is not alone. We are celebrating a very important centennial this year. It is a centennial of one of the smartest things an American employer ever did. I will read a quote.

After the success of the moving assembly line, Henry Ford had another transformative idea. In January of 1914, he startled the world by announcing that the Ford Motor Company would pay \$5 a day to its workers. The pay increase would be accompanied with a shorter workday—from 9 to 8 hours. While this rate did not automatically apply to every worker, it more than doubled the average auto-worker’s wage. While Henry’s primary objective was to reduce worker attrition, newspapers from all over the world reported the story as an extraordinary gesture of good will.

Here is the important part:

Henry Ford had reasoned that since it was now possible to build inexpensive cars in volume, more of them could be sold if employees could afford to buy them. The \$5 day helped better the lot of all American workers and contributed to the emergence of the American middle class. In the process, Henry Ford had changed manufacturing forever.

This quote is not from some Democratic talking point. This quote is from the Web site of the Ford Motor Company—a press release they issued in January to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Henry Ford’s novel decision.

There was an employer who knew the American economy was based on consumer demand and if workers could be

paid more, they would buy more, it would help his company, and it would help America. The Senate can take action in this way, and the Senate can take action in other ways to give people a fair shot to move on up in American society.

In fact, we have already acted on a couple of bills I hope the House will pick up. We acted on immigration reform, which strengthens border security, creates a pathway to legal status and citizenship for millions of undocumented immigrants, and helps businesses and families. This eliminates a barrier that keeps people from moving up, and the CBO estimates it will significantly improve the American economy. Immigration reform is about a fair shot. Immigration reform is about moving up.

We also acted on ENDA, legislation to end discrimination in the workplace against folks based on sexual orientation. A person can’t move on up and achieve their economic dreams if folks can fire someone at will if they don’t like the kind of person someone is or who they love. So ENDA, which awaits action in the House, is also a bill about making sure people have a fair shot and can move on up.

We can act this week. We are now on the bill to provide unemployment insurance to those who are still struggling in the economy. Soon we will consider paycheck fairness for women. A person can’t achieve all they can if they are going to be paid significantly less than their colleagues just because of gender.

In coming weeks we will also consider jobs skills and education legislation, which are real keys to economic opportunity for so many.

What we need to do is pretty simple. What the Presiding Officer did and what so many others in this Chamber did when we were Governors was to try to give individuals the tools to create their own opportunity, to create their own mobility, as well as to take the steps we could when there were barriers or structures in the way to move those out of the way so people had a fair shot to succeed.

With that, I thank the Chair, and I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

NATIONAL SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS MONTH

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, today marks the beginning of National Sexual Assault Awareness Month. It comes at a time when Congress is about ready to take up reauthorization of the Justice For All Act—a law that has improved public safety, strengthened victims’ rights, and delivered justice all across this country. I am proud to be the lead Republican sponsor of this bill, and I am even prouder of what it has accomplished and what it will continue to accomplish.

Thanks to the Justice For All Act and similar initiatives, law enforcement agencies across America now have greater resources to reduce the

rape kit backlog. I might just explain. A rape kit is, as it sounds, a forensic collection of evidence collected at the scene of a sexual assault. Much to our chagrin, we have learned over time that many of these rape kits—this forensic evidence—is not forwarded to a lab for testing and, thus, the DNA of the assailant is not identified. So we realized that local jurisdictions needed more resources and more guidance and more expertise when it came to testing these untested rape kits because of the incredible evidence it provides, both to acquit people who have been falsely accused of crimes, as well as to identify, indict, and convict serial sexual assailants.

This is sort of unique in many ways because people who commit rape don't just do it one time. Many times they will do it time and time again until they are caught. Worse yet, this is a crime of opportunity. Many times it involves children as well, as we know. So now we know that thanks to the Justice For All Act and similar initiatives which have allowed these rape kits to be taken off the evidence locker shelf and tested, that what has been a national scandal, which has allowed violent criminals to remain on the streets, is now being addressed more and more.

I am not here to suggest that everything that can be done has been done, but it is important for us to make sure these rape kits are tested and to get these serial sexual assailants off the streets and brought before a court of law and justice.

Even a relatively small reduction in the backlog can lead to major gains in public safety and peace of mind. In the city of Detroit, for example, the processing of 1,600 old sexual assault kits, including some from the 1980s, allowed authorities to identify 100 different serial rapists, ten of whom were convicted rapists already. So this is powerful evidence. Incredibly, police sometimes keep this forensic evidence for 20 or 30 years, and it is still susceptible to being tested, and for the rapist to be identified and to be taken out of circulation.

In the city of Houston, meanwhile, a backlog that once reached 6,600 untested rape kits is now in the process of being completely eliminated—thanks, in large part, to the support provided by this legislation.

I wish to take a second to highlight the SAFER Act, which was included in the Violence Against Women Act and which passed just this last year, and the fact that it funded a provision of the Justice For All Act known as the Debbie Smith Act. I have had the pleasure of meeting Debbie Smith for whom this legislation was named, and she has become a tireless advocate for the sorts of reforms and improved funding that are contained in the SAFER Act and in the Justice For All reauthorization.

The SAFER Act mandated that more of the money the Federal Government granted must be used to actually test

old rape kits as well as dedicate a portion of that money to inventory—evidence that had been sitting on police evidence locker shelves or had been sent to laboratories but had not yet been tested. This law, passed in 2013, has already played a crucial role in making Federal support available for tackling the rape kit backlog.

I was proud to introduce that legislation and I am proud to sponsor reauthorization of the Justice For All Act. As I said a moment ago, I am enormously gratified and proud of what these laws have helped us accomplish. Upholding victims' rights and keeping dangerous predators off the street are two of the most solemn obligations the government has, and we should never forget it.

With hundreds of thousands of rape kits still untested, we have a long way to go; there is no question about it. It is encouraging to see the progress that has been made. Hopefully, this will encourage us to take even further steps to make sure these untested rape kits are tested and the people who are innocent are vindicated from any charges. But the people who commit serial sexual assault, both against other adults and minors, should be and will be brought to justice.

THE ECONOMY

Shifting gears to the economy, I wish to repeat a call I made yesterday and once again urge the majority leader in the context of the legislation we are currently considering to allow Republican ideas for economic growth and job creation to come to the floor for a vote.

I realize President Obama has stubbornly chosen to stick with the same policies that have given us the weakest economic recovery following a recession since World War II. It is also the highest—the longest period of high unemployment since the Great Depression. Indeed, after promoting the same fiscal and economic strategy for the last 5 years—a strategy that involves higher taxes, more Federal spending, and more debt—the President and his allies seem to see no reason to change course. His proposed budget for 2015, for example, would increase Federal spending by \$791 billion. It would also increase taxes by \$1.8 trillion over 10 years, and increase our national debt by \$8.3 trillion. That is on top of the \$17 trillion already—about \$56,000 for every man, woman, and child in America.

For those keeping score, the President has already raised taxes by \$1.7 trillion during his presidency and increased our national debt by four times that much. In other words, if more taxes and more spending were the path to prosperity for this great Nation, America would be booming, unemployment would be at zero, and our economy would be chugging along, creating new jobs right and left. Instead, the evidence is in. We are experiencing stagnation and mass unemployment. It is said that insanity is defined as doing the same thing over and over but some-

how expecting a different result. If that is the definition of insanity, then maintaining the current policies of spending, tax, and debt are the definition of insanity.

There has to be a better way, and there is, if only the majority leader would allow the Senate to do what it is supposed to do. This body used to once be known as the world's greatest deliberative body, where we had the great debates on the issues of the time, and then we had a vote, and we all accepted the majority vote in those instances. But now, the new tactic by the majority leader seems to be to bring a bill to the floor without going through a committee where members of that legislative committee are allowed to offer amendments and to get votes on those amendments to help shape the committee product. We don't even do that anymore, and we didn't do that on this underlying unemployment insurance extension bill we will be voting on this week.

So Members of the Republican Conference—the Republican Members of the Senate—have offered 45 amendments, all of which are designed to improve the underlying piece of legislation and not just kick the can down the road. I would think the majority leader and the President of the United States would welcome our efforts to try to improve the underlying legislation—but apparently not.

For example, can't we do a better job, let's say, of directing Federal dollars for workforce training efforts in places such as West Virginia and Texas so that for the good jobs that do exist, we could match the skills of these people who have been unemployed for a long time to those good jobs that pay very well and do exist in abundance. So we have 45 different suggestions and ideas we would like to offer in the spirit of cooperation and trying to do our jobs as Members of the Senate. However, so far, the majority leader has steadfastly and, I might add, stubbornly, pushed for another extension of unemployment insurance without anything else attached that would actually improve workforce training and programs that would upgrade stale skills for people who have been unemployed for a long period of time so they can qualify to do the good-paying jobs that exist.

One of the favorite parlor games here in Washington, DC, is to spin various narratives to explain what is happening in Washington. Sometimes I have heard the majority leader and others say the Republican Party is the party of no. Well, that is a false narrative. We have 45 different amendments that would improve this underlying legislation. We have been shut out and, more importantly, the 26 million people I represent in the State of Texas have been shut out of this debate and this discussion and this effort to come forward with a better product. Isn't that what we are here for?

I mentioned some of these ideas that have been proposed yesterday. For example, I mentioned a bill, sponsored in different forms, by the senior Senator from Maine and the junior Senator from South Carolina that would relieve the burden of ObamaCare, which has been complained about mightily by organized labor and others, that has compelled—or induced, I should say—employers to take 40-hour workweeks and shrink them to 30 hours or less in order to avoid ObamaCare penalties. So this amendment would relieve that burden on workers and businesses by restoring the traditional 40-hour work week. Why wouldn't that be a subject worthy of debate and a vote in the Senate?

I mentioned a separate bill introduced by the junior Senator from South Carolina that would modernize workforce training and eliminate duplicative governmental programs. There are more than 40 different government programs that purport to train people to improve their job skills all across the country.

I have had the chance to visit some of those locations in Texas, and they do a very good job. But rather than have 40-plus different programs, why don't we have 1 or 2 and use the extra money from all that duplication in order to put more money into these programs so they can train more people and get them back to work faster? That is another of the amendments that have been shut out of this process so far.

I also mention legislation sponsored by the senior Senator from Utah and the junior Senator from Kentucky respectively that would eliminate ObamaCare's job-killing tax on medical innovation—something that I believe, if allowed to come for a vote, would receive an overwhelming majority vote on a bipartisan basis in the Senate.

Also, the junior Senator from Kentucky has a piece of legislation that would make it easier for Congress to block major regulations that cannot pass a simple cost-benefit analysis.

Meanwhile, the junior Senator from Wyoming and the senior Senator from North Dakota, whom I see on the floor, have a bill that would expedite the approval of natural gas exports to our NATO partners in Europe and to Ukraine and help relieve that stranglehold Vladimir Putin and Russia have on Europe because they control most of their energy supply. It would also approve the Keystone XL Pipeline, thereby creating thousands of well-paying American jobs and would transport North Dakota oil and Canadian oil all the way down to Texas, where it would be refined into gasoline and jet fuel and create thousands of jobs in the process.

