

lot of people throughout our Commonwealth, and indeed throughout our Nation. In this case, I believe, obviously, CMS has made the wrong decision.

One would think, in order to help determine what a hospital is doing, a representative from CMS would visit and would do a thorough review of the hospital that can only be done in person. You can't do that just based upon charts or phone calls. One would think someone from CMS would come and see WillsEye Hospital firsthand. They really haven't done that yet in a manner that is connected to the actions they have been taking. So I have encouraged them to do that. It is not a very burdensome task to get on the train, go to Philadelphia, spend some time in WillsEye Hospital, and use that as part of the basis upon which to make a determination as an agency of government.

In this case, unfortunately, CMS has made an arbitrary decision, which is wrong. This decision threatens this world-class hospital, and that is an understatement. In essence, this decision makes no sense. WillsEye is a hospital. It provides great care for people who can't get this care almost anywhere else in the country, especially when it comes to children and especially when it comes to that diagnosis that families get of retinoblastoma. Without the intervention and the great work at WillsEye, those children will die.

I will continue to urge CMS to work with me and to work with WillsEye on a solution that resolves this bureaucratic problem. That is basically what this is, a bureaucratic approach that doesn't make sense in the real world—the real world of quality medical care, the real world of the services that WillsEye provides, and the real world of Joey's circumstance and children like him across our region in Pennsylvania but also across the country.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for 10 minutes, and if the Chair would, let me know when I have spoken for 8 minutes, please.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair will do so.

Ms. STABENOW. I thank the Chair.

#### FUNDING FOR FLINT, MICHIGAN

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, this has been a roller coaster time for those of us who care deeply about what happened over 2½ years ago in the city of Flint with a system that was not treated properly and exposed 100,000 people in Flint to lead poisoning.

We had a great vote last week, and I am very grateful to Senator INHOFE and Senator BOXER, who came together, working with Senator PETERS and me, to put together a larger water bill that included an effort to help Flint families as well as other communities that have exposure to lead in their water. That effort had a final vote of 95 to 3. This was a very positive moment.

Today, just a little while ago, it was just the opposite. We have an opportunity to complete the job we started last week and include this fully offset package in this budget bill in front of us, the continuing resolution. Yet the Republican leader did not do that. What adds insult to injury is, there is help for Louisiana but not for the families of Flint, and I might add, ours is fully offset. There is no offset in spending, there are no other programs cut to pay for the help for Louisiana, but I offered to phase out a program I sponsored in 2007—that doesn't happen a lot around here—in order to pay for this emergency in Flint and help other communities with lead in their water across the country. So we have something fully paid for and for which there should be absolutely no objection.

I would love to know the objection to helping a group of people—100,000 people in Flint and other families across the country in Jackson, MS, New York, Indiana, Pennsylvania, Texas, and across the country—with something fully paid for. What is the objection to putting that into this continuing resolution if the other side of the aisle is willing to put in something that doesn't have an offset in it to help the people in Louisiana?

I support helping the people in Louisiana. I believe we are in this together as a country. As Americans, I think, no matter the emergency, we should be willing to help each other. We have had a variety of emergencies over the years, such as the fertilizer company in West, TX, where there was an explosion a few years ago. It was not a flood, not a hurricane, not a drought but a fertilizer explosion, and people were exposed. The Federal Government stepped in to help, and that wasn't fully paid for either.

Here we have a situation with 100,000 people—9,000 children under the age of 6—who are seriously exposed to lead and that exposure will affect their development, physically and mentally, for the rest of their lives. They have now waited—they have waited—over 1 year since they knew what was happening. We have finally gotten to a point where we have strong bipartisan support in the Senate, and this is easy to put this in this bill—easy. But we are in a situation where we are saying to the people of Flint: Well, wait just 3 more months. Wait until the end of the year. I guess the other question is, Why don't people in Louisiana wait until the end of the year? I think we should help both of them now.

In Flint, we literally have people getting up in the morning and saying: OK.

