

Some might say: What is this issue all about? Think about it. If you have an agency that doesn't want to have filming or pictures in a certain part of a wilderness area or certain part of public land because a different story might be told that doesn't fit with the agency's view, that is not right. This bill will ensure that we are not going to regulate content in terms of whether or not a permit is issued.

I will give a specific example of why this is needed. Back in 2014, a producer for Oregon Public Broadcasting wanted to film a piece in the Willamette National Forest to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act. To ensure that the piece had the "primary purpose of dissemination of information about the use and enjoyment of wilderness," officials from the Forest Service asked to review the script. They wanted to look at the script before issuing a permit. That was not right. I believe giving Federal officials veto power over content can have a very chilling effect on journalism.

The final title of the Sportsmen's Act—this is a new title we came up with in committee—provides for reforms in the Land and Water Conservation Fund—LWCF. The reforms in the bill do not go as far as I would like to see them go, but they do reflect what our committee could agree on.

We also agreed to reauthorize the Historic Preservation Fund and to create a fund to address the maintenance backlog at the National Park Service. This is the same language we included in the broad, bipartisan Energy bill back in July—the same language now incorporated as part of the sportsmen's bill.

As I said before, my own proposal to reauthorize LWCF would look different from what our committee reported. When LWCF was created decades ago, monies were to be allocated each year so that Federal agencies would receive no less than 40 percent. States were to receive 60 percent. But what has happened in the ensuing years is that now nearly 85 percent of LWCF dollars have gone to Federal land acquisition, and we are not seeing the original congressional intent being met. Again, keep in mind that when LWCF was first created, it was going to be so that Federal agencies would get about 40 percent and States would get about 60 percent. We have now turned that on its head.

What our LWCF title does is recognize that States are leaders on recreation and conservation. Our reforms are trying to restore balance to the State-Federal split by ensuring that at least 40 percent of LWCF dollars are allocated to States for the State-based programs, including the traditional stateside program. This is an improvement, in my mind, but doesn't go far enough to restore the original congressional intent.

The title also recognizes the importance of accessing existing Federal lands and sets aside the greater of 1.5 percent or \$10 million per year to im-

prove access for sportsmen. This is an important provision for our sports men and women.

Like many western Members, I remain concerned about Federal acquisition. In Alaska, close to 63 percent of our lands are already controlled by the Federal Government. To begin to address the issue, the LWCF title also emphasizes conservation easements. This will keep lands in private ownership as working lands and will require agencies to take into account certain considerations when acquiring lands, including whether the acquisition would result in management efficiencies and cost savings.

To prioritize the backlog of deferred maintenance needs, this title establishes a National Park Service Maintenance and Revitalization Conservation Fund. This fund will help shift our focus to a more appropriate place, which is taking care of the lands we already have rather than an endless acquisition of new acreage.

Our country is fortunate to have an abundance of lands that are designated for recreation, conservation, and preservation. It is time we reached a consensus on how to care for and how to manage them. I believe we can do that best by allocating more than 40 percent of the LWCF to State-based programs.

People on the ground, who see what is happening day in and day out, provide the greatest insight into management, and we should recognize that. We should pair increased funding for State-based programs with increased authority for States to manage public lands. And we should consider giving Governors a say on Federal land acquisitions. After all, these are their States we are talking about—and opportunities for all sorts of activities on their land—are often affected by these decisions.

The LWCF reforms in the sportsmen's bill are a step in the right direction. I believe they provide a greater framework for further discussion. If we work hard and work together, we can agree on additional reforms to make LWCF even more effective in the years to come.

Those of us on the Energy and Natural Resources Committee have now completed our work on the Sportsmen's Act, and that brings us to the next step, which will be taken by our friends on the Environment and Public Works Committee. They are now considering a separate bill, S. 659, with provisions that are jurisdictional to them. I think it is fair to say that EPW's portion of the sportsmen's bill is also quite vital.

