

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

property guide because climate change loads the dice for more frequent and more severe storms and hurricanes that put businesses and homeowners along the shore at risk from flooding, erosion, and wind damage.

Superstorm Sandy was a harsh warning. This property guide helps residents and business owners understand the risks and the costs they now face both today and in the future because of the carbon pollution we are doing nothing about. Extreme precipitation, rain bursts, heavy rains or snows have increased 74 percent in the Northeast between 1958 and 2010.

Rhode Islanders have always cared a lot about our Narragansett Bay. We love our bay. We want to protect it. These heavy rains, these sudden rains, these rain bursts, what they do is they drive polluted and nutrient-rich runoff that might otherwise be filtered or captured straight into the bay where it can close beaches and harm the bay's marine life.

Climate change and the carbon pollution mean we will have to work harder in Rhode Island and invest more dollars in a storm water and wastewater infrastructure, and it is not cheap. Our Rhode Island Narragansett Bay Commission, our wastewater utility, is overhauling its sewer and storm water collection to address that overflow during big storms. When big storms hit now, the underground storage tunnel that was completed in 2008 stores up the sewer and storm water until the extra water can be processed and until the capacity in the treatment plant is there to pump it out and process it.

As a result of the first phase of what is called the combined sewer overflow project, the commission estimates that through 2012, 4.6 billion gallons of mixed storm and wastewater that would have been dumped directly into Narragansett Bay untreated were instead processed at the Field's Point Wastewater Treatment Facility at one of our small towns. The town of Tiverton, RI, received funding through the USDA to help pay for upgrades to the town's water system, connecting thousands of residents on inefficient old septic tank systems to a town sewer. Leroy Kendricks, the chair of the Tiverton Wastewater District, told our group that these improvements will protect the Sakonnet River and Mount Hope Bay from mounting levels of pollution.

Julia Gold is the climate change program manager at the Rhode Island Department of Health. Julia explained how the department of health has teamed up with the division of elderly affairs to focus on the effects of climate change on the elderly, collaborating with the departments of environmental management and transportation to pilot a Lyme disease prevention training program for outdoor workers—those ticks spread more widely in warmer weather—and partnered with the Brown School of Public Health to examine correlations be-

tween rising temperatures and rising hospital admissions.

You may have seen a segment in the documentary series "Years Of Living Dangerously" on the deaths in Los Angeles from heat-related conditions worsened by climate change. This work with Brown University is similar and showing similar results.

These were just a few of the many stories told in Rhode Island at the Energy and Environmental Leaders Day. Not only do Rhode Islanders connect with one another there, but we also have the chance to share our important work with national leaders and hear their perspective on regional and national trends.

The first of three keynote addresses came from renowned marine scientist and National Geographic Explorer-in-residence Sylvia Earle. Sylvia is truly a remarkable woman and a legend in oceanography circles. Her passion for our living oceans is just about as deep as those oceans. She reminded us that the oceans are the cornerstone of our human life support system, that indeed the oceans are the life support system for all creatures on our planet, not just the aquatic ones, and that our oceans bear witness to the unprecedented changes carbon pollution is causing. Her bad news was that these threats are grave. Her good news was that never before have we, as humans, been as well equipped with knowledge about our earth and our climate. The oceans indeed are sick but we have the power simply by changing our behavior to help them heal.

In a happy coincidence Sylvia's new documentary called "Mission Blue," which lays out the perilous condition of earth's oceans, was playing the night before at the Newport Film Festival. Sylvia went there and said:

Think of a film about oceans 50 years from now. It will be based on what we do now.

Our possibilities are terrific. Here is another thing that she said. I will quote her.

The good news sounds like bad news but the good news is that we know that it is happening. We are the only creatures on earth with the capacity to dive back into time, put ourselves into perspective and plan a future based on evidence, based on knowledge.

So what are we doing now? While Congress snoozes in the snug embrace of the big polluted interests, President Obama has stepped into the vacuum. His chief lieutenant in this effort is EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy. She delivered our second keynote.