In addition, another amendment that has been offered on this underlying legislation that would help the economy grow and help get people back to work and rein in excessive Federal regulation that is killing jobs—the senior Senator from Oklahoma has a bill that would stop new EPA regulations

until—until—the Agency could tell us exactly what the impact of those regulations would be on jobs and the economy.

So most of the ideas I have listed have been submitted as one of these 45 amendments to the underlying unemployment insurance bill. Yet the majority leader, who is the traffic cop on the Senate floor—the rules of the Senate give him complete, 100-percent discretion to decide which amendments are going to get a vote and which will not—the majority leader seems determined to prevent any votes on any of these ideas.

If we are truly serious about job creation and if we are truly serious about doing everything possible to get America back to work—because of the dignity work provides and the means it provides people to provide for their own families and to pursue their dreams—why on Earth would we deny Members a chance to vote on these job-creating pieces of legislation? Well, unfortunately, I think we got a little bit of a peek into the majority leader's playbook last week when he and others had a press conference upstairs and talked about this agenda they had for the time from the present through the election. And they were pretty candid about it. This is an agenda they dreamed up in conjunction with the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee. The majority leader said as much in his announcement. In other words, this is a political plan by the political arm of the Democratic Senators' campaign committee. So this is not about finding solutions or else the majority leader would welcome these suggestions we have offered.

I would say to the majority leader, do not allow votes on these amendments simply to placate me and others of my political party. Do not do it for us. Do it for the 3.8 million people who have been unemployed for more than 6 months. Do it for them. Do it for the untold numbers of people who have simply given up looking for work. Our labor participation rate—the percentage of Americans actually in the workforce—is at a 40-year low. So it is not only the tragedy of the unemployment numbers that we see reported, it is people who are not reflected in those unemployment numbers because those statistics do not count people who have given up. And that is what the low labor participation rate indicates. These are the people who need our help, and they are the ones who deserve a vote on these constructive suggestions to the underlying piece of legislation. I hope the majority leader will reconsider.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

GUN VIOLENCE

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, in January of this year, I came to the floor to talk about and honor one of my constituents, Javier Martinez, who was killed on December 28 of last year,

just as 2013 was ending. He was shot while walking to a friend's house in New Haven. He was 18 years old.

In the aftermath of that tragedy, I have spoken with Javier's family and his friends about his life and legacy. As I said on the Senate floor a few months ago, Javier was a kind and intelligent young man, well on his way to becoming a leader in his community. He cared a lot about the environment. He worked with the Nature Conservancy and the New Haven Urban Resources Initiative to plant trees and protect endangered species. His classmates at the Common Ground High School in New Haven would like to plant a tree at the site of his death and dedicate a garden in his honor because of his interest in the outdoors and the natural resources that enhance the beauty of our world, which he loved so much.

Yesterday morning I visited some of Javier's classmates at the Common Ground High School in New Haven. I spoke to a group of young people who were serious about ending gun violence because it is such a serious cause of heartbreak, grief, loss, and sacrifice—not just in New Haven, not just in Sandy Hook, but throughout our country in big and small towns, rural and urban neighborhoods, people from all backgrounds and different walks of life. I spoke to the Common Ground AP U.S. Government class, where the students and their teacher, Brian Kelahan, were kind enough to welcome me and share with me some of their views on gun violence and the justice system in this country. I told them what I firmly believe: that I have a duty to listen to them and to all people who live in Connecticut because they have a unique insight and a depth of understanding and perspective that should be shared here in Washington, DC, in this body and around the country.

It is my job to bring that perspective, those insights back to Washington. So I want to begin by showing my colleagues a picture of those Common Ground students who were Javier's classmates. This photograph was taken at the top of East Rock. Unfortunately, it is somewhat indistinct as to who is pictured here. But it is overlooking a scene that Javier knew well with people who were his friends. They are dedicated to ending gun violence in this country because they know firsthand the toll it takes. They have been no stranger to gun violence in their neighborhoods. Many of them have to travel long distances to come to this school—the Common Ground High School in New Haven—from neighborhoods that are afflicted with gun violence, and they suffer the traumatic, emotional, sometimes physical threats that come with that exposure to violence.

Connecticut also has been no stranger to gun violence over the last year and a half, and I have come to the floor many times with my colleague Senator MURPHY to commemorate the courageous and strong people of New Town

and in particular the families who suffered the loss of 20 beautiful children and 6 great educators.

What the students who met with me yesterday morning wanted me to hear bears telling and repeating here. They were speaking truth to power. What they wanted all of my colleagues to hear and what I strongly believe is that as tragic as the mass slayings are in this country, no less tragic, no less horrific, no less important is the shooting of one innocent 18-year-old young man like Javier while walking to a friend's house. It may not make the national news. It rarely does anymore because we have come to regard gun violence, in a way, like the background noise of our society. It may not feature prominently in the headlines. Individual gun violence is a plague, still, that affects all of us as it affects any one of us. We cannot let these shootings continue in our urban communities. Many of them are committed with handguns. Many are the result of illegal gun trafficking and straw purchases. Far too many are ignored by the news media—simply disregarded background noise.

Gun violence affects all of us wherever we live in Connecticut and the country. If anything positive is to come of these tragedies in New Town and New Haven—and in the 30,000 other deaths that have happened since New Town—as a result of gun violence, it should be the uniting and bringing together of all who have been touched by gun violence, which is all of us. That goal is one that will drive me, and I am sure others here, to seek an end to gun violence with commonsense, sensible measures, such as the ones we considered—background checks, mental health initiatives, school safety.

The Presiding Officer helped to craft a very sensible and commonsense approach to background checks. We prohibit felons, criminals, mentally deranged people, and addicts from having these firearms, but we have no universal background check system to make sure they do not purchase them. How effective can enforcement be if there is no real way of checking who is buying these firearms?

A young woman who is a senior at Common Ground, in fact, asked me what laws can be effective when people are willing to break them, buy firearms even though they are prohibited from doing so. That is an important question. The answer is that no law is perfect, none can be absolutely perfectly enforced, but regulations and restrictions on dangerous people having firearms can reduce the level of gun violence in our society, reduce the number of criminals buying weapons. Background checks especially have been shown—there is empirical evidence—to reduce the number of guns that get into the wrong hands.

Students and teachers asked me about the way our country deals with criminal justice. Systematic disparities continue to plague our justice sys-

tem, resulting in severely disproportionate rates of incarceration for young men and women of color. They spoke about the overlapping cultures of law enforcement and school discipline and about the need to reduce prison populations and bring about much needed reform in the way sentences are calculated, not only as a matter of fairness but also to reduce the cost in our society of incarceration.

These young people are thinking about where our society should be going. What is our plan and our strategy for making our neighborhoods and communities better places and safer places to live?

I made a commitment to those students pictured here in this picture that I would come back again. And I will. I made a commitment that I would tell their story, which is really Javier's story—a story of hope and promise, dreams and aspirations, cut short by gun violence because he was in the wrong place at the wrong time and murdered.

That investigation may be ongoing, but we already know the answer to the fundamental question: Can we do something to reduce gun violence? The answer is yes, in his name, in the name of 30,000 people who have perished along with him from gun violence, needless and senseless deaths that are all our responsibility.

I respect the Second Amendment, as I know the Presiding Officer does. I respect the right of people under the Constitution and the Second Amendment to own and possess firearms and use them for hunting, for recreation, target practice. I will continue to honor the memory of Javier Martinez and the lives and aspirations and homes of the students at Common Ground, and work not only to build that garden but to make the neighborhood around it safer and the community around it a more nurturing and better place to live.

I have made no secret of the fact that I believe this body has a responsibility to act, and its failure to do so is shameful and disgraceful. The students of Common Ground agree. If their aspirations include organizing to make more people aware of the need for this action, I commend them. In fact, I urge them to participate in this effort.

I wish to close with the words from a card they sent me with this photograph. The card read:

Senator Blumenthal, we are so grateful for your help in remembering Javier Martinez, supporting our Common Ground community and taking action to stop gun violence. It means so much to have you by our side as we recover and make meaning in this incredibly difficult time. Know that we will stay with you in the struggle to build a safe and peaceful community.

I know it sounds more like rhetoric than reality. But I will tell my colleagues in the Senate that as long as the young people of Common Ground and others like them are at our side, we will prevail in commonsense measures to reduce gun violence, and we will prevail in the fight to make America a better, safer place to live.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. HOEVEN. Mr. President, I rise to offer an amendment to the unemployment insurance legislation we are currently considering. While we all want to help those who are unemployed, the real solution is to get them a job, is to create a growing economy and more jobs. We need to get this economy going. One way we can do it is by empowering our energy sector.

That does not mean spending more government money. What it means is taking the shackles off billions in private investment that is ready to go into energy development in this country. In 2011, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce commissioned a study. The study took a look at the energy projects that are stalled in this country due to government bureaucracy and redtape.

That study found there are more than 350 energy projects, projects that will both produce renewable energy as well as projects that will produce traditional energy that are stalled at a cost of \$1.1 trillion to the American economy, at a cost of almost 2 million jobs for the American people.

I want to take a minute to read from that report:

In aggregate, planning and construction of the subject projects would generate \$577 billion in direct investments, calculated in current dollars. The indirect and induced effect, where we apply the multiplier, would generate an approximate \$1.1 trillion increase in U.S. Gross Domestic Product, GDP, including \$352 billion in employment earnings based on present discounted value over an average construction period of 7 years.

Furthermore, we estimate that as many as 1.9 million jobs would be required during each year of construction.

Two million jobs. Many of these projects are still blocked by government redtape and the permitting process. That is why I have introduced a States First All-of-the-Above Energy Plan for our country to get these projects going. If you think about it, it just makes sense. The States, after all, are the laboratories of democracy. Let's make them the laboratories of energy for our country.

The right energy plan is about much more than just energy. It means economic growth, it means national security, and it means jobs—jobs for those who are currently unemployed and jobs at a good wage. Today I am offering amendments to the unemployment insurance legislation that will do all of those things.

The first one I wish to talk about for a minute is the Energy Security Act. I am pleased to join with the senior Senator from Wyoming Mr. BARRASSO and also our ranking member on the Energy Committee, Senator LISA MURKOWSKI from Alaska, as well as other cosponsors on the legislation, Senator JOHN CORNYN of Texas, obviously a big energy-producing State, Senator JAMES INHOFE of Oklahoma, and Senator DAVID VITTER of Louisiana.

What the Energy Security Act does, quite simply, is first it approves the Keystone XL project. This is a more than \$5 billion pipeline that has been in the permitting process now for more than 5 years. We are now in the sixth year of the permitting process trying to get a permit from the administration. We have thousands of pipelines all across this country, millions of miles of pipeline, and here is a project that for 6 years the administration has held in limbo.

The latest greatest technology moves Canadian oil, our closest ally, Canada, moves oil from Canada as well as oil from my State, North Dakota, and Montana to refineries across the United States. We import 50 percent of our oil. Do Americans want to get that from the Middle East or do they want to produce it here in our country and get it from our closest friend and ally, Canada? That is an obvious answer. That is why in poll after poll, 3 to 1, Americans want this project approved. But it remains in limbo, now in its sixth year of the permitting process on the part of the administration.

