

fuel and the denial industry. There are a bunch of them who are out there. They turn up at all the usual denial conferences. They write in the denial journals. They take money from the denial organizations that all have fossil fuel industry funding behind them. Go to someplace neutral.

For instance, go to your own State university, like the University of Arizona or the University of Oklahoma. The dean of the relevant department at the University of Oklahoma signed the IPCC report and started Climate Central. Ask your own university. Ask any major scientific organization. All the major recognized scientific organizations in the United States of America are on board, agree that this is real, agree that this is important, agree that it is vital, and believe that we are actually near the tipping point that may make the damage irrecoverable.

If you don't want to go to your home State university and if you don't want to go to America's major scientific societies, try NOAA and NASA.

Think about NASA for a moment. As I give this speech, there is a Rover that is the size of an SUV being driven around on the surface of Mars. We built a Rover, shot it to Mars, landed it safely, and are now driving it around. Do we think those scientists might actually know something? Do we think they might know what they are talking about? Do we think they might merit our confidence? So ask them and see what they say.

Or, if you want, ask some of America's leading corporations. If you are from Arkansas, go and ask Walmart. They will tell you. If you are from Georgia, go and ask Coca-Cola. They will tell you. This is not hard to discover once you get away from that little stable of denial scientists who are so closely affiliated with the fossil fuel industry.

I do this every week because we have the arrogance so often here to think how much our laws—the laws that we pass—matter. But the laws that we pass are passing things. They come and they go. They have their time. They are repealed, they are replaced, they fall into desuetude.

But some laws last, and those are the laws that God laid down upon this Earth that guide its operations. Those are the laws of physics, the laws of chemistry, the laws of biology, the law of gravity. We cannot repeal those laws. We must face their consequences. And we know the consequences of continuing to emit gigatons of carbon dioxide into our planet is going to launch us into an environment in which the habitability of Earth as we have known it will be put into question.

History makes its judgments about every generation. If we do not take calm and reasonable and sensible precautions about this obvious known and admitted risk, then when that risk comes home to roost, we will be duly shamed.

So let us avoid that. Let us get to work. Let us take advantage of the

opening that the distinguished senior Senator from Alaska and the distinguished senior Senator from South Carolina have opened for us, and let us do what is right by our country and by the judgment that we can anticipate from history.

I yield the floor.

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

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

#### MORNING BUSINESS

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

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

#### TRIBUTE TO BEN RICHMOND

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I rise to pay tribute to a great Kentuckian and a man who has dedicated his entire career to promoting civil rights and helping people. My good friend Ben Richmond, the longtime president and CEO of the Louisville Urban League, recently announced his impending retirement from that position. Mr. Richmond has served as president and CEO of the Louisville Urban League for nearly 30 years—since 1987.

Mr. Richmond is a civil rights champion who has led a venerable civil rights institution such as the Louisville Urban League to new heights. Under his tenure, the Louisville Urban League has promoted job training and education for many in Louisville's African-American community. His body of work is so outstanding that in 2007 he received from the city the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Freedom Award, a recognition for a local activist who is dedicated to King's principles and who has promoted peace, equality, and justice.

Since Mr. Richmond took over the Louisville Urban League, the staff has grown from around 20 to 30 and the annual budget grown from under \$1 million to around \$3.3 million. Mr. Richmond is the driving force for fundraising for the budget.

The Louisville Urban League placed more than 200 people in jobs last year with a combined annual income of nearly \$5 million. It helped about 1,000 prepare for finding employment through career expos, job training, referrals, and career counseling. It also has many programs to help youth and seniors.

The Louisville Urban League is nearly halfway towards realizing their goal of seeing 15,000 local African Americans earn college degrees between 2012 and

2020. Mr. Richmond oversaw the Louisville Urban League's move to a new headquarters in 1990. And under Mr. Richmond's tenure, the Louisville Urban League was just one of 13 Urban League affiliates nationwide to receive a top score in a self-audit required by the National Urban League.

I should add my interest in the Urban League is personal—my father once served on the board of the Louisville Urban League. I believe he knew Ben Richmond. We are lucky, that after his retirement, Mr. Richmond plans on staying in Louisville. Our city can continue to benefit from his wisdom and experience.

I want to wish my good friend Mr. Ben Richmond all the best in retirement, and I ask my Senate colleagues to join me in congratulating Ben for his successful tenure at the helm of the Louisville Urban League. The city of Louisville and the State of Kentucky have certainly benefitted immeasurably by his many efforts over the decades.