Climate change, she told our assembled group, is perhaps the most difficult, complex, and necessary issue for us to face. She reminded us that EPA is at its heart a public health agency. So when it comes to the carbon pollution that increases smog and asthma or increases the storms and floods that batter our communities, she says this: "EPA's job is to protect those that are most vulnerable from this pollution, so

it is our job to take action on climate. Period. Full stop."

Administrator McCarthy led an extraordinary effort to put out the EPA's proposed rule, for the first time limiting carbon pollution from our country's largest source—our powerplants. The rule is revolutionary in many ways, particularly in its adaptability, allowing States and regions to reach their own goals their own way. It is the product of an intensely collaborative process and an enormous amount of give and take. The rollout has been viewed by those outside fossil fuel board rooms as a real achievement.

I commend Administrator McCarthy on moving that rule forward with so much energy. I wish her and that rule Godspeed.

The road ahead offers many obstacles as our third and final keynote speaker reminded us. Jeff Goodell has reported on the energy industry and the changing climate for Rolling Stone magazine, where he is a contributing editor. His many books have explored the inner workings of the fossil fuel industry and the most far-reaching proposals for avoiding catastrophic global warming, among other topics.

Jeff has firsthand knowledge of the complex apparatus of denial supported by the big polluters. The fossil fuel producers are bankrolling entire political campaigns and phony front organizations peddling scientific misinformation.

As Jeff pointed out, these misinformation efforts even involve not just the same strategies but the very same scientists who were involved working for the tobacco industry—the scientists-for-hire who worked for the tobacco industry in its decades-long venture to hide the dangers of tobacco from regulators and the public. They are still at it, but now it is denying climate change, not denying that tobacco is harmful.

Not only do these polluters stall tactics stand in the way of responsible action to cure climate change, Jeff reported they also hold back progress in our energy sector and in our economy, particularly in States and regions that have long relied on fossil fuel jobs. He called on us—he called on his home country—to finally take steps to move these communities into the 21st century economy.

The environmental and energy challenges facing our Nation can seem daunting. When we join together to share ideas and experiences, as we do each year in the Rhode Island Energy and Environment Leaders Day, it is clear that there is a path forward.

Rhode Islanders understand this. They see the challenge, and we are up to it. We are all up to it as Americans. One thing Rhode Islanders will be doing is later this month hundreds of us will board buses and head down to New York City for what will be known as the People's Climate March. Organizers expect as many as a half million people will take part in the historic

citizen action to call attention to the global crisis of climate change. Marchers from Rhode Island, from California, from all across our country, from different organizations, from different industries—a patchwork of America—will be there to demand responsible leadership in the fight against carbon pollution. I will be among them.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, what is the current business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate is in a period of morning business.

PAYCHECK FAIRNESS ACT

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, in just a few minutes we are going to have a procedural vote on the Paycheck Fairness Act. If we truly believe women and men are equal and should be paid equally, this ought to be an overwhelming vote.

The Senate women held a press conference after the last vote. The Republicans gave the first procedural vote so we were able to get to this point, but now we have to have 60 votes in order to move forward with an actual vote on the Paycheck Fairness Act.

We all know what this vote is about. It is very simple. It is about women in America having the same opportunity for success as their male counterparts. No one should be paid less just for being a woman.

This issue was brought to us front and center by Lilly Ledbetter, who was a manager at a Goodyear tire plant in the South and who discovered just by happenstance that although there were five managers doing the same job—she and four men—she was getting considerably less money.

To make a long story short, the courts were stacked against her. At the end of the day, Lilly Ledbetter was told by the Supreme Court that she was too late—she didn't know about this; it took her a long time to know about it—therefore she had no case. We fixed that problem, and we said: No more. We are not going to put a statute of limitations because someone may never find out about this unfair situation for many years and they shouldn't be disqualified from justice.

But now we have more problems. We have testimony of people being harassed simply because they want to know whether they are getting paid fairly. I am so grateful to our colleague Senator MIKULSKI from Maryland for introducing the Paycheck Fairness Act which will help close the wage gap.

We may say: Is there truly a wage gap? Yes, there is. Women get paid 77

cents for every dollar made by a man for the same work. That is not every woman. But when we average it all, that is what she gets. In terms of a yearly pay, it is \$11,000. I think we ought to look at this \$11,000 less a year. What could we buy for \$11,000? One year of groceries, in many places a year of rent, in many places a year of daycare or a used car or community college.