So when I talk about those 350 projects, when I talk about \$1.1 trillion in GDP, when we talk about almost 2 million American jobs that study performed by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce identified, you can see what they are talking about when you talk about this project that has been held up now into the sixth year.

The legislation, the Energy Security Act, would approve that project, but it would also approve the 24 pending applications that would allow us to export LNG, liquefied natural gas, to our allies who need that help. Right now in this country we produce 30 trillion cubic feet of natural gas a year. We consume about 26 trillion cubic feet of natural gas. That is growing rapidly. Believe me, I know. We are flaring off natural gas in our State that we want to get to market. We need a market for that product. But right now we are not allowed to export liquefied natural gas to countries such as the NATO countries.

Look what is going on in Eastern Europe, such as what Russia is doing in Ukraine. What is next? One of the reasons Russia is able to take that kind of action and the European Union is reluctant to put sanctions in place as a response is because Europe, Ukraine, are dependent on Russia for natural gas for energy. Over one-third of the supply of the EU's energy comes from Russia.

So we have an opportunity here. We can create economic activity. We can create jobs. We can use that natural gas we produce beyond what we need here at home to help our allies and at the same time stand up to Russian aggression. That is why I say this is about jobs. This is about getting our economy growing. But this is also very much about national security, our national security here at home, energy security for our country, but also secu-

rity working with our allies to stand up against the kind of aggression we see from Russia and from President Putin right now.

In terms of jobs, the Obama administration's State Department, their own State Department, has estimated the Keystone XL Pipeline during the construction phase will create more than 40,000 jobs. That is just that one project, more than 40,000 jobs. If you look at some of the studies, very conservative studies on job creation that will occur by approving these LNG applications, the National Economic Research Associates identifies more than 45,000 jobs that would be created by expediting approval of those permits.

Let me give you two examples so you understand the magnitude of what we are dealing with here. Cheniere Energy wants to invest \$11 billion in an export facility at Corpus Cristi, TX. That is not one penny of government spending—not one penny. We have a huge deficit and we have a huge debt. We have got to get on top of it. That means controlling our spending, but that means we have to have economic growth.

So here are companies willing to invest and create jobs and create economic growth and create tax revenues—not raising taxes, creating tax revenue. Why in the world do we hold them up? How does that make sense? How is that common sense? Here we are on an unemployment insurance bill where we are going to spend more government money to pay people who remain unemployed when we could approve these projects and put them back to work at good-paying jobs. Instead of growing the deficit, we could actually create tax revenues from a growing economy—again, not higher taxes, from a growing economy that helps reduce our deficit and debt.

So the Cheniere Energy project, \$1 billion investment facility in Corpus Christi, creates a market for some of the natural gas that is now being flared off, according to the Perryman Group, 3,000 direct construction jobs, far more indirect jobs during the construction phase. Here is another project. Exxon wants to build the Golden Pass LNG facility at Sabine, TX, which is on the border between Texas and Louisiana. That is a \$10 billion investment. Perryman Group estimates that between both the direct construction jobs and indirect jobs, on the order of 45,000 jobs for that project during construction, almost 4,000 permanent jobs.

So you can see when we talk about NERA, the National Economic Research Associates, saying, hey, there are going to be 45,000 jobs for these projects, that is a very conservative estimate. It creates so much more—not just good-paying jobs but also a growing economy, cash revenues to help with the deficit and national security, and security working with our allies at a critical time, a critical time in Eastern Europe.

In addition, I have offered other legislation I filed, that I am now offering

as an amendment to this unemployment insurance bill—again, legislation that will create jobs and help people get back to work.

The second one I want to mention is the Empower States Act. The Empower States Act gives primary regulatory responsibility to the States when it comes to regulating hydraulic fracturing. The reality is, a Federal one-size-fits-all approach does not work for hydraulic fracturing, because the way hydraulic fracturing is done across this country is different in different States. The way they hydraulically fracture in States, for example, in West Virginia, where they are going after natural gas is very different than the way they do it in North Dakota where we are going after oil. We drill down 2 miles, 2 miles vertical drill bore to reach the oil, and then we drill out for miles at that level.

We produce primarily oil and natural gas—huge amounts of natural gas and gas liquids as a byproduct—but we are miles away from any potable water, which is much closer to the surface, so it is very safe. The water that is produced—both the frack water as well as the water that comes up with that oil and natural gas—we put back downhole through saltwater disposal wells, in essence recycling the water. Anything that can't be reused goes back downhole and that creates a recycling process.

That is different than the way it is done in the Marcellus shale in places such as New York, Pennsylvania, and it is different than the way it is done in West Virginia and different than the way it is done in the Utica shale in Ohio. There are some similarities with the way it is done in Texas in the Eagle Ford, where they also drill for oil.

But the point is, the way this is done, the technologies that are used, even the product we are going after—and certainly the formations are different across the country.

When we put a Federal one-size-fits-all approach in place, it doesn't work. Not only does it not do the job in terms of making sure we have the right kind of regulation, it holds up projects. It prevents job creation. It doesn't allow our economy to grow. It doesn't empower us to produce the energy that could be produced across this country with the right approach, with the right energy plan.

As far as job creation, our State is now the fastest growing State. We have the lowest unemployment, and we have the fastest growing economy, 7.6 percent in the most recent statistic versus a 2.6-percent average for the other States. Again, this is about creating a growing economy. It is about creating jobs.

Also, I am offering the Domestic Energy and Jobs Act legislation I filed as an amendment to this bill. DEJA is a series of bills that has already passed the House. This is all legislation that has already passed the House. So we know if we can get a vote in the Senate, the legislation we can pass in the

Senate has already gone through the House. We are already a huge distance on the journey to getting this done.

What does the Domestic Energy and Jobs Act do? It does exactly what the title says. It reduces the regulatory burden, it sets goals, it helps us produce more energy and create jobs.

For example, we establish an American energy development plan for Federal lands. We have all of these Federal lands—millions and millions of acres of Federal land both onshore and offshore. The Department of Interior should have a plan to develop energy on those public lands, and they should set goals to do so. This legislation would require them to do just that.

We freeze and study the impact of EPA rules on gasoline regulations. That benefits all Americans at the pump, not only small businesses that are looking to hire people but families, all consumers.

We provide onshore oil and gas leasing certainty, meaning that the Department of Interior has to approve the permits within a stipulated, reasonable period of time. It advances offshore wind production. This is about producing renewable energy as well as traditional energy. It streamlines the permitting process. It provides access to the National Petroleum Reserve for development in Alaska. It requires the BLM to hold live Internet auctions. Let's use this new technology to encourage investment in job creation and energy development in new and creative ways.

It establishes rules on surface mining that make sense, commonsense rules. It increases States' revenue sharing for Outer Continental Shelf drilling, offshore drilling, and it also offers lease sales off the Virginia coast.

Clearly, developing these new areas creates revenue for the States, creates revenues for the Federal Government, creates more energy for our country, and creates more jobs—not spending Federal money, investing hundreds of billions of private dollars that are currently sidelined in these new and exciting projects.

Finally, I am offering the stream buffer rule legislation that I filed as a stand-alone bill. I am offering that as an amendment as well to this UI bill. The Department of Interior wants to implement a Federal one-size-fits-all rule for stream buffer zones, meaning mining proximity to rivers and streams. Again, a one-size-fits-all, one-size Federal approach for every situation does not work. Allow the States to take the primary role in regulating the stream buffer zones and let them do what makes sense.

With all of this legislation, we can empower hundreds of billions in private investment. We can put that investment in good old-fashioned American ingenuity into getting our country going, getting our economy growing, and getting our people back to work.

We can do it. The way we can get started is simply by voting. That is

what we do in the Senate. That is what we do in this Senate forum. Let us put forward our ideas and let's have a vote. If it passes, we can do these things. But why in the world wouldn't we get a vote? That is what this body is all about. Let's have the debate. Come to the floor and let's have a debate. Let's debate each one of these and a lot more. That is what we do. Then let's vote. That is how we will decide. That is what the American people expect us to do. They sent us to the Senate to do just that.

The question I have is why aren't we voting on these amendments and a lot more if we are serious about getting people back to work? If somebody wants to come down and refute this, come on down, do it, and then let's vote.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. I commend my colleague, the Senator from North Dakota, not only for his leadership on so many energy initiatives, but for the proposal he has put forth this afternoon.

I am pleased to be able to join him in support of those various measures—measures that, as he has outlined, will not only as a nation allow us to move forward and take that leadership role, which we so rightly have and should use as something to benefit not only ourselves and our economy, jobs within the Nation, but to benefit other nations. The proposal he has advanced—again, that I am pleased to join him on—is one that allows for incredible jobs and opportunities with the construction of the Keystone XL Pipeline, provisions that will allow for expedited processing of our LNG exports.

It recognizes, again, that when we produce more in this country—when we produce more of a resource that not only allows us to be more energy secure, but that also helps our friends and allies around the world, it also helps to truly effectively reduce the cost of that energy to American consumers.

How can this possibly be a negative? How can this possibly be bad when it adds to jobs, when it strengthens our economy, and when it makes us more secure as a nation.

There are many win/wins that we see in these energy proposals we have in front of us that Senator HOEVEN has offered. But, again, if we only have an opportunity to kind of talk aloud about them but never actually have the chance to move them forward through a legislative process so they can actually become law so we can actually see those benefits play out, it doesn't do us much good.

I appreciate what my colleague has outlined this afternoon through his proposals. I know we will have an opportunity to speak further to them tomorrow, and I look forward to doing that as well.

KING COVE

I want to take 5 minutes in this late afternoon to continue to educate not only my colleagues but folks within this administration and around the country about an injustice that continues to unfold in a small corner of my State, a very remote part of my State in southwestern Alaska for the small community of King Cove. There are about 950 people who live in King Cove.

I have been fighting since I came to the Senate, and before I came my father took up this fight, in an effort to get a small connector road, a small 10-mile, one-lane gravel, noncommercial-use road that will allow the people of King Cove access to an all-weather airport so they can get out in the event of medical emergencies.

We had another one last night. I had an email saying the weather had completely taken over in the gulf in King Cove, and there was an emergency call that went out. It was for a 58-year-old fisherman who had been injured. He had been out on a Seattle-based processor called the M/V Golden Alaska.

This fisherman happened to live in Seattle, and he was onboard this boat. They were out near Unimak Island, which is out toward the chain in the North Pacific, when this fisherman was accidentally sprayed with a high-pressure hose and it severely injured his eye. It was 1 a.m. when this incident happened.

We have this big vessel, a big processing vessel of 305 feet, heading from Dutch Harbor to Seattle when the accident happened. I don't have a map with me, but if we can envision, there is a lot of big, wide-open ocean, and medical care is a long way away. This fisherman couldn't wait for that medical care. The closest deepwater port was King Cove.

King Cove got the word that they had an injured fisherman onboard and they said: Look, our clinic can't handle somebody who has critical needs. See if you can take the boat over to Cold Bay so that not necessarily he can get medical care, he could get on an aircraft out of Cold Bay that could fly him the 600 miles or thereabouts to Anchorage for the medical care he needed. But the problem they faced was they had wind gusts of up to 60 miles per hour. They had rough seas, very rough seas.

