

Let us set aside this partisan our-way-or-the-highway approach, opt for the alternative, which is more sunshine and more bipartisanship. I will pledge to you everything in my power on the Senate Finance Committee to bring that about.

Mr. President, 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.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

MANUFACTURING

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, the White House started out this week with all kinds of activities on the White House grounds pertaining to things that we make here in America and the importance of manufacturing and, frankly, the kinds of good jobs that have traditionally come with manufacturing.

When we have an economy that focuses on making things and growing things, that has always been the strongest economy for working American families—an economy that competes, an economy that produces. Where the Presiding Officer and I live in Louisiana and in Missouri, in the middle of the country and close to that great transportation corridor and close to the resources of the country, we always particularly thrive when we are in an economy that is focused on making things.

With all of the other discussions this week, it would be a shame to not think about those products from every State that the President talked about this week, that were on the Capitol grounds, and that are reflective of companies that are almost brandnew and companies that are a century old, where people had figured out how to be competitive enough in what they were doing that they could make a living for themselves and lots of other people, doing just that. In fact, manufacturing employs 12.3 million people in the country today, including more than 260,000 people in my State of Missouri. There is no doubt that we benefit from those kinds of jobs.

I was glad that in 2014 we were able to get the Revitalize American Manufacturing and Innovation Act signed into law. This was a new way, a new opportunity for businesses to link with each other and to link with training facilities, maybe research universities. You have to have that kind of public partner, as well, to see what we could be to be even more competitive than we are. When we looked at Germany and other countries, they were not only doing this sort of thing, but they were doing it in a way that made it really hard for us sometimes to keep up with that level of interaction between innovation and manufacturing, innovation and labor.

Businesses are really very much impacted, jobs are very much impacted by

the decisions that government ultimately sets the stage for. If you are going to make something in America today, the first two boxes I think you would have to check would be can you pay the utility bill and does the transportation system work with what you are trying to do. If you can't check those two boxes, no matter how great that workforce and that location might be, you are not going to take those jobs there. So government, either as a regulator or as a provider, is going to be very involved in whether you can pay the utility bill.

That is why I was really glad to see the new director at the Environmental Protection Agency look at the power rule. The courts fortunately had already said you don't have the authority to do that—only Congress can do what you want to do here—which is look at the power rule and look at States like many of our States in the middle of the country where, in my State, the so-called clean power rule would have doubled the utility bill for families and the places they work in about 10 or 12 years. By the way, nobody pays the utility bill for you. The utility bill is paid based on how many utilities you use. There is no mythical big government to come in and pay the utility bill unless we are going to have a totally different system than we have now. The utility bill would have doubled.

I have often said that in the last three years in this fight to see that this didn't happen to Missouri families—and I said it again on the radio this morning in an interview, thinking that this fortunately had not happened—I said: If you want to test what happens if the utility bill is allowed to double because of some needless government action—and double before it has to because you are doing things before they have to be done—the next time you pay your utility bill, just as you are writing your checks out of your checkbook, pay it one more time and see what you are going to do with the rest of your family's money that month, which suddenly you can't do because you are paying the utility bill twice.

There are ways—when we need to transition to some other kind of utility provider if we want to transition in fuels or sources or whatever—there are ways to do that. The way to do that is to say that the next time you have to build something, the next time you have to borrow money that the utility users are going to pay back over 20 or 30 years, once you have paid for what you are doing now that has met all the requirements, you have to do it differently than what that silly rule would have said, because it would have said you have to pay for what you already have, but you have to also be paying for what you immediately had to replace it with.

This would have been like if you had the CAFE standards, the miles-per-gallon standards, if that same agency

would have said: OK, we are going to have new miles-per-gallon standards and they are effective immediately, and if you have a car that doesn't meet those standards, you of course have to keep paying for your car, but you also have to have a new car. That is what we were about to tell utility users and families. And if you don't think that would have had an impact on jobs, you are just not thinking about jobs.

There was a water rule, the waters of the United States, that would have done about the same thing. Both of those have been pushed back by the courts, and hopefully we are walking toward a more reasonable situation where we are thinking about how to accomplish the same goals in a way that lets families accomplish their dreams.

Then the second thing, the transportation issue: Does the transportation system work for what you want to make? Can you get the material where you need to get it? Can you get a product in a way that continues to make you competitive? And the State and Federal Government and local governments are very, very much in charge of the decisions that make that environment whatever it is.

So when we are thinking about "Made in America," we have to think about those things. Then we have to think, with that infrastructure in place, what is the third and crucial piece of that puzzle coming together? It is a workforce that is competitive and prepared and an education system that is prepared to help with whatever comes next.

If we think we know what the average person, or any person, is going to be doing and how they are going to be doing it 20 years from now, I suspect none of us are quite that able to predict what 20 years from now is going to look like. In fact, if we had thought about the way we do most of the work we do now 20 years ago, it would be amazing: Oh, it is just 20 years later, but we didn't have the cell phone, we didn't have an iPad, we didn't have a computer. There was nothing at the factory that did what that machine does right now. We have to have a workforce that is ready, and we have to do all we can to make that workforce ready.