The Louisville Courier-Journal newspaper recently published an article extolling Mr. Ben Richmond's many accomplishments. I ask unanimous consent that said article be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Courier-Journal, Jan. 21, 2015]  
URBAN LEAGUE CEO RICHMOND RETIRING  
(By Sheldon S. Shafer)

Ben Richmond, a cornerstone of local social activism for more than a quarter century and a major advocate of economic equality, is retiring as president and CEO of the Louisville Urban League.

Richmond announced his impending retirement at an Urban League board meeting Tuesday, after serving as head of the civil rights organization since 1987.

Under the leadership of Richmond, a mainstay in the push to improve economic development in western Louisville, the Urban League has long been dedicated to promoting job training and education, primarily for Louisville's poorer citizens.

Richmond "has been one of the anchors for diversity and for stability in not only the African-American community but the overall Louisville community," said Raoul Cunningham, Louisville NAACP president. "I am going to miss Ben, his counsel and his cooperative spirit."

Richmond "has become known around the country for innovative and groundbreaking approaches to helping residents improve their quality of life," said Dan Hall, a University of Louisville vice president and the Urban League board chairman. "He is intensely passionate about helping individuals find a pathway to success."

Richmond received Louisville Metro's Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Freedom Award in 2007, an annual recognition given by the city to a local activist dedicated to King's principles and who has promoted peace, equality and justice.

Then-Mayor Jerry Abramson said at the time that "over his decades of leadership, countless lives have been improved through Ben's tireless efforts in workforce development, housing and youth programs."

The national Urban League was founded in 1910, and the Louisville agency in 1921. The

local league was set up chiefly to help rural black Southerners who had moved to Louisville after World War I.

The Louisville Urban League under Richmond has greatly expanded its reach. It placed about 250 people in jobs last year and helped around 1,000 more prepare for finding employment. The league's career-development efforts range from helping job seekers draft resumes to mock job interviews.

In recent times the league has sponsored Saturday morning enrichment classes for children. And it has found buyers for dozens of new single-family homes built on vacant or abandoned property under its Project Rebound program in Russell, helping to transform the surrounding neighborhood.

League efforts annually include career expos; job training, referrals and career counseling; a variety of services for employers; homeownership training and counseling; a health and wellness program called Get Fit Louisville; a walk to defeat childhood obesity; and a long list of programs to help both youths and seniors in many ways.

Benjamin K. Richmond, 71 and single, was born in Durham, N.C., and raised in Jackson, Miss.

Richmond came to the Louisville Urban League as president and CEO in 1987, after top jobs with league affiliates in Wisconsin and Michigan. Richmond here replaced the league's longtime leader, the late Art Walters. Walters, who died in 2010 at age 91, directed the Louisville Urban League from 1970 to 1987.

Since Richmond took over, the league's staff has grown from around 20 to 30—also aided by dozens of volunteers—and its annual budget has grown from under \$1 million to around \$3.3 million this year. The funds have been cobbled together largely by Richmond—from Metro United Way and numerous public and private sources.

The current budget, for instance, includes about \$340,000 from United Way, less than \$100,000 from Metro Government and a \$1.2 million federal grant earmarked primarily for programs for seniors.

The league has several departments, including the Center for Workforce Development, the Center for Housing and Financial Empowerment and the Center for Youth Development and Education.

Richmond said in an interview Monday that he expects to remain on the job until around June 30, or until a replacement is named by the agency's board, after a planned national search. He said he may then stay on under a contract for a while longer.

Richmond intends to stay in Louisville, while traveling some to visit relatives in Mississippi and Arizona.

But he pledges to remain active, noting that "there are many opportunities in both the public and private sectors here. I will see what emerges. But I want to have fun."

Among many achievements during his tenure, Richmond cited:

Opening the league headquarters in 1990 at 1535 W. Broadway, a 19,000-square-foot office, community meeting site, classroom and job-training facility. The league invested \$1.6 million in the headquarters, which was paid off long ago. Richmond said the league headquarters has spurred significant nearby development along Broadway.

The economic impact of the league in terms of finding jobs for more than 200 people last year. Their combined annual income should be nearly \$5 million.

Richmond noted that in recent years the league helped find jobs for dozens of minorities in construction of the KFC Yum! Center, and he said the league was instrumental in getting the PGA of America to establish an urban youth golf program and also hire top staff minorities.

That a halfway point has nearly been reached toward a goal—shared with partner organizations such as Simmons College and Jefferson Community and Technical College—to have 15,000 local African-Americans earn college degrees between 2012 and 2020. The minority effort is part of the community's 55,000 Degrees effort.

That the league last year received a top score in a self-audit—a review of its staff, policies, finances and procedures—required every three years by the National Urban League. The Louisville agency was just one of 13 affiliates of the national organization to achieve that status, Richmond said.

Richmond said he is proud that under his oversight the local league has attained financial stability, adding that he believes his organization is widely respected.