The ship's captain said: I am not going into Cold Bay. I am not going to try to hoist a man who has been severely injured in his eye—I am not going to try to hoist him up a 20-foot ladder at the Cold Bay dock. We are not going to do that.

So they went into King Cove, a safer, more protected cove, and they were able to get the gentleman there at 11:30 a.m. The physician's assistant—we don't have a doctor in King Cove, we have a PA, somebody who basically does a good job in stabilizing folks. She contacted the emergency room in Anchorage.

The ER folks said: Look, you have to get this guy to an ophthalmologist as

soon as you possibly can in order to preserve as much of his eyesight as possible.

As I mentioned, not only does King Cove not have a doctor, they don't have any kind of a eye specialist. The nearest ophthalmologist is in Anchorage, more than 600 miles away.

The PA, Katie Eby, did what health professionals at the clinic always do in an emergency like this. She calls for help to our Coast Guard. She begs the Coast Guard to come. The Coast Guard says they will come, but they can't come now. They can't chance the weather to get in there. They are not going to risk a pilot and his crew to get into this situation where we unnecessarily put even more lives at risk. They said: Look, we are going to have to wait until the conditions improve and the winds die down. So the physician's assistant tries to stabilize the fisherman, manage his pain as best she can and basically she waits, holding the hand of a man and telling him the Coast Guard will come.

The Coast Guard did finally make it in around 3 in the afternoon the next day. So this injured fisherman waited 13 hours for the winds to settle.

The problem with this story, of course, is there were other alternatives for this fisherman who had been injured, who had to wait in pain wondering if he was going to go blind, if he was going to completely lose his eyesight while he was waiting for the Coast Guard helicopter to come in, to pluck him out, to fly him over to Cold Bay, and have a flight take him to Anchorage. The other alternative—the safe, reliable, affordable way out is a 10-mile, one-lane, gravel, noncommercial-use road. If that fisherman could have been put in an ambulance and taken across that road, a dozen hours could have been spared.

Yesterday's medevac marks the fifth medevac by the Coast Guard in this current year. In 2014, we have had five Coast Guard medevacs. Keep in mind, each one of these medevacs costs around \$210,000 per flight. So for those who are saying we can't have a road in King Cove because it is going to cost the taxpayers money, it is costing the taxpayers money because we are footing the bill for the Coast Guard.

Thank goodness the Coast Guard is there. But we are also putting the lives of these men and women—our fine coasties—at risk when we are doing this. If we had a road, who is building the road? It is the State of Alaska. Who is maintaining the road? It is the Aleutians East Borough. This is not the U.S. taxpayer who is paying for this, again, 10-mile, one-lane, gravel, noncommercial-use road.

There are options here. But the Secretary of the Interior has determined she wants to look at other options. She wants to find other alternatives. The fact of the matter is we have been looking at alternatives for a long time now, and those alternatives have been tried and failed or studied and reviewed and discarded.

But the one thing we are pretty sure of is that this fisherman from Seattle who was injured and had to wait 13 hours to get out—we are pretty sure we could have put him on an ambulance across that road—if one existed—and he would not have had to wait for 12 hours.

We are pretty sure that the 63-year-old woman who suffered heart issues on Valentine's Day and had to wait hours and hours for the Coast Guard to pluck her out of King Cove before she was able to safely make it to the hospital in Anchorage, we are pretty sure she could have been spared some of that agony.

We are pretty sure that a couple of weeks ago when a father who had been crushed by a 600-pound crab pot—his pelvis crushed and his legs broken—that for hours and hours and hours he waited in the King Cove clinic to get medevaced out, and of the fact that his infant son, a 1-month old baby named Wyatt who was there in respiratory distress also had to be medevaced out on the same day, only that baby had to make it through the night in the arms of the physician's assistant, and the PA knowing and feeling the infant was in distress and actually feeling him stop breathing.

If we had a road in place, with the agony of not only the individuals who have been injured but the loved ones who care about them, there are better alternatives, and, it is very clear to me, alternatives that work for the people who live there and the people who are in the area—the fishermen.

Maybe I am taking this a little too personally because my oldest son crabbed in the Bering Sea this winter. He was out in those waters. He was out in that foul weather. He was working in a very dangerous industry. Anybody who has ever watched "Deadliest Catch" knows what I am talking about. Both my sons fish in these areas. They go through the Gulf of Alaska. They go through Nunivak Pass every year as fishermen. If something should happen to them or to somebody else on their crew, and the closest deepwater port for them happened to be King Cove but the weather was to the ground, I want a road for them.

I want a road for the people in King Cove. I want a road for the Seattle fisherman who is transiting back. It is a lifeline. It is a way to get to help. Right now, the one thing keeping these people from getting help is the Secretary of the Interior because she has concluded that we cannot build a 10-mile, one-lane, gravel, noncommercial-use road without disturbing the waterfowl, the black brant, and the geese that go through the Izembek.

We have all heard my story on this many times before. We know we can build this small road and have it coexist peacefully with the birds that go through there. We know the people who live there will continue to care for the waterfowl and the wildlife just as they have for thousands of years.

I don't want to keep coming to the floor and ranting about why we need this road. I don't want to make it appear we are sensationalizing the injuries of men, women, and children for the purpose of winning this fight. But I am not going to have somebody die out there when we could have found a safer and saner path forward.

So I am going to keep coming to the floor. I hope the Secretary of the Interior is listening, that folks in the administration are listening, and that they understand we in Alaska can be responsible for the lands where we live, and we can provide for the health and safety of those who are out there and those who are transiting through. But we need this Secretary to do the right thing for the people of the State of Alaska and provide for a life-saving road.

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

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

The Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, I ask to be recognized for a few minutes, if I could, as if in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection.

IRAN U.N. AMBASSADOR

Mr. GRAHAM. There is an issue facing this country that needs to be addressed firmly and decisively. I am encouraged there is a bipartisan effort to deal with this issue, and the issue is very simple. The person who has been nominated to be the U.N. Ambassador for Iran is a gentleman who participated in the takeover of our Embassy in Tehran, holding hostage 52 U.S. personnel for 444 days.

This is a slap in the face by the Iranian Government to the American people, to the hostages, and it should not be allowed to stand. Senator CRUZ, I believe, will be offering a unanimous consent request potentially dealing with this issue, but I just wanted to rise for a few minutes and speak in support of what he is trying to accomplish in the Senate. I am somewhat encouraged that there is a bipartisan effort forming among our intel folks to deal with this affront to the American people, to all those held hostage, and basically to human dignity. The idea that the Iranians would be appointing someone connected in such an apparently direct way with the Embassy takeover back in 1979 to represent their nation in the U.N. tells us all we need to know about Iran.

This hardline-moderate divide doesn't exist. This is all a game. President Ruhani, when he was the nuclear negotiator for Iran, bragged about how much progress they made when the heat was off. If he were truly moderate

he wouldn't have been on the ballot and wouldn't be serving today at the pleasure of the Ayatollah. Nobody serves in a high position in Iran without the blessing of the Supreme Leader.

So the idea of making this gentleman—I don't want to butcher his name—the Ambassador to the United Nations from Iran when he has actively participated in violating every diplomatic principle involved, the idea of invading a consulate or embassy and taking hostages runs afoul of every principle of international law and diplomatic behavior.

It would be different if in the last 30 or so years the Iranian regime had changed. We have relationships with people today who are some of our strongest allies who used to be our enemies. There is nothing changing in Iran since the Embassy takeover that would place Iran in the column of a friend of America. This regime has been actively involved in worldwide terrorism plots. They have provided equipment to those who were fighting in Iraq to kill our soldiers. They support Hamas and Hezbollah, terrorist organizations. They have been designated by the State Department as a state sponsor of terrorism. They are trying to build a nuclear weapon, not a power plant. So they have actually been no good for a very long time. I hope this body will send a signal to the Iranians that we will not accept on U.S. soil the person who has been designated, because this person was actively engaged in holding 52 Americans hostage for 444 days, in contravention of every law on the books and human decency. If Iran wants a new relationship with the United States, this is not a good way to start it.

I think there will be a lot of bipartisan objection to allowing this person to come to New York. We have provisions in our laws that give us the right as the host nation to exclude people who have been involved in acts of terrorism against the United States or their neighbors and any security threat. Again, the idea of doing business with former enemies is the way of life. The idea of accepting that the Ambassador to the United Nations from Iran as one of the people intricately involved in the takeover of our Embassy and holding Americans hostage for 444 days is an affront to us as a people and to the United Nations as a whole. He has served in other posts in Europe. That is not the issue. It is our Embassy that was taken over; it was our people who were held hostage, and the surviving hostages are very upset, as they should be. We don't want to reward people for doing bad things. This would be the ultimate reward for somebody who did a very bad thing.

It would be a mistake to engage Iran in this way and not push back. If there is to be a better relationship with Iran, it is worth fighting for. We are going to have to stand up to these people because they will take advantage of us if we allow it.

I look forward to supporting Senator CRUZ and others who want to join in the effort to stop this appointment because it is wrong.

With that, I yield the floor and note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. WARREN). The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CRUZ. 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 Mr. CRUZ pertaining to the introduction of S. 2195 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. CRUZ. Madam President, I note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BALDWIN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

DEA'S FINAL RULE

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Madam President, I rise today to urge the Drug Enforcement Administration to issue the final rule necessary to implement the Secure and Responsible Drug Disposal Act of 2010. I note that year—2010—because that is the year this bipartisan bill was passed.

What it does is it provides consumers with safe and responsible ways to dispose of unused prescription medications and controlled substances.

I thank Senator CORNYN, who was the lead cosponsor on the Republican side of this legislation, as well as Senator GRASSLEY and Senator BROWN, for working with me on the legislation.

The important law expands safe disposal options for individuals and for long-term care facilities, and it promotes the development and expansion of prescription drug take-back programs.

As the Presiding Officer knows, this simply means that when you get prescription drugs and you do not use all of them—or your doctor prescribes something else—you do not just leave them in your medicine cabinet, where someone else might be taking them. Instead, you find a safe place to dispose of them, so someone else does not start taking them and potentially get hooked on the drug.

Why did I mention 2010? Well, 2010 was the year President Obama signed this bill into law. It has now been 4 years—4 years—as we have awaited the rules. I will describe why, but I think it is time to put this law into action.

The DEA issued a proposed rule in December 2012. Unfortunately, that took 2 years. There were some com-

ments then about making sure the rules worked for our long-term care facilities—you can imagine, there are a lot of prescription drugs at long-term facilities—and the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs. But these issues should be addressed in the final rule. It is time now to get this rule done so we have more options to easily and safely dispose of our prescription drugs.

I know the final rule is now at the Office of Management and Budget for their approval. I have spoken to them about this rule. I am also aware they have only had the rule for 35 days. So they are not really the ones who have been holding this up. They have 90 days to get this out, and they have pledged that they hope to get that done.

We need to get the rule done, and let me tell you why. As a former prosecutor, I have seen firsthand the devastating impact that drug addiction has on families and communities. During my 8 years as chief prosecutor in Hennepin County—the largest county in our State—drug cases made up about one-third of the caseload.