I have to take the kids to the school. Should I pick up the bottle of water before I take them to school or after? Gosh. Now, I don't have a car, but can I get somebody to help me go over before I go to work—pick up the bottle of water now or later? We are going to have to spend some time because it is not easy to use bottled water and do a shower for yourself and the kids, let alone for cooking and all of the other things we take for granted every day. People in Flint, for almost 2 years, have been having to deal with this every single day.

If this were happening to us, we would view it as an emergency. A decade ago—I don't know, 10 or 12 years ago—when Washington, DC, had lead in the water, somehow everybody came together to get that fixed. There was a concern about the water in the Cannon House Office Building, and that got fixed. I have a funny feeling if something happened in Wisconsin, the Speaker would decide that was serious enough to fix that, but we have a group of people in Flint, MI, who trusted their elected officials and who have been waiting—actually, incredibly patiently—for action so they can turn on the faucet and have clean water.

They had such hopes last week. This was a great moment of people coming together, 95 to 3, on a bill that would not only help families in Flint but across the country. That is how we are supposed to govern. We did that concerning the lead in the water in Flint. We went the extra mile to make sure that was fully offset by phasing out another program to pay for it.

Literally, this package could go anywhere. It could go by itself by voice vote today. It could go any number of places, but it needs to happen now. To see the continuing resolution come to the floor with help for Louisiana and not for the families of Flint is outrageous. It is just outrageous. I will do everything in my power to make sure this does not happen. We are not—we are not, I am not—going to support an effort that says to the people of Flint: You don't count. Your child doesn't count. We care about people in Louisiana. Oh, they count, but people in Flint, MI, don't count. We don't see them. We don't care.

Well, we do see them. We do care about them. We spent 8 months putting together a bipartisan coalition in the Senate, and I am grateful for that. As I said before, Senator INHOFE has been terrific to work with. We were so pleased last week that we were on track to get this done and then to find out that when we now have this opportunity and we had this huge vote—a bipartisan, fully offset, paid-for package to move it forward—suddenly Flint doesn't count. Flint families don't count. Flint children don't count. But for Louisiana, which wasn't in the WRDA bill—or so far we haven't voted on it separately—we need to help Louisiana. By the way, let me say again, I am happy to support Louisiana, but

the help for Louisiana and the help for Flint need to be done the same.

Let me finally say—

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has used 8 minutes.

Ms. STABENOW. I thank the Chair.

I want to actually turn and give 2 minutes to my colleague who has been my great partner in this, but I want to close by saying this. There is one other provision in this bill that is outrageous and that continues dark money in campaigns from having to be reported. So this continuing resolution is saying yes to dark money and no to children with lead poisoning in Flint, and that is not acceptable.

Now to my partner Senator PETERS.

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, I thank Senator STABENOW for yielding me her remaining time. I couldn't concur more with what she had to say.

This is another day. It seems like we are down here on the floor all of the time talking about the crisis in Flint, asking for help, and demanding that folks step up to help the people of Flint. We are so close to doing it.

As the Senator mentioned, we came with incredible bipartisan support, 95 votes—a program fully paid for that the Senator authored, a program that I fought for as a Member of the U.S. House. Now we are saying this is so important that we are willing to take this program, use these funds to help the people of Flint. But the people can't wait any longer. In this body, the Senate should not be about picking and choosing specific States to help, specific cities to help, specific neighborhoods. It should be about all of America: No matter who you are, no matter where you live, when you are hurting, we will step up as the American people and help those folks in need. That is all we are asking.

A program that is fully paid for and has strong bipartisan support—this seems to be a very easy thing to do, which is why I am at a loss to understand why it can't be put in a CR when it had such broad support and when it is clear people have been waiting for months. We had families in Washington last week, a woman, a mom, talking about her daughter whose teeth are crumbling when she bites into sandwiches because of the damage related to lead poisoning. She has blood levels going up and down with lead; it is still not under control. She was in tears. She was at a loss. She felt some hope when the WRDA bill passed. But if we don't take action and we leave to go back to our States for the month of October, who knows when we were going to bring this up. This is wrong.

The people of Flint have waited long enough. The people of Flint have suffered enough. This is our opportunity as the Senate to rise up and to say: Every American's life is important. Every American's life is one that we celebrate. Every child should have opportunities.