As I wrap up, there is one provision I would like to call attention to briefly, and that is the reauthorization of the North American Wetlands Conservation Act. The NAWCA program helps conserve waterfowl, fish, and wildlife through partnerships involving governments, nonprofits, and community groups. In Alaska, we are not in any danger of running out of wetlands and

this program has funded a lot of good wetlands projects in my State. For example, on the Kenai Peninsula, partners in the private sector provided \$1.6 million to match and exceed an \$800,000 grant provided through NAWCA. Those funds were then used to implement habitat protection for over 300 acres of land along the Kenai River.

I think it is important that we reauthorize this program and provide funding to it so we can see important work like this continue, particularly in States that have fewer wetlands and thus have greater need for conservation.

NAWCA is just one of the provisions the EPW Committee can and hopefully will report in the future. Once their work is complete, all who support America's sportsmen and sportswomen and all of us here in the Senate who are sports men and women ourselves, should look forward to considering the full Sportsmen's Act here on the floor next year.

I am pleased that we are on a better track for this legislation in the 114th Congress. I again thank the many Members who have worked with us to get S. 556 to where it is today. As a result of this good work, millions of hunters, fishermen, recreational shooters, and other outdoor enthusiasts will soon have greater access and greater opportunities on our public lands and Federal lands, and I think that is something we should all be proud to support.

Mr. President, I see that my colleague from New Jersey is here. I think my time has expired. I do have a further statement about a truly mighty Alaskan leader who has been known throughout the education community in the State of Alaska who passed just yesterday at the age of 100. The death of Sidney Huntington in Galena, AK, is news that has brought great sadness to us all.

In deference to my colleague from New Jersey and in recognizing his time, I would like to come back to the floor later this afternoon and provide tribute to a great man who provided so much in terms of leadership and direction to so many, whether they be Alaskan Native children in the small, remote, rural communities or in our urban centers. It is fair to say that as of yesterday, we have lost a great Alaskan, and our hearts go out to him and his family. I look forward to coming back to the floor later to provide greater tribute to the great Sidney Huntington.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

#### ZADROGA BILL FUNDING

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, as we are all awaiting those who are negotiating a multibillion-dollar omnibus package and tax extender package, I wanted to come to the floor at this time of the year, as we approach the

holidays, and say that it would be unconscionable that we would go home to celebrate with our families without doing everything we can to make sure we send a clear and unambiguous message to our first responders—in the name of Jim Zadroga from New Jersey, for whom the 9/11 bill, the Zadroga bill, is named, and all those who responded on that fateful day—that we will never forget what they did for our fellow citizens, for this Nation on September 11, the day that changed the world.

We shouldn't have had to wait this long for the law to expire. At the same time, we are being told that we can't pass the legislation because we have to offset it. Yet we are talking about passing an \$800 billion tax package, much of which goes to large corporations. I haven't heard any of my colleagues speak about the need to pay for this nearly trillion-dollar package which will deprive the Federal Treasury of anywhere between \$800 billion and \$1 trillion. Only the men and women who put their lives on the line on September 11 and the days that followed are waiting for Congress to act because we supposedly have to pay for the way in which we take care of their health care or the way in which we take care of the families, for those who lose a loved one as a result of the toxins and other circumstances that have led to their illnesses, that have led to their deaths. And unfortunately, we have seen a rising number of those individuals who responded on that fateful day who have died, including one very recently.

I don't understand how the rules don't apply to large corporations that will reap billions of dollars, but somehow those rules are asserted when we are trying to take care of the men and women who responded on that fateful day of September 11. I don't understand how there is any moral equivalency between them. There is none, and no one can claim there is any.

None of us can leave Washington for the holidays without passing this bill.

I would remind my colleagues of the immortal words of Charles Dickens in "A Christmas Carol":

I have always thought of Christmas time, when it has come round as a good time: a kind, forgiving, charitable, pleasant time: the only time I know of, in the long calendar of the year, when men and women seem by one consent to open their shut-up hearts freely, and to think of people below them as if they really were fellow-passengers to the grave, and not another race of creatures bound on their journeys.

We should keep those words in mind as we approach the holidays. Beyond that, this isn't about the holiday spirit, it is about obligation. We should accept our profound, collective responsibility—not charity but responsibility—to act on this legislation. If we do not, and if we continue to insist on pay-for provisions when we don't insist on the same provisions that would provide benefits to America's largest corporations to the tune of hundreds of billions of dollars, we should be ashamed of ourselves.