Most Americans know that we have a problem with serious drugs. But what most Americans may not know is that one of our most serious drug problems is, in fact, drugs that are in the medicine cabinet—drugs that are prescribed legally.

Within those cabinets are some of the most addictive prescription drugs out there—like pain killers and beta blockers. Prescription drugs such as these are some of the most commonly abused drugs—and people are surprised by this, but they are ahead of cocaine, heroin, and methamphetamines in many States.

Teenagers now abuse prescription drugs more than almost any other drug, and the majority of teens who abuse these drugs get them for free. They get them in that medicine cabinet or, more likely, a friend of theirs gets them from their mom's or dad's medicine cabinet—often without the knowledge of the person who has it.

I think we all know that many leftover drugs are lying around. You go to see the dentist for surgery, and they prescribe you something for pain. You feel OK. You only take 1 or 2, and then you have 10 left, and they are just sitting in the medicine cabinet.

We used to tell people to flush these drugs down the toilet. This is not a good idea for our water supply, and I think most people know that. Some people will tell you that the proper way to dispose of your drugs is to crush up your extra pills, then mix them with—and this is what they say—kitty litter or coffee grounds.

We need to do all we can to keep these dangerous drugs out of the hands of teens, but I am just not sure—especially if someone does not have a cat—that kitty litter is a realistic solution. Not everyone these days makes their own coffee nor has coffee grounds. We are dealing here with a very serious

problem, and all we are hearing about is kitty litter and coffee grounds. That is why we passed this bill.

One option parents have is to dispose of leftover drugs at a National Take-Back Day. Listen to this. Over 3 million pounds of prescription medications have been removed from circulation through seven National Take-Back Days that have been held since 2010. I participated in one of those days in Brooklyn Park, MN, last fall.

While these events have been incredibly successful, one-day events that are held a few times each year do not fully address the problem of how we are going to dispose of our drugs safely.

For instance, let's say you heard about a Take-Back Day right after you had your dental surgery. Great, you can bring over those pills and safely dispose of them, but then you remember your kid has a soccer tournament, and you cannot make it that day to dispose of the drugs. It looks like those pills are going to stay sitting right where they are in the medicine cabinet. I doubt many people have the time right then and there to call and ask when the next Take-Back Day might be and put it on their calendar in a red pen.

We have to be realistic. These Take-Back Days are great. In my State, especially in the metropolitan area, under the leadership of our sheriff Rich Stanek we actually have some permanent facilities in places where they can be brought permanently—the drugs—in the libraries and places like that, but we really have gone the extra step. The reason our law enforcement is such a big fan of this law is they know we could take so many more drugs in if, for instance, long-term care facilities were able to simply bring the drugs to one location each and every day.

If, for instance—and some of our drug stores have been open to this, some of these national chains—imagine how good this would be if they would just be willing to take these back and then they bring them somewhere. But to do that they need certain legal protections. They need protections about how they transport them. That is why we have been awaiting these rules.

Given the Food and Drug Administration's recent approval of some very powerful drugs, I think it is even more important that we make sure when these drugs are out there that they are able to be disposed of.

Offering more ways for people to dispose of their unneeded prescription drugs is also a crucial component of stopping the recent rise we have seen in heroin. Now, that might seem counterintuitive. You might say: Why would that help with heroin? That is not a prescription drug. How could that reduce the amount of heroin out there when we know we have seen huge increases in the amount of heroin. We have seen it in our State.

The heroin epidemic in Minnesota and all across the country is deadly. In the first half of 2013, 91 people died of

opiate-related overdoses in the Twin Cities—in Hennepin and Ramsey Counties—compared to 129 for all of 2012—just to give you a sense of 6 months compared to a year. Hospital emergency department visits for heroin nearly tripled from 2004 to 2011.

In the 7,000-person community of St. Francis, MN, three young people have died of opiate overdoses since May. Another three young people have been hospitalized for heroin overdoses. One was only 15 years old.

Experts blame this rise in heroin use to, first of all, some pure heroin coming from Mexico, but, secondly, an increased use of prescription drugs like OxyContin and Vicodin. That is because, according to the Office of National Drug Control Policy, as many as 4 out of 5 heroin users got their start by abusing prescription drugs. That is a pretty phenomenal number.

I think people think of heroin like from the 1970s and people shooting up. Well, it is not like that anymore. They can take it by pills. They can take it different ways. What happens is, when they start with these prescription drugs, and they have access to them, they get hooked, they get addicted; and then, when they cannot get the prescription drugs—which does happen—then they turn to heroin, and heroin right now is much easier to obtain.

So the answer here—because those drugs are similar in how they make them feel—the answer is to stop them from getting addicted in the first place. I think often times, when people just see a drug in the medicine cabinet or know that it is OK to take one of these types of drugs—OxyContin and other things for pain—they actually do not intend to get addicted. These are many of the people I just had a roundtable with at Hazelden, one of the Nation's premier drug treatment centers, talking about this. A lot of times the people who end up dying from a heroin overdose actually may even be casual heroin users. They are not doing it every single day. But that is because the heroin was a replacement for the prescription drugs they started getting addicted to when they got them out of a medicine cabinet or maybe they were prescribed them.

We know this is not going to fix everything. But certainly making it easier and empowering people to dispose of these drugs will, No. 1, clearly cut down on the use of these prescription drugs, and then, we believe, lead to less heroin use in the long term.

Americans all across the country—in cities, suburbs, and small towns—need options to get rid of leftover pills before they fuel addictions and claim the lives of their loved ones.

The Secure and Responsible Drug Disposal Act provides these options. But we cannot take these crucial steps in the fight against drug abuse until the DEA issues its final rule.

After 4 years, it is time to make these rules official—4 years that families and long-term facilities have lost

out on safe and easy options to get rid of unused prescription drugs; 4 years that those plastic amber bottles have piled up in medicine cabinets across America; 4 years that dangerous pills have been left vulnerable to misuse, potentially falling into the hands of our loved ones fighting addiction or criminals or being accidentally consumed by an innocent child.

We need the final rules. We must get them done right. But with so much at stake, we must get them done now.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. MORAN. Madam President, it is April Fools' Day, but it sure feels more like "Groundhog Day" because we are once again here considering an extension of unemployment benefits for the millions of Americans who have been out of work for months, and some of them even for years.

While assistance to those without work serves an important purpose in helping Americans transition, we are failing to address the underlying and more important issue: How do we grow the economy and create jobs for all of our citizens?

A growing economy creates new opportunities for Americans to find meaningful work, and with meaningful work comes an opportunity for Americans to improve their economic security and advance up that economic ladder.

It is one of the reasons Senator WYDEN and I started the Economic Mobility Caucus. We wanted to study the facts and explore policy improvements that can make a difference to increase the likelihood that all Americans can do just that—improve their standard of living and move up that economic ladder to a better life.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, their monthly report indicates that 10.5 million Americans are unemployed; 7.2 million Americans are working part time because they cannot find full-time work; 2.4 million Americans want to work but have stopped searching. What a sad circumstance that is for those folks.

Our labor participation rate is hovering around its 35-year low at 63 percent. While those statistics and the lives these numbers represent are pretty discouraging, I want to talk about a piece of good news. We know we can create jobs and we can create a growing economy, and we know from the facts, from the studies, that entrepreneurship, starting a business, giving Americans a chance to pursue the American dream, is the key.

The Kauffman Foundation in Kansas City has studied entrepreneurship. They make clear that most new jobs come from young companies created by entrepreneurs. In fact, since 1980, nearly all of the net new jobs that have been created in our country have been created by companies less than 5 years old. It kind of makes sense. Big businesses often are looking for ways to

cut costs, reduce their workforce. New businesses wanting to succeed increase their workforce. In fact, these new businesses create, on average, 3 million jobs each year.

Unfortunately, the number of new business startups, those business formed each year, are around their lowest total since the Bureau of Labor Statistics began keeping track over 40 years ago. So while we know that startup companies have a great opportunity to create jobs, we are creating the fewest number of startup businesses in nearly 40 years.

A couple of authors, John Dearie and Courtney Geduldig—they are authors of a book called “Where the Jobs Are”—point out in that book that “the vital signs of America’s job-creating entrepreneurial economy are flashing red alert.” John and Courtney spent an entire summer traveling the United States. They met with more than 200 entrepreneurs in dozens of cities to learn about the challenges those entrepreneurs are facing.

What they found is no surprise to anybody in this Chamber. They are the same issues I hear when I am back in Kansas. Those who start a business struggle with access to money, to capital to start that business; a lack of skilled talent; a complex Tax Code; a regulatory burden; and, boy, a lot of uncertainty, most of it, much of it, resulting from the action or lack of action here in Washington, DC.

A few years back I set out with a bipartisan group of Senators to address the challenges entrepreneurs face. Together we developed legislation that is now called Startup Act 3.0 to help create a better environment for those whose dream it is to start a new business. The Senate majority leader is frequently talking about allowing votes on legislation that has bipartisan support. This bill, Startup 3.0, is such a bill.

I spent time working with Senator WARNER and Senator COONS, Senator KING and Senator KLOBUCHAR, as well as Senator BLUNT and Senator RUBIO. We introduced what I would say is a very commonsense approach to addressing factors that influence an entrepreneur’s chance of success: taxes, regulations, access to capital, access to talent.

This legislation has been introduced as an amendment to the unemployment insurance extension bill the Senate is now considering. Unfortunately, at least so far, we have been denied having a vote on what is clearly a job-creating measure. I have offered this as an amendment to other bills on the Senate floor, but if the past is any example of what will happen on this bill, the chances of us being able to offer the amendment, have it considered and voted on, do not look very probable.

Startup 3.0 makes changes to the Tax Code to encourage investment in startups and provides more capital for those who are ready to grow and hire. To address burdensome government

regulations, this legislation, now this amendment, requires Federal agencies to determine whether the cost of new regulations outweighs the benefits, and it encourages Federal agencies to give special consideration of the impact proposed regulations would have on a startup business.

As any entrepreneur knows, a good idea is essential to starting a successful business. So Startup 3.0, an amendment now to this bill, improves the process by which information that is funded by Federal research, information that is garnered by Federal research, is more readily available to those who want to start a business, so that tax-funded innovations can be turned into companies that spur economic growth.

Finally, Startup 3.0 provides new opportunities for highly educated entrepreneurial immigrants to stay in the United States where their talent and new ideas can fuel economic growth and create jobs in America.

For more than 2 years, Startup Act 3.0 has earned praise from business owners, from chambers of commerce, from economic development officials, from entrepreneurs, from economists, and elected officials. Recently, the California State Senate passed a resolution calling on Congress to pass Startup Act 3.0. The President’s Council on Jobs and Competitiveness, when it was in existence, had voiced strong support for several of the bill’s provisions.

Unfortunately, none of that support from across the country has progressed in the Halls of Congress to see this legislation seriously considered. I can tell you that the reason Congress has not been able to address our economic challenges is not for lack of good ideas. In my view, it is a lack of leadership in the Senate and within the administration, within Washington, DC, to address the challenges Americans face.

