

we act. The U.S. attorney in Washington, DC, announced last Thursday he will launch a conviction integrity unit following five recent exonerations. Similar programs exist in Dallas, Chicago, Philadelphia, San Jose, and Detroit.

This underscores the fact that mistakes can happen all too often. Any good prosecutor fears the possibility of a mistake happening because usually prosecutors are going to get convictions. They want to make sure they prosecute the right person. Unfortunately, though, there are some who have been willing to accept less than adequate evidence or ignore the fact that no real effort was made to find all of the adequate evidence.

For example, we are just beginning to understand the scope of the systemic errors committed by hair and fiber analysts at the FBI crime lab in the 1980s and the 1990s. I know as a young prosecutor I relied on that FBI crime lab. Now we find there were errors and they were hidden and covered up—errors involving the question of the convictions of 2,600 defendants, including 45 on death row.

In a separate inquiry involving the same FBI unit, more than 60 death row convictions were potentially tainted by agent misconduct.

Those statistics are bad enough, but according to the Justice Department's inspector general, three of those defendants were executed before their attorneys were notified of the misconduct. One of them would not have been eligible for the death penalty without the FBI's flawed work. Whether someone is for or against the death penalty, it should shock our conscience. It is unacceptable. We may have executed an innocent man. I will hold the FBI accountable. I will demand they take the necessary steps to ensure that such a systemic failure never occurs again. I know the ranking member on the Judiciary Committee, Senator GRASSLEY, shares my outrage about this situation.

So it is against this backdrop of these shocking cases that I come to the floor and urge the Senate to take swift action. Let us reauthorize the Justice for All Act, which includes the post-conviction DNA testing program that is a lifeline to the wrongfully convicted.

There is nothing partisan or political about ensuring we have the right person behind bars and we are not locking up an innocent person. That is an issue both Republicans and Democrats agree on, and that is why the Justice for All Act has the support of the ranking member of the Judiciary Committee, Senator GRASSLEY, and the Republican leader, Senator MCCONNELL, and as I said cosponsored by me and Senator CORNYN.

Justice is the bedrock of our great country. Our Founders understood that a government's legitimacy is eroded every time an innocent person is sent to prison for a crime he did not com-

mit. They sought to protect against this erosion by enshrining fundamental protections for the accused in our Bill of Rights. While those protections are critical, they are not fail-safe. We have to do more. Lives are in the balance. Lives are in the balance.

The dozens of exonerations made possible by the Justice for All Act are testament enough to its value. Henry Lee McCollum and Leon Brown are just the latest examples. The injustice they survived—and the fact that North Carolina nearly executed an innocent man—should dispel any doubt this legislation is needed. It is time for the Senate to pass this bipartisan Justice for All Reauthorization Act. First giving appropriate notice to both leaders, I will be asking unanimous consent that we take it up and pass it.

I see my distinguished colleague and friend on the floor, and I yield the floor.

Mr. WICKER. I thank the distinguished President pro tempore.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

ISIS

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, I wish to spend a few moments speaking about national defense.

As we all know, last week, in a much anticipated address to the Nation, President Obama outlined a plan to defeat the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria. I want my colleagues to know I intend to do my part to make this plan a success.

I am not alone in hoping this goal to defeat—not contain—ISIS will replace the half measures and disengagement that has defined the President's foreign policy to date. The President's previous comment that “we don't have a strategy yet” sent the wrong signal to our allies and to our adversaries.

In response to the President's address last week, Congress and the American people are now seeking specifics about the new strategy. I am hopeful the new plan is strong enough and broad enough to be successful long term. U.S. leadership and the projection of military might are critical to defeating the ISIS extremists.

Thirteen years after September 11, 2001, Americans need to send a unified message that we remain resolved to fight the scourge of global terrorism. ISIS is part of that scourge, reeking havoc in Iraq and Syria, with torture, mass executions, crucifixions, and plans for a seventh century-style Islamic caliphate. As we all know, ISIS broadcasts its savagery through gruesome propaganda online, including the horrific murders of two Americans and a British aid worker.