What does this mean? It means that because the woman is not getting paid fairly, her family suffers, whether in the quality of housing or their food or the quality of daycare, the quality of their car, and certainly the ability of that woman to get an education and move up the scale.

Looking at it from a yearly standpoint I think is important, but I asked my staff: Let's look at it over a lifetime and what is the loss to this woman and her family in a lifetime. Almost one-half million dollars—\$443,000—in a woman's lifetime if she gets 77 cents instead of a full dollar. What could she do with that? She could pay off one or two mortgages for that, send three kids to the University of California or buy 8,000 tanks of gas. What we don't say here is you need more security, and economic security today, which is so critical. Thanks to science, we are living longer and we know it gets more expensive to live.

If I were to tell one of my Republican friends on the other side that somebody came up to a woman, knocked her on the head and took half a million dollars from her and stole it, they would be horrified and they would remedy it. They would bring in the law. Well, I am asking them to simply vote for the Paycheck Fairness Act. Just vote for it. Make sure women in this country earn what they deserve to earn.

The wage gap not only hurts our families, it hurts our economy. If you add it all up, it is \$200 billion a year in income that would be spent at the grocery, that would be spent at the gas station, that would be spent on vacation, that would be spent on local restaurants or in better housing.

In the history of our Nation we have had a lot of fights before over the issue of discrimination. We know you cannot discriminate on pay because of race, disability, or age. What we are saying is you shouldn't be able to discriminate based on your gender. It is wrong. I would say if it were reversed, I would be standing here fighting for the men. It is not right. People have to be paid based on the work they do, and if the work they do is similar to the work of a man, as in the case of Lilly Ledbetter, they should be paid the same.

What the Mikulski legislation does is it prohibits employers from retaliating against an employee who shares information with their coworkers. Right now if you are around the cooler of your corporation and somebody says: Oh, my God, I cannot afford to get a babysitter for my child, I need a raise,

and somebody says: Well, what do you make? And they say: I make X. Believe me, you can be fired for asking those questions. It is wrong. We have seen it happen. We want to make sure if there is a disparity in pay that it is warranted. Sure, if a woman is doing less than a man in a different job, of course that is not the same. We are saying if you do the same work, you have got to get paid the same.

We have hundreds of personal stories from all over this great Nation from people who have faced pay discrimination. I have many of these stories from California. One of them is a woman from my State who had an identical advanced degree as her husband, and she landed the exact job as her husband, but they were at different work-sites. Her husband was offered \$5,000 more in starting salary for the same job with the exact same resume—same job, the woman gets paid \$5,000 less.

Then there is a health care worker in Long Island. She discovered she had been earning \$10 an hour less than her colleagues with the exact experience. When she brought this up to her superiors, which you would expect her to do—you have got to fight for yourself. Don't we tell people that? Stand up, have respect, but ask the right questions. So she brought it up to her superiors. She was reprimanded. She was reprimanded and told not to discuss any type of wage gap.

Then there is a female employee from a major corporation in Florida. She was told when she was hired that if she disclosed her salary to other workers, that was grounds for dismissal. So you have somebody who is well trained. She is great. Then you are talking to your friends in the workplace, you mention your salary. She was told in advance that this is grounds for dismissal.

This bill is a major step in the right direction. I call on my Republican friends—we don't need many of you—five, is that right—six, if everyone is here. We need a handful. Stand with women, stand with families, stand for children, stand for equality, stand for justice, stand for what is right. Don't play games with this. Don't take the side of a boss who is exerting all kinds of pressure on a woman to tamp down her salary. I think clearly if we do this together tonight—and I always remain hopeful—if we do this together tonight, what we are going to see is an America that is fair, an America that is just when it comes to our women.

I am really glad one of our colleagues is here to discuss this from her perspective. You know, my kids would say to me, "Mom, this is a no-brainer."

This is not complicated, equal pay for equal work. We stand for that as Democrats, and we are going to keep on fighting for it. Tonight is that moment in time when we will see whether our Republican friends stand with us to give a fair shot to the women in this country—a fair shot—or they will block us as they have done before. I