There are plenty of good ideas that can provide immediate relief to Americans, many ideas in addition to Startup 3.0. Some of those examples are a 40-hour workweek. The House is poised to pass legislation. Some of my colleagues are proposing amendments here in the Senate to change full-time employment from 30 hours, as outlined in the Affordable Care Act, back to 40 hours.

Small businesses, restaurants, school districts, and community colleges across Kansas and around the country are already cutting hours to comply with the employer mandate of the Affordable Care Act. By fixing this provision, we can make certain that hard-working Americans have the opportunity to work more hours, earn a bigger paycheck, or find full-time employment.

Many of us believe—in fact, a large majority of the Senate in a bipartisan way believes—that approval of the Keystone XL Pipeline will help us in two ways: reduce energy costs in the United States, a very important factor in new jobs and expanding the econ-

omy, as well as increasing employment during the construction of that pipeline.

A recent poll by Washington Post and ABC News shows that Americans support this 3 to 1. Again 80-some Senators voted in moving forward with the Keystone Pipeline. Yet it has not happened. The President has not made a decision in regard to Keystone Pipeline, has stalled this issue. Nothing in the Senate would suggest the leadership of the Senate is ready to move this ball forward.

The President talks about trade promotion authority, spoke about it in one of his State of the Union Addresses. Yet that is another issue that has not been considered by the Senate. The President apparently has backed off of this issue out of deference to politics. Yet we know—we certainly know this in Kansas—that the airplanes we make in south central Kansas, the wheat we grow in western Kansas, the cattle we grow in our State, that we raise in our State, clearly much of the economic activity that comes from those activities occurs because we are able to sell those agricultural commodities, those manufactured goods around the globe.

Millions of Americans can be better off if there is greater opportunity for what we manufacture, the agricultural products we grow, if they have a wider market. The President and this Congress, particularly the Senate—not this Congress, the Democratic majority here—have focused much of their attention on, for example, the bill we are on, extending the unemployment insurance timeframe, apparently in the near future increasing minimum wage.

Consider these facts. There are 3.6 million Americans at or below the minimum wage level. Minimum wage workers make up 2.5 percent of all workers, and 55 percent are 25 years old or younger. So it is a relatively small portion of the workforce and a young portion of the workforce. I am certainly willing, happy to have a debate about the need to increase the minimum wage, to extend unemployment benefits, in part because I want the Senate to operate.

One of my greatest complaints since my arrival in the Senate is the Senate no longer functions as it has historically, in which issues of importance to the country, whether they are Republican issues, Democratic issues, American issues, middle of the road—this place takes up those issues very rarely. I am willing to have a debate about what is proposed here.

But what I am thinking we are doing is we are missing the real issues if we only deal with those. The minimum wage and extension of unemployment benefits is a symptom of a larger problem. It is that Americans want and need jobs. In my view, this Senate and this President have done nothing to increase the chances that Americans have a better shot at finding a better job.

We have to grow the economy. By growing the economy—I think that

sounds like something that is far removed from the everyday lives of Americans. But growing the economy simply means we are creating greater opportunities for American men and women, for husbands and wives, for sons and daughters, for families to have the opportunity to pursue a career they feel comfortable in, that is satisfactory to their economic needs, and gives them the hope they can improve their lives financially.

So growing the economy is about creating a greater opportunity for every American to pursue what we all have grown up calling the American dream. Unfortunately, the facts, if you believe the Congressional Budget Office, indicate that raising the minimum wage will increase unemployment. In fact, the numbers I saw—this was not the CBO score, but a Texas university study indicated that raising the minimum wage to \$10 an hour or more would reduce jobs in my home State by 27,300 jobs.

I doubt that voters care much about CBO reports or about a Texas university study, but they are acutely aware—they see it every day in their own lives—of the lack of opportunity, the dearth of jobs, the reduction in hours, the reduction in opportunity. These reports make clear they are happening because of failed policies and the refusal of the Senate and the President to address the broader issue of what can we do to create jobs for Americans.

I thought the message of the 2010 election, the election where I was brought to the Senate on behalf of Kansans—I thought the message that we all would have, should have received, the message of the election, was the desire for every American to have the chance to improve their lives through a job, through a better job, and through a secure job. In my view, it is time for us to focus on growing the opportunities for all workers everywhere.

With a willing Congress, including leaders who understand these challenges and are willing to address them, I am certain we can create greater opportunities for millions of Americans, including those who no longer or who currently have no meaningful work. The lack of a job is terrible. I think there is a certain moral component, a sense of well-being, a sense of who we are as human beings when we have a job that not only fulfills us financially but gives us a sense of purpose in our daily lives.

As the Senate considers a short-term extension of unemployment insurance, we must not lose sight of that longer term goal of creating an environment for job creation. Again, I would offer Startup Act 3.0, a bipartisan amendment, a bipartisan piece of legislation offered as an amendment, as an opportunity to do that, as part of the consideration of the extension of unemployment benefits. There is no better way to create jobs than to support entre-

preneurs and to foster the development of new businesses.

Small business is, as we always say, the backbone of American jobs. So let's stop having this "groundhog day" moment every few months and let's start tackling the challenges that entrepreneurs across the country are telling us about, that Americans are telling us about, that we learned in the 2010 election mean so much to every American.

Unfortunately, this President and this Senate have done nothing to improve the chances that every American has a better job and a brighter future. Please, this is so important. There is so much we can do. Too many times we focus on what we are unable to agree upon. But there is so much we can agree upon, so many things we can do. The American dream depends upon us doing so and doing so now.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Madam President, I am on the floor for the 63rd consecutive week we have been in session to ask my colleagues to finally wake up to the threat of climate change. The evidence mounts of unprecedented and dangerous changes, from the latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report to the recent warning from the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

The American people demand action in ever-greater numbers. Yet Congress continues to sleepwalk, lulled by special interest influence and polluter propaganda. The influence and propaganda are spread through an apparatus of denial. This apparatus is big and artfully constructed—phony-baloney organizations designed to look and sound as if they are real, messages honed by public relations experts to sound as if they are truthful, payroll scientists whom polluters can trot out when they need them. The whole thing is big and complicated enough that when we see its parts, we could be fooled into thinking it is not all connected. But it is just like the mythological Hydra: many heads, same beast. And this denial beast pollutes our democracy just as surely as its sponsors pollute our atmosphere and oceans. Some editorial pages spread the polluter party line so consistently that it appears they have gone over and actually joined the apparatus.

The climate denial network controls the political arm of the multinational corporations, the so-called U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

Polluter-funded super PACs target officials who don't fall in line—interestingly, often Republicans, in an effort to purify the party in a coal-fired crucible.

The whole deniers' castle can look pretty daunting, but it is based on rejecting science and ignoring empirical evidence. That is a weak foundation. It won't stand. The castle is built on sand and its fall is inevitable. Remember

from Apocrypha: "But above all things Truth beareth away the victory." And it will.

There are cracks in the foundation already. Some leading news sources have begun to put climate denial into their policy against printing misinformation and discredited theories. They just won't print that nonsense. Many executives recognize the significance of climate change and are distancing their companies from the policies and politics of climate denial. They don't want any part of that nonsense. Many local officials are doing all they can to protect their communities from the effects of climate change. They know climate denial is nonsense.

It has been wrong that the climate change denial campaign has been so ignored by major media outlets. Media Matters found that all the major network Sunday TV talk shows in all of 2013 discussed climate change for a grand total, all combined, of 27 minutes. NBC News's "Meet the Press" mentioned climate change once. When several of the Sunday shows discussed climate change on February 16 of this year for a grand total of 46 minutes combined, it was more climate coverage than in the past 3 years.

It has been wrong that polluters so often got their way on the editorial page. Whether through a desire to appear fair and balanced or a willful effort to help polluters, newspapers still publish editorials or letters to the editor that dispute consensus science, disparage scientists or journalists who report the truth about climate change, and exaggerate the costs of taking action to stop it. Often, their authors have direct ties to coal and oil interests, and rarely is the connection disclosed.

As we can see from this chart, some papers do it more than others. The denier champ is the Wall Street Journal editorial page, with eight denier letters in the first 10 months of 2013. That is one every 5 weeks. I think they have actually joined the denier apparatus and are now a part of the scheme, but they are on the wrong side of history.

On the right side is the Los Angeles Times, whose editorial page last year released a note from editor Paul Thornton announcing they would no longer print climate denial letters.

Thornton's note read:

I do my best to keep errors of fact off the letters page; when one does run, a correction is published. Saying "there's no sign humans have caused climate change" is not stating an opinion; it's asserting a factual inaccuracy.

Reddit is one of the Internet's most popular social and news Web sites, "the front page of the Internet." According to the Pew Research Center, 1 in every 17 American adults uses Reddit. Reddit science has 4 million subscribers. That is about twice the circulation of the New York Times. Reddit Science has banned posts on climate denial because, as its moderator, Dr. Nathan Allen, explained, "We require submissions to [Reddit Science] to be related

to recent publications in reputable peer-reviewed journals, which effectively excludes any climate denial.”

The L.A. Times and Reddit Science are not alone in seeing that the climate denier castle is built on lies. More and more American corporations are responding to the facts, understanding that they are ultimately responsible to their shareholders and customers. Major utilities—for example, PG&E, the Public Service Company of New Mexico, and Exelon—all quit the U.S. Chamber of Commerce after a chamber official called for putting climate science on trial like the Scopes Monkey Trial of 1925. The chamber may have been infiltrated and captured by the polluters, but major corporations get it: Coke and Pepsi, UPS and FedEx, GM and Ford, Google and Apple, Walmart—we can go on and on. The denier castle is crumbling.

Many of the businesses getting serious about reducing carbon pollution are actually based in States that are represented in Congress by Members who won't take the problem seriously at all. Coca-Cola, headquartered in Georgia, says:

We recognize climate change is a critical challenge facing our planet, with potential impacts on biodiversity, water resources, public health and agriculture. . . . Beyond the effects on the communities we serve, we view climate change as a potential business risk, understanding that it could likely have direct and indirect effects on our business.

Texas- and Maryland-based Lockheed Martin states:

From 2007 through 2011, Lockheed Martin reduced its absolute carbon emissions by 30 percent, and continues to focus on carbon emission reductions by championing energy conservation and efficiency measures in our facilities.

Sprint, the mobile carrier headquartered in Kansas, gets it.

We understand that climate change is a critical issue and that reducing greenhouse gas emissions is an important goal. Because Sprint is a large corporation with thousands of locations, millions of customers and billions of dollars in operating costs, we have many opportunities to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions.

The denier castle is crumbling at the local level too. Scores of locally elected officials are fighting to slow climate change and protect their residents, even if in Congress their Congressman won't listen. One of those local leaders is Mayor Frank Cownie of Des Moines, whom I met on my recent trip to Iowa. Iowans are taking climate change seriously, and Mayor Cownie is one of over 1,000 mayors represented on this map all across the country who have signed the U.S. Conference of Mayors Climate Protection Agreement. Their pledge is to meet or beat the Kyoto Protocol emission reduction targets in their own cities and press their State governments and the Federal Government to enact meaningful greenhouse gas reduction policies.