It is clear our efforts to date have been insufficient to overthrow this well-funded, well-equipped, and sophisticated army. It will take more than limited air strikes and the modest deployment of military advisers to curb the rapid spread of ISIS across north-

ern Iraq and Syria. The United States must be committed to building a coalition that fosters regional cooperation, dismantles the group's considerable financial network, and assists the Iraqi, Kurdish, and Free Syrian forces. I wish to help the President in his request for authorization to train and equip these forces.

This coalition needs to include Muslim-majority nations that are all in with a demonstrated resolve to defeat the Islamic terrorists in their own neighborhood.

The cost of inaction is already high. The rise of ISIS in northern Iraq and its operations in Syria have threatened regional stability and the security of our allies in Jordan, Turkey, Lebanon, and Kuwait. The involvement of foreign fighters raises fears of potential terrorist plots here at home. Earlier this month, Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel said there are more than 100 U.S. citizens with passports fighting for the terrorist group. He went on to say, “There may be more. We don't know.”

Secretary of Defense Hagel, who will testify tomorrow before the Armed Services Committee, has called ISIS, “An imminent threat to every interest we have, whether it's in Iraq or anywhere else.” Secretary of State John Kerry has expressed similar alarm, saying, “The wickedness it represents must be destroyed.” I agree. But if these statements are true, then we should respond to them aggressively.

Similar to Secretary Hagel and Secretary Kerry, the American public is concerned about the threat of ISIS to the United States. A new report by the Wall Street Journal and NBC News says nearly 7 in 10 Americans believe military action against ISIS in Iraq and Syria is in our national interest.

Americans are ready for a bold international strategy to confront these extremists whose ruthless campaign of terror and ethnic cleansing has survived for too long. These radicals have driven tens of thousands of Iraq's Yazidi and Christian minorities from their homes in fear. According to news reports, thousands of civilians have been slaughtered across northwestern Iraq.

GEN Jack Keane, former Vice Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army, and Danielle Pletka, a senior vice president at the American Enterprise Institute, put it this way in a recent Wall Street Journal op-ed:

A U.S.-led international coalition can provide the military capability, including air interdiction to deny ISIS freedom of movement, take away its initiative to attack at will in Iraq, and dramatically reduce its sanctuary in Syria.

In other words, with U.S. leadership and international cooperation, we can defeat this enemy, and we ought to get about the business of doing it.

I believe Congress should support our Commander in Chief in the fight against ISIS, a fight that can result in a victory and a peace that can be sustained. I look forward to hearing more

details about the President's plans when Secretary Hagel and GEN Martin Dempsey testify before the Armed Services Committee tomorrow.

There are still questions to be answered. For example, if public opinion turns, will the administration lose its resolve? How long will it take to win? How long will it take to crush ISIS? What is the definition of success? What is the definition of victory in this case? If we accomplish our objectives, will we once again abandon our gains, as we did after the surge in Iraq? What is the plan to eliminate the terrorist group's financial network? Are the President and congressional leaders willing to find a solution to defense sequestration in order to fulfill the mission if more resources are required? And more resources will be required.

Addressing these questions is important to understanding the specific goals and aims of the President's strategy, which are yet to be fleshed out. Americans and Congress deserve this clarity.

Congress has the responsibility to provide for the resources our U.S. military needs for its missions. We do this through appropriations, through the power of the purse, and the National Defense Authorization Act, which has garnered bipartisan support for the past 52 years.

Under the capable leadership of Chairman LEVIN and Ranking Member INHOFE, the Armed Services Committee approved a bill more than 3 months ago. So has the full House of Representatives. It has passed its authorization act. I hope that even at this late date, Majority Leader REID will allow our country's major defense policy bill to come to the Senate floor for consideration soon. An annual blueprint of the military priorities is vital to making sure that our troops have what they need to protect our national security interests at home and abroad.

This year's bill, for example, includes a provision to stave off drastic cuts to the U.S. Army which would put troop strength at levels not seen before World War II. Well-trained units such as the 155th Heavy Brigade Combat Team in my home State of Mississippi should not be jeopardized by short-sighted and ill-considered proposals by the Obama administration. Instead, under the committee bill, an independent commission would have the opportunity to make recommendations on force structure and size before the National Guard personnel could be cut or the Apache attack helicopters could be transferred.