I don't know which one of my colleagues can go to a September 11 commemoration and look those first responders in the eye. I don't know how you do that. The reauthorization bill I have cosponsored is necessary to provide the security and reassurances to those first responders that these critical programs will last longer than just what the next couple of months' funding will provide. It also permanently lists the statute of limitations on the Victim Compensation Fund to provide for those first responders and their families who need access beyond next year and, very importantly, it exempts these key programs from the budget sequestration cuts. The sequestration, which I voted against, imposes arbitrary and capricious cuts to funding that will continue to provide care and support for those September 11 heroes who sacrificed everything to help those in need on that tragic day.

The fact is, Congress must act. I don't think we should wait for a public outcry before we ensure that these heroes receive the care and support they deserve. I don't think we should wait for a future tragedy to observe what we should have done. The brave men and women who rushed into the towers to save others did not wait or hesitate to respond. They did not think about themselves. They did not think about the risk. They valiantly responded, and we—we—should not hesitate or wait to respond to their needs. To do so would be absolutely shameful.

With that, I yield the floor.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

#### REMEMBERING DR. SIDNEY CHARLES HUNTINGTON

Ms. MURKOWSKI. I wish to take a few minutes this afternoon to pay tribute to an amazing Alaskan, a man who lived a life that many would say was remarkable. Yet I think in his humble words he would respond that he just lived his life and did the best he could.

Dr. Sidney Charles Huntington was truly a great Alaskan. He died yesterday at the age of 100 years old in Galena, AK, which is on the Yukon River.

Sidney Huntington was a respected Athabascan elder. He was a culture bearer. He was a role model—definitely a role model. He was a mentor to so many, not only in his village but in his region and in his State. He was a prolific storyteller. He was a philosopher. He had words of wisdom. He was a reservoir of traditional knowledge. He was an outdoorsman who knew, understood, loved, and feared the land. He was a businessman. He was truly a public

servant, especially when it came to education and conservation, and he was a warrior in the fight against youth suicide. These are just some of the words by which we remember one of our State's most treasured, cultural icons.

Sidney Huntington was known to his family and his friends as Grandpa Sid, and probably, for many good reasons, he had a lot of grandkids. There were the personal stories, and I think as we reflect on the 100 years of this great Alaskan, we will begin to share these many stories and tributes. He was certainly a savvy poker player. That is going to come out. He was a very generous man.

We were talking about him earlier today in my office. He was one of those guys who would truly give the shirt off his back. Sidney once encountered a young Native student who he thought had left the village and gone off to school, and the young man said: I couldn't go because I need to stay home and earn some money. Sidney literally took out his wallet, gave him eight hundred-dollar bills, and he told him to get to school. That was vintage Sidney. School was important. School had to be a priority, and Sidney wasn't going to let the fact that this young man thought he needed to stay home and make money stop him from going to school. He literally took out his wallet and solved the problem.

Sidney Huntington was one tough Alaskan. He was a man of very impeccable standards. He told it like it was. He would hold back not one iota.

I was in Galena after they had experienced some terrible flooding several years back, and the community had come together to talk about the FEMA response, how that was working with the State. You had the Federal Agency reps, you had the State people, and everybody was trying to figure out how to get through a difficult situation. Sidney Huntington—not sitting in the back of the room but sitting right up front at that table—said: By gosh, we have to get to work. No mincing words about it; he told it like it truly was. He was hardy. He was determined. He was very resilient. He was the real deal.

I was very privileged to know Sidney, and I was honored to be called his friend. That is quite an honor because you didn't choose Sidney to be your friend. Sidney chose you. He had identified me as somebody who could not only be helpful but that he could relate to, that we could have conversation back and forth.

It wasn't too many years ago that I flew into Galena. Galena is a very small village on the Yukon River, as I mentioned. You fly into the little airport there. I went to the very small terminal, and there was Sidney sitting on a chair right outside the little airport terminal.

I asked him: Where are you going, Sidney? I am sorry you are not going to be here while I am visiting Galena.

And he said: No, no, no. I am here because I have some talking to do with