Seventy-eight current and former mayors from Florida have signed on. With over 1,000 miles of coastline, Flor-

ida is at serious risk from sea-level rise. According to the World Resources Institute, of all the people and all the housing in America threatened by sea-level rise, 40 percent is in Florida.

Thirty-one former and current mayors from Texas have also signed on to the climate agreement. Texans are waking up to the threat of climate change. A recent poll showed that roughly 55 percent of Texans say the United States should reduce greenhouse gas emissions regardless of whether other countries do the same.

Kansas Governor Sam Brownback, our former Republican colleague from this Chamber, understands the benefits of cleaner energy. He fought to keep in Kansas his State's renewable portfolio standard, which encourages utilities to ramp up generation of renewable electricity. The standard has already helped create thousands of Kansas jobs.

Governor Steve Beshear of Kentucky, a coal-producing State, has taken a commonsense stance on climate change that defends the well-being of his State. He said:

[W]e have to acknowledge our commitment to address greenhouse gas emissions, while stressing the need for a rational, flexible regulatory approach.

I have to say I agree with him. I stand ready and many of us stand ready on this side to work with coal-State colleagues to ease their transition away from a polluting fossil fuel economy.

When we think of what the costs are going to be to all of us of failing to address this problem, the cost of easing the transition for those who will suffer from it is easily worth undertaking. But to do any of that, we first have to break through the barricade of lies built around Congress in Washington. We can't keep pretending this isn't real. That is why once a week for over 60 weeks I have come to the floor to press this point. It is real. It is happening. It is not going to go away if we ignore it.

There is one thing and one thing only that prevents our action, and that one thing is the politics of the Republican Party. There is one thing and one thing only that makes this the politics of the Republican Party, and that one thing is the special influence of the polluters. But against the relentless facts and science, against Mother Nature's relentless truth, that castle is built on sand and will fall. But above all things, truth beareth away victory.

For the sake of our democracy, for the sake of our future, for the sake of our honor, it is time for us to wake up.

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

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

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam President, we are in the midst of a debate about extending unemployment insurance for millions of Americans who are unemployed, some of whom have been out of work for some time. It is a problem for the country.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the number of Americans who want to work but who have stopped looking for a job is 3.1 million. Over 91 million Americans are outside the labor force entirely. According to a recent report in CNN Money:

Only about 63 percent of Americans over the age of 16 participate in the job market, meaning they either have a job or are just looking for one. That is nearly the lowest level since 1978, driven partly by baby boomers retiring but also by workers who had simply given up hope after long and fruitless job searches.

As a matter of fact, we saw at our budget hearing this morning a chart which showed the decline in workers by age group, and it was interesting. The younger workers had the biggest decline in percentage working, and the older, 62 and above, are working at a greater rate than they were in previous years. So that is an interesting statistic. But we do have a problem, particularly among a lot of our younger people finding work.

At the same time we are having these difficulties, this administration has engaged in a systematic dismantling of the protections our immigration laws provide for American workers, producing for them—our workers—lower wages and higher unemployment. That is just a fact. Why are wages down? And wages are down, as we heard from all witnesses, Republican and Democratic, in the Budget Committee this morning. Wages have declined significantly in the last 5 years. They have been declining, just at a lesser rate, since 1999.

In fact, our review of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement published statistics for 2013 reveals that under the guise of setting priorities for enforcement of our laws, this administration has determined that almost anyone in the world who can enter the United States then becomes free to illegally live, work, and claim benefits here as long as they are not caught committing some felony or serious crime.

Based on what the President has said, and what the Vice President has said, it would appear an individual could come to America on a work visa, and 1 day after the visa has expired just continue to stay in America and be able to work and could be confident that they will not be deported because the policy of this government is not to deport people unless they catch them at the border entering illegally or they have committed a serious crime.

A recent report this week shows that even the serious crime issue is cloudy. An independent report earlier this week said one-third of those—68,000—who had been involved in criminal activity in some way are not being deported. So this applies not only to

those who unlawfully enter our borders but also those who enter on a legal visa and don't leave when that visa expires.

The President and Members of Congress are arguing, it appears, based on the bill that cleared the Senate, for a historic surge in the amount of legal immigration into our country at a time of high unemployment. The White House has preposterously claimed, amazingly, that an influx of new, mostly lower skilled workers will raise wages. This is a conclusion not supported by any credible academic evidence or even the Congressional Budget Office's own report analyzing the massive Senate immigration bill. The CBO concluded the bill would add 46 million mostly lesser skilled legal immigrants by 2033 and that average wages would fall for one dozen years if it were to become law and unemployment would increase and per capita GDP—growth in America—would decline, I think for 20 years.

And, apparently the House of Representatives is considering proposals to bring in hundreds of thousands of guest workers at a time when we are talking about extending unemployment for Americans who can't get jobs.

Dr. George Borjas at Harvard has found that high immigration levels from 1980 to 2000 resulted in an 8-percent drop in wages for American workers without a high school degree. Let me repeat that. This is Professor Borjas at Harvard, raised in Cuba and immigrated to America. He is perhaps the most authoritative academic in the world on immigration and its effect on wages and the labor force. He found that high immigration levels from 1980 to 2000—and he studied that carefully, using census and other data—resulted in an 8-percent drop in wages for American workers without a high school degree. Eight percent is a lot. It is several hundred dollars a month for a person who didn't graduate from high school. Actually, it is about \$250 a month. So there is a reason workers who are earning \$30,000 and less support a reduction in net immigration levels by a 3-to-1 margin. Working people know what is happening out there. They know their wages are going down. They know particularly lower skilled people, some young people who didn't get to graduate from high school or who got in trouble, are not having much success at all.

Average household income has fallen steadily since 1999, and only 59 percent of U.S. adults are now working. African-American youth looking for work cannot find jobs. We don't have a shortage of workers in this country—we do not have a shortage of workers in this country. We have a shortage of jobs. That is a fact.

Some might ask: How can you be so sure of that, Senator? I believe in the free market, and I tell the chamber of commerce and the big hotel magnates, if we have a shortage of workers, why aren't wages going up? Wages are going down. We don't have a tight labor mar-

ket. We have a loose labor market, and it is impacting adversely American workers.

The idea that we ought to double the number of guest workers who come into the country legally when the President of the United States is not going to enforce immigration laws and we will not use comprehensively the E-Verify system indicates we are going to see a decline in wages for average Americans out looking for jobs.

The President's own economic adviser, Gene Sperling, former Director of the National Economic Council, recognized this, saying recently that "our economy still has three people looking for every job," three people for every job. Majority Leader REID has cited that statistic on the Senate floor as well.

So this Senate passes a comprehensive immigration bill that doubles the number of guest workers. Don't think these are workers who are going to work seasonal jobs in agriculture. They will be able to move throughout this country and take jobs from wherever, providing businesses with a ready source, a new source of additional labor that helps keep the labor market loose.

My amendment, the Accountability through Electronic Verification Act, is a proven way to help out-of-work Americans. This legislation was introduced in this Congress by Senator GRASSLEY and cosponsored by myself and Senators BOOZMAN, CORKER, ENZI, FISCHER, HATCH, JOHANNES, LEE, VITTER, and WICKER. So we have offered legislation to deal with this, and I have offered it as an amendment to this unemployment insurance legislation, but I have been told it will be blocked. We will not get a vote. The leader has filled the tree.

What this proposal would do is it would create some jobs for Americans who are out of work. It absolutely would. It would work, and it would immediately help create jobs. That is why the establishment doesn't want to see it happen, if you want to know the truth.

The legislation would permanently authorize and expand the E-Verify Program. That is a simple Web-based tool that allows employers to maintain a legal workforce by verifying the work eligibility of employees. E-Verify works by checking data against records maintained by the Department of Homeland Security and the Social Security Administration. It is quick and easy. An employer simply puts in a Social Security number, it runs against the Social Security database, and an employer receives an answer as to whether this person is a lawful applicant for a job.

Although in 1986 Congress made it unlawful—in 1986—for an employer to knowingly hire or employ illegal aliens, these laws have never been effectively enforced. They just have not. They have gotten comfortable with this, not having it enforced. Under current law, if the documents provided by

an applicant for a job to an employer reasonably appeared to be genuine, then the employer has met its obligation.

Incidentally, shortly after the 1986 amnesty law was passed, when it was promised amnesty would not be granted again, the now-assistant to President Obama and the Director of the Domestic Policy Council, Cecilia Munoz, who was then a senior policy analyst of La Raza, led the charge to undo these enforcement provisions. So the person chosen by President Obama to be the Director of the Domestic Policy Council and who has been given the responsibility to deal with immigration, use to work for La Raza where she sought to undo enforcement.

Ms. Munoz authored a report for La Raza entitled "Unfinished Business: The Immigration Reform & Control Act of 1986." In that report she argued that Congress had a moral obligation to "repeal employer sanctions" and that workplace enforcement is "inherently discriminatory."

Now think about that. The person the President has chosen, who is supposed to be helping us create a lawful system of immigration in the United States, has as her prior effort written a paper that says basically it is a moral requirement of America to repeal any employer sanctions. This is the mentality running our government today; that it is morally wrong to say to employers they should only hire people lawfully in our country. She went on to say that any kind of workplace enforcement—apparently in which our employers would be disciplined or punished if they violate the law—is inherently discriminatory.

Because identity theft and counterfeit documents became a thriving industry after the 1986 amnesty, Congress created an E-Verify program in 1996.

In 1996, after realizing this was turning into a joke—nobody was following the intent of Congress and anybody could produce false documents—Congress passed a law which said we would end this game and create a system that would work. Employers required to use E-Verify today include the Federal government, certain Federal contractors and employers of certain immigrant students. The program for other employers is voluntary and free for them to use, and it has been very successful throughout the country by any who use it.

According to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, in fiscal year 2012, 98 percent of queries resulted in a confirmation of work eligibility immediately or within 24 hours. So most of them overwhelmingly immediately access the computer system, put in a Social Security number and other data they require, hit the computer button, and it quickly comes back. On a few occasions there is a question and it may take up to 24 hours.

It is not slowing down employment, it is not a big burden on employers, and it protects them from being accused of deliberately hiring illegal

aliens if the report comes back that the Social Security number matches. According to a January 2013 USCIS customer satisfaction survey, E-Verify received an 86 out of 100 in the American customer satisfaction index scale—19 points higher than the customer satisfaction rating for the overall Federal Government.

There is no objection to this. The only objection to it is by certain business lobbyist groups and certain activist immigration groups who don't want it to work, and they want to keep other businesses from using it because it does in fact identify people in the country who are not allowed to take jobs and it would keep them from receiving these jobs.

This legislation would make the program mandatory for all employers within 1 year of enactment of the law. This legislation would also increase penalties for employers who do not use the system when it is mandated or continue to illegally hire undocumented workers.

Employers would be required to check the status of current employees—but within 3 years—and would be permitted to run a check prior to offering someone a job. In other words, they can run a check before they actually offered a job and determine whether the person was lawfully able to take the job. This could help them a lot.

Employers would also be required to recheck those workers whose authorization is about to expire, such as those who come to the United States on temporary work visas.

This legislation would require employers to terminate the employment of those found unauthorized to work due to a check through E-Verify, and would reduce employers' potential liability for wrongful terminations if they participated in E-Verify.