Another provision of the bill would allow for the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps to modernize their amphibious warships. These incredibly versatile ships signal to the world that America's fighting forces can respond to threats rapidly. Currently our fleet is significantly smaller than the number needed to perform required missions, and many of the ships are near the end of their service lives. The Defense au-

thorization bill as passed on a bipartisan basis by the committee would authorize the construction of a 12th LPD 17 warship ensuring that the men and women who defend us in perilous corners of the globe have world-class hardware for their missions.

I believe it would be a fitting tribute to Senator LEVIN, who is retiring at the end of this year after decades of distinguished service in the Senate, to take up this bill in regular order and pass it as a tribute to our retiring chair.

In conclusion, we have work to do. The Senate Armed Services Committee and the House of Representatives have passed the Defense authorization bill. It is time for the Senate to follow suit. America has the most formidable fighting force in the world and this presence must remain resilient as dangerous groups such as ISIS put our interests at risk. The rapid rise of the barbaric terrorists is a wake-up call for U.S. leadership. Now that the President has declared his intention to degrade and destroy ISIS militants, we must ensure that the mission is fulfilled.

Thank you.

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

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

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I rise today for the 78th time in my "Time to Wake Up" series to urge my Republican colleagues that it is long past time to wake up to the growing threat of global climate change.

For those who still deny the science—and believe it or not, that is where some of our colleagues still are—I remind them that virtually every credible scientific authority—and, no, the ones funded by the big carbon polluters don't count—virtually every credible scientific authority has moved beyond the question of whether our climate is changing or whether human carbon pollution drives these changes to now how it is happening and where it is happening.

Climate change is no longer a forecast; it is happening before our eyes, all around us. The latest reports from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change—made up of the world's top climate scientists—call the fact that our Earth is warming "unequivocal." Just last week the Secretary General of the World Meteorological Organization said: "We know without any doubt that our climate is changing and our weather is becoming more extreme due to human activities such as the burning of fossil fuels." I repeat—he said "without any doubt."

It is actually evident to our own eyes now from observations and measurements—not projections or predictions—of increases in global warming air and ocean temperatures, widespread melting of snow and ice, and a rising global average sea level—a phenomenon that means a lot to my coastal State of Rhode Island and to the Presiding Officer's State of Maine. Back home our constituents, our neighbors, get it. On our coasts they brace against the unrelenting rise of the seas and watch mystifying changes in fisheries they have been familiar with for generations. On the Plains they toil to raise crops under unprecedented drought. In the mountains they watch as ancient acres of forest are killed by the spread of invasive pests. Yet here in Washington we do nothing.

In Rhode Island the waters of Narragansett Bay are getting warmer—3 to 4 degrees Fahrenheit warmer in the winter just since the 1960s. Long-term data from the tide gauges in Newport, RI, just off Naval Station Newport, show an increase in average sea level of nearly 10 inches since 1930 and accelerating. Sea level rise is contributing to erosion and brings storm surges and waves farther inland.

While Washington fiddles, Rhode Islanders act. Early this month more than 200 Rhode Islanders came together in Providence for my annual Rhode Island Energy and Environmental Leaders Day. The event brings together Rhode Islanders in renewable energy and sustainable development businesses, in community development nonprofits; it brings together State and local officials, advocates, and academics to share ideas with each other and with national leaders and Federal agencies on promoting green energy, improving resiliency, and combating climate change.

The innovation taking place in my Ocean State was on full display this year. Rhode Islanders are leading the effort to improve our environment and develop clean technology and energy and prepare for the changes carbon pollution has looming over us. Sheila Dormody, the director of sustainability of Providence was there to discuss the recently released Sustainable Providence plan for making our comparable city cleaner and greener. The plan covers everything from reducing food waste to improving energy efficiency to increasing alternative transportation options. These actions benefit public health and the environment, and they create economic opportunity. These aren't job killers. These are job builders. You cannot send efficiency upgrades or solar panel installation jobs overseas. Those are Rhode Island jobs, American jobs.

Grover Fugate, executive director of Rhode Island's Coastal Resources Management Council, was there to discuss the collaboration they have with the Rhode Island Realtors Association to create a Rhode Island coastal property guide. We need a Rhode Island coastal