We can put this in the CR. We can pass it and send a strong signal to the people of Flint that their lives matter.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, if there is a moment left, I wish to underscore that we are not asking to pit communities against each other. We are not asking colleagues to say no to Louisiana. We are asking colleagues to say yes to Flint and Louisiana and understand that your ZIP Code doesn't matter. We have the obligation to step up when there is an emergency and help American families. That is all we are asking for the people of Flint.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

#### JUSTICE CLARENCE THOMAS

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I rise today to celebrate an event that both represents and helps preserve what is best about this great country. I ask unanimous consent that I be permitted to finish these remarks.

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

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, 25 years ago next month, the Senate confirmed, and President George H.W. Bush appointed, Clarence Thomas to be an Associate Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court. To paraphrase John F. Kennedy, I would like to note both what this country has done for Justice Thomas and what Justice Thomas is doing for this country.

President Bush made the announcement of then-Judge Thomas's Supreme Court nomination on July 1, 1991, at the Bush home in Maine. In his brief remarks, Judge Thomas said: "Only in America could this have been possible." He was right. It would be difficult to find a more powerful story about how far someone can go in this country.

Clarence Thomas was born on June 23, 1948, in a small wood-frame house in the rural town of Pin Point, GA. Six people lived in that house, which had no indoor plumbing.

Life in the world of Clarence's youth was fully segregated. In 1955, the year after the Supreme Court ruled segregated education unconstitutional, he and his brother moved in with his maternal grandparents, Myers and Christine Anderson. Myers Anderson lacked the outward material signs of success that many prize so highly today. He grew up poor, without a father, and had only a third grade education. Yet it was what he had, rather than what he lacked, that would make him the most profound influence on his grandson, Clarence Thomas. Mr. Anderson's strength of character, his principles and values, and his example shaped the man whose memoir would later be titled, "My Grandfather's Son."

Clarence's grandparents were honest, hardworking, and deeply religious people. They taught decency and respect for others, insisting that Clarence never refuse to do an errand for a neighbor. Mr. Anderson wanted his

grandson to be self-sufficient, able to stand on his own two feet even in a hostile world where the odds seemed heavily stacked against him.

The other powerful influences for young Clarence were the nuns who taught him at St. Benedict's Grammar School. There, and at St. Benedict's Catholic Church, Clarence learned that all people are inherently equal, no matter what the law or society might say at a particular time.

Clarence graduated from high school in 1967, the only Black student in his class, and was the first person in his family to attend college. After graduating from Yale Law School, Clarence went to work for Missouri attorney general John Danforth—known as Jack Danforth by us—arguing his first case before the Missouri Supreme Court just 3 days after having been sworn in as a member of the Missouri Bar. He came to Washington in 1979 to join then-Senator Danforth as a legislative assistant.

Clarence Thomas was confirmed by the Senate for the first of five times in 1981 as Assistant Secretary of Education for Civil Rights. I think I was the chairman at that time. He would become the longest serving chairman of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in 1982, a judge on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit in 1990, and a Supreme Court Justice in 1991 at the age of 43. America gave him opportunities that do not exist anywhere else in the world.

Since this anniversary is about Justice Thomas's service on the Supreme Court, let me turn from what America has done for him to what he is doing for America. I have known Clarence for 35 years and chaired or served on the committees that oversaw each of his appointments. His impact on our Nation comes from his own strength of character fueling his deep conviction about the principles of liberty and other great principles as well.

I have already touched on some of the building blocks of Clarence's character, including his grandfather's example of standing firm in his beliefs. In one interview, Clarence said that his professional career is a vindication of the way he was raised. He described that upbringing in this way in a 1986 article:

But my training by the nuns and my grandparents paid off. I decided then . . . that it was better to be respected than liked.

At the time of Clarence's Supreme Court nomination, reporters noted that he defied categorization and refused to uncritically accept orthodoxy of any stripe. Even liberal columnists acknowledged the nominee's intellectual independence was great. This strength of character has not changed and makes it possible for Justice Thomas to advance his deep conviction about the principles of liberty.

The first principle is the inherent equality of every human being. As the Declaration of Independence states, government exists to secure the inalienable rights of individuals. Justice