The legislation would establish a demonstration project in a rural area or an area without substantial Internet capabilities—although there are not many left—to assist small businesses in complying.

The legislation also addresses identity theft concerns by ensuring that the Social Security Administration catches multiple uses of Social Security numbers—different people using the same social number to get jobs with a fake document and a false Social Security number.

And for victims of identity theft, this legislation would amend the Federal criminal code to clarify that identity fraud is punishable regardless of whether the defendant had knowledge of the victim. So this provision addresses a 2009 Supreme Court decision holding that identity theft requires proof that the individual knew the number being used belonged to an actual person.

E-Verify has been proven to deter employers from hiring illegal workers and will help put Americans back on the payrolls.

Since I have seen legislation move through Congress—comprehensive re-

form legislation that is going to fix our immigration policies—one of the things I have observed is that whatever works is what gets objected to. If someone offers a bill which appears to work but doesn't work, that will pass. E-Verify has been proven and will work to deter employers from hiring illegal workers, and will help put Americans back to work. That is why we apparently don't have any ability to get it up for a vote. A number of States have enacted E-Verify laws, and it is working in those States with great results.

According to a 2013 Bloomberg government study entitled "Early Evidence Suggests E-Verify Laws Deter Hiring of Unauthorized Workers":

Soon after E-Verify laws were signed in Arizona, Mississippi, Alabama, and South Carolina, unauthorized workers in specific industries appeared to drop off employer payrolls. This prompted employers in many cases to fill positions with authorized workers, American workers who are here lawfully, maybe a young 22-year-old African American who needs a job, would like to get married, maybe raise a family.

With respect to my State of Alabama, the Bloomberg study says:

Employment trended lower immediately after the law was enacted. Employers then added more crop production workers in the months before [the law] took effect, when compared with the same period the year before. That growth in production jobs was among the largest in the nation. This study hypothesizes that authorized hires probably filled the jobs of unauthorized workers who had left the state.

Isn't that what we would like to see? Wouldn't we ask people to come to the country lawfully? We admit 1 million people a year for permanent residence on a guaranteed path to citizenship absent serious criminal activity. We are generous about immigration. Make no mistake about it. But we do need to make sure that people who don't follow the law, don't wait their turn, don't meet the requirements of American immigration law—they shouldn't be able to come unlawfully and take jobs when Americans are out of work in record numbers.

Regarding South Carolina's law, the study found this:

The number of crop production workers fell. . . . And then hiring surged as the law took effect in 2012. Farmers say they added workers because their normal labor supply vanished.

The study also found that:

[t]he state's commercial bakery industry had been losing workers, then gained them as E-Verify took effect.

So people who were unlawfully there couldn't get past E-Verify. It exposed them as being unlawful, and the businesses lost workers. But then they hired people back, and the people they hired back were lawful workers—either here as immigrants lawfully or native born.

The study, which is based on research from the Pew Hispanic Center, goes on to say this:

[t]he abrupt shifts in employment across multiple industries convey a similar nar-

ative: soon after E-Verify laws are adopted, workers drop off employer payrolls and, in a number of industries, new hires fill those vacant positions. The robustness of this effect reinforces the likelihood that this phenomenon is due to something other than chance.

Our goal must be to help struggling Americans move from dependency to independence, to help them find steady jobs with rising pay, not falling pay. Making E-Verify permanent and requiring all employers to use it is one simple thing we can do to work towards that goal.

Let me just say, the E-Verify system is already established. The system is in place. It can accommodate the increase in inquiries. It is all a computer system. It is all done virtually instantly. It is not as if we have to create a new system or add tens of thousands of people to make it work. The system is already working and it can handle larger numbers.

Our policy cannot be to simply relegate more and more of our citizens to dependence on the government for assistance while importing a steady stream of foreign workers to fill available jobs. That is not in the interest of this country or our people.

I would just like to add that Senators GRASSLEY, LEE, VITTER, ENZI, BOOZMAN, and HATCH are cosponsors of this amendment. We know what is being said out there. We are being told that Americans won't work, they are not looking for jobs, and that businesses can't hire. The Bloomberg study on how the E-Verify system has been implemented indicates quite different.

According to a report on Syracuse.com on January 8, 2014:

In Syracuse [New York], thousands showed up for the Destiny USA job fair on June 14, 2012. More than 50 employers interviewed candidates for roughly 1,600 jobs.

On January 29, 2013, a Fox affiliate in Atlanta reported:

Northside Hospital held a job fair Wednesday, but had to call it off early due to the overwhelming number of people that showed up looking for work. The hospital was hoping to fill 500 jobs.

On May 17, 2013, news outlets in Philadelphia reported:

More than 3,700 job seekers overwhelmed the Municipal Services Building in Center City for a job fair Friday morning intended for ex-offenders. . . . The city anticipated a big crowd and therefore doubled the staff to handle the responses, but the crowd was still too big to handle, forcing the event to be cancelled and leaving hundreds on the plaza outside.

We need to help ex-offenders find jobs. I am aware of a major corporation in Alabama, in talking to a Federal judge recently, which said they will start taking a chance on former offenders. Properly examined and picking the right ones, they found out they are doing fine. We shouldn't be denying young people—particularly young men—who may have gotten in trouble at a younger age ever being able to have a job. One of the goals this country has to have is to help our ex-offenders in employment.

On May 20, 2013, the New York Times reported in an article entitled, “‘Camping out for five days, in hopes of a union job,” the following:

The men began arriving last Wednesday, first a trickle, then dozens. By Friday there were hundreds of them, along with a few women. They set up their tents and mattresses on the sidewalk in Long Island City, Queens . . . and settled in to wait as long as five days and nights for a slender chance at a union job as an elevator mechanic. . . . There were more than 800 by sun-up Monday. . . . The union accepts 750 applications for the 150 to 200 spots in its four-year apprenticeship program.

There are more examples, and I could go on. But I do believe this idea that Americans won’t work is not correct. If we take a person who has been unemployed for a while and place them in a position where the labor is physical, it takes a while to get in shape. If you are going to play ball, it takes a while to get in physical condition. People going into the Army are not expected to meet the physical fitness test the first week. They build up to it.

Businesses have to participate in this effort, too. Businesses need to understand they are not entitled and cannot expect—for the government of the United States to produce perfectly fit, well-trained people for every single job they would like to fill. Sometimes they have to hire people, train them on the job, let them work into it and learn the skills on the job. It is some new idea, apparently, that businesses have to have so much training. We certainly need to use the job-training programs in this country to more effectively train workers for real jobs out there. It is a valid criticism of our trade schools and some of our community colleges that they are not focusing on reality. But my State has done a great job—a far better job than in most States—and I saw a report recently about how Mississippi is doing an excellent job. I believe our program is at least as effective, if not better. So we are doing better. But businesses have always had to bring people into their workplaces and train them to handle the physical challenges that some jobs require.

Madam President, I thank the Chair for an opportunity to share these remarks. I am disappointed that when we are talking about unemployment in America, we have a Congress and a Senate refusing to even allow this amendment to come up for a vote. Without a doubt it would work, be fair, and would simply make it more difficult for people who are not here lawfully, who shouldn’t be able to get jobs in America—would make it more difficult for them to get that job, freeing that position up for unemployed Americans who need to get in the workforce and off the welfare rolls. That is the goal.

We have a huge number of welfare programs. We spend \$750 billion a year on means-tested programs to help people who are lower income, and that is 50 percent more than the defense budget, more than Social Security, and

more than Medicare. Those programs are not working well. They need to come together in a coherent whole with a unified vision. The vision should be to help people who are in stressful circumstances; help them aggressively, in a practical, realistic way; put them in a job-training program that would allow them to take a job. We could easily do that with the money we are spending now. We would have more Americans working and off the welfare rolls. We would save billions of dollars at the same time. They would make more money, be more fulfilled, have more self-respect, and reduce the budget deficit at the same time.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. DONNELLY). Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators allowed to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

JUSTICE FOR ALL REAUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, last week, I called on members of the Senate to come together and support reauthorization of the Justice for All Act, a bipartisan law that increased resources devoted to DNA and other forensic technology, established safeguards to prevent wrongful convictions, and enhanced protections for crime victims. The bipartisan bill to reauthorize this historic law was reported unanimously by the Senate Judiciary Committee last fall. Every Senate Democrat has cleared the way for passage of this important measure, and I hope Senate Republicans will soon follow suit so that we can take one step closer to reauthorizing this law that protects and supports victims of crime.

The programs created by the Justice for All Act have had an enormous impact, and it is crucial that we reauthorize them. The legislation strengthens important rights for crime victims, reauthorizes the Debbie Smith DNA Backlog Grant Program, seeks to improve the quality of indigent defense, and increases access to post-conviction DNA testing to help protect the innocent.

The reauthorization legislation also strengthens the Kirk Bloodsworth Post Conviction DNA Testing Grant Program. Kirk Bloodsworth was the first person in the United States to be exon-

erated from a death row crime through the use of DNA evidence. The program named for Mr. Bloodsworth provides grants to States for testing in those criminal cases like Mr. Bloodsworth’s where someone has been convicted but where significant DNA evidence was not tested. The Justice for All Reauthorization Act of 2013 expands State access to post-conviction DNA testing funds by restricting the evidence preservation conditions set for this program to felony cases, which is a more attainable goal for States.

This legislation also takes important steps to ensure that all criminal defendants, including those who cannot afford a lawyer, receive effective representation. It requires the Department of Justice to assist States in developing an effective and efficient system of indigent defense. I know as a former prosecutor that the system only works as it should when each side is well represented by competent and well-trained counsel.

The bill also asks States to produce comprehensive plans for their criminal justice systems, which will help to ensure that criminal justice systems operate effectively as a whole and that all parts of the system work together and receive the resources they need.

The bill reauthorizes and improves key grant programs in a variety of areas throughout the criminal justice system. Importantly, it increases authorized funding for the Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grant program, which is a vital program to assist forensic laboratories in performing the many forensic tests that are essential to solving crimes and prosecuting perpetrators.

We need to continue the bipartisan work that has been done. During the Judiciary Committee mark-up we unanimously adopted amendments before passing the bill, one from Senator DIANNE FEINSTEIN, and one from Senator JEFF FLAKE. Both amendments strengthened rights for crime victims, and added to the comprehensive improvements contained in the bill.

I thank Senators COONS, UDALL of New Mexico, MCCONNELL, KLOBUCHAR, FRANKEN, PORTMAN, FEINSTEIN, HATCH, SCHUMER, LANDRIEU, BURR, COLLINS, BENNET, and SHAHEEN for their support as cosponsors of this bill.

I am glad to be partnering with Senator JOHN CORNYN on this legislation. We have done important work in the Judiciary Committee to support law enforcement and victims of crime. Last week, he and I introduced sweeping legislation to improve the use of forensic evidence in criminal cases. The Criminal Justice and Forensic Science Reform Act helps ensure that forensic labs throughout the Nation operate according to the highest standards, and that State and local labs have the resources they need. Both that measure and the Justice for All Reauthorization Act of 2013 are important priorities to support our criminal justice system and law enforcement.