Under Richmond, the league has become more diversified. About half of its 36-member board and about half the staff are white. Richmond said he has strived to "practice what we preach—racial diversity."

Richmond "has been a tremendous leader," said Metro Councilman David Tandy, D-4th District. "There is still work to do, but he has been at the forefront of the second, or third, wave of the civil-rights movement, focusing on economic opportunity. ... He has played a pivotal role in the community."

Richmond "has tried to create opportunities and meet challenges our community has faced," said longtime ally Sam Watkins, president of the Louisville Central Community Center, another West End-based, pro-development group.

"He's been a champion for west Louisville and has been proactive in trying to garner desperately needed attention for the area's issues and problems."

## COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION AND FORESTRY

### RULES OF PROCEDURE

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. President, the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry has adopted rules governing its procedures for the 114th Congress. Pursuant to rule XXVI, paragraph 2, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, on behalf of myself and Senator STABENOW, I ask unanimous consent that a copy of the committee rules be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

### RULES OF THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION AND FORESTRY

#### RULE I—MEETINGS

1.1 Regular Meetings.—Regular meetings shall be held on the first and third Wednesday of each month when Congress is in session.

1.2 Additional Meetings.—The Chairman, in consultation with the ranking minority member, may call such additional meetings as he deems necessary.

1.3 Notification.—In the case of any meeting of the committee, other than a regularly scheduled meeting, the clerk of the committee shall notify every member of the committee of the time and place of the meeting and shall give reasonable notice which, except in extraordinary circumstances, shall be at least 24 hours in advance of any meeting held in Washington, DC, and at least 48 hours in the case of any meeting held outside Washington, DC.

1.4 Called Meeting.—If three members of the committee have made a request in writ-

ing to the Chairman to call a meeting of the committee, and the Chairman fails to call such a meeting within 7 calendar days thereafter, including the day on which the written notice is submitted, a majority of the members may call a meeting by filing a written notice with the clerk of the committee who shall promptly notify each member of the committee in writing of the date and time of the meeting.

1.5 Adjournment of Meetings.—The Chairman of the committee or a subcommittee shall be empowered to adjourn any meeting of the committee or a subcommittee if a quorum is not present within 15 minutes of the time scheduled for such meeting.

### RULE 2—MEETINGS AND HEARINGS IN GENERAL

2.1 Open Sessions.—Business meetings and hearings held by the committee or any subcommittee shall be open to the public except as otherwise provided for in Senate Rule XXVI, paragraph 5.

2.2 Transcripts.—A transcript shall be kept of each business meeting and hearing of the committee or any subcommittee unless a majority of the committee or the subcommittee agrees that some other form of permanent record is preferable.

2.3 Reports.—An appropriate opportunity shall be given the Minority to examine the proposed text of committee reports prior to their filing or publication. In the event there are supplemental, minority, or additional views, an appropriate opportunity shall be given the Majority to examine the proposed text prior to filing or publication.

2.4 Attendance.—(a) Meetings. Official attendance of all markups and executive sessions of the committee shall be kept by the committee clerk. Official attendance of all subcommittee markups and executive sessions shall be kept by the subcommittee clerk.

(b) Hearings. Official attendance of all hearings shall be kept, provided that, Senators are notified by the committee Chairman and ranking minority member, in the case of committee hearings, and by the subcommittee Chairman and ranking minority member, in the case of subcommittee hearings, 48 hours in advance of the hearing that attendance will be taken. Otherwise, no attendance will be taken. Attendance at all hearings is encouraged.

### RULE 3—HEARING PROCEDURES

3.1 Notice.—Public notice shall be given of the date, place, and subject matter of any hearing to be held by the committee or any subcommittee at least 1 week in advance of such hearing unless the Chairman of the full committee or the subcommittee determines that the hearing is noncontroversial or that special circumstances require expedited procedures and a majority of the committee or the subcommittee involved concurs. In no case shall a hearing be conducted with less than 24 hours notice.

3.2 Witness Statements.—Each witness who is to appear before the committee or any subcommittee shall file with the committee or subcommittee, at least 24 hours in advance of the hearing, a written statement of his or her testimony and as many copies as the Chairman of the committee or subcommittee prescribes.

3.3 Minority Witnesses.—In any hearing conducted by the committee, or any subcommittee thereof, the minority members of the committee or subcommittee shall be entitled, upon request to the Chairman by the ranking minority member of the committee or subcommittee to call witnesses of their selection during at least 1 day of such hearing pertaining to the matter or matters heard by the committee or subcommittee.

3.4 Swearing in of Witnesses.—Witnesses in committee or subcommittee hearings may be