On the infrastructure front, we need to look not only at the infrastructure bill that is coming up, but also how many more tools can we put in the tool box. Senator WARNER and I reintroduced the BRIDGE Act to provide one more tool to create more incentive for private sector partnerships, to do things differently than we have done them before. If we are going to get different results, we have to do different things. If we do just exactly what we have been doing, we are going to get just exactly what we have been getting.

So as the President focuses, I think properly, on the kinds of American jobs that create stronger families and more opportunities, we don't want to lose

this week without also thinking about those jobs, thinking about the 12.3 million Americans who work at making things, thinking about the more than a quarter of a million Missourians who do that. Think about the others who work at growing things and how an economy that makes things and grows things is a stronger economy than an economy where people just trade services with each other. There is nothing wrong with trading services, but if you do that on top of a productive economy, it has a much better likelihood for everyone involved to serve the people who provide the services, as well as the people who are out there making things that are competitive in the world to have better opportunities.

I appreciate the President and Vice President this week calling attention to that important part of what we do as we move toward transportation and infrastructure and other things.

THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS FOR SENATOR MCCAIN

Mr. President, while I am on the floor, I want to mention for just a minute our friend, JOHN McCAIN. I know lots of prayers have been said for Senator MCCAIN and his family. Lots of stories today have been told and traded, and there are lots of stories to tell.

When I was in the House for 14 years, I was often in brief meetings with Senator MCCAIN. Frankly, I never grew to appreciate him anywhere near like I did when I had a chance to begin to work with him every day. For me, at least, he was an acquired taste. It took time to really see his strength, his tenacity, and to understand that irascibility was just part of who he is and part of his determination to make the country and the Congress and the Senate better.

It would be hard to find anyone more determined or less fearful. In fact, someone in a recent debate in the last year or so said that Senator MCCAIN had—I think a reporter said that Senator MCCAIN had done something because he was afraid to do the other thing. When asked about it, Senator MCCAIN said: Well, it has been a long time since I was afraid.

He is a man who served his country day after day after day, and still does; a believer in what we stand for; someone who has traveled all over the world, as I have had a chance to travel to dangerous spots and other places. Over and over again, as I would get there, people would say: Here is what Senator MCCAIN had to say when he was here. Here is what Senator MCCAIN did when he was here. Senator MCCAIN was here last week. He was there, always proud of the independence and determination and democracy and freedom that he stands for.

We all know he is in a fight right now, but we all also know he is a fighter. He is not a man who surrenders. I know the prayers of not only the Senate but so many people all over the country and, frankly, all over the world go out to help JOHN McCAIN as he faces this fight.

With that, 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. WARREN. 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. WARREN. Mr. President, I rise today to oppose the nomination of David Bernhardt as the next Deputy Secretary of the Interior.

Mr. Bernhardt has shown that he is unwilling to fight for the long-term conservation of our public lands and the responsible use of our public resources. By his own admission, he intends to be a big business yes-man for the Trump administration's extreme disregard for our environment and the human lives that are affected.

President Trump promised to drain the swamp of DC, but with each day of this administration, this Republican-controlled Senate approves yet another corporate insider to help out big business. The decision to nominate Mr. Bernhardt is no exception. He is another conflict-ridden, climate-dismissing Trump appointee who favors profits over people.

Let's look at his record. Mr. Bernhardt has extensive political experience in the Department of the Interior under the Bush administration, but in his tenure at the Department, including the 2 years he oversaw the ethics division, the Department was awash in ethical scandals and scientific misconduct.

And what did he do after he left government service? He scooted off to a lucrative lobbying firm to help Big Oil and other extraction companies maximize their profits by expanding offshore drilling and delaying air pollution limits on coal plants, regardless of the impact that would have on our children's future.

Even Mr. Bernhardt isn't proud of his own record. Prior to his nomination, his lobbying firm bio bragged about recently helping corporations fight against the Endangered Species Act, supporting corporate interests in offshore drilling and exploration for fossil fuels, and helping mining companies pursue public lands for development.

He openly bragged about recently representing "an entity under investigation by a Federal Agency" and "entities accused of violating the Department of the Interior's regulations." He swaggered through Washington. That is, he swaggered right up until he was under consideration for the No. 2 spot at Interior. Now that he is in the public spotlight, he has scrubbed all those pro-industry, pro-pollution references from his bio. Now that the public is paying attention, he is putting out a clean image of a public servant who just happens to advise big corporations from time to time.

Beyond the ties Mr. Bernhardt still has to industry, I am alarmed by his

willingness to serve as the corporate rubberstamp that President Trump wants. Mr. Bernhardt is a walking conflict of interest who has taken one spin through the revolving door, and now he is coming back around again for a second pass.

The Deputy Secretary serves at the pleasure of the President. But a Deputy Secretary—the No. 2 at the Department—is, first and foremost, bound to serve the American people and the mission of the Department. No President is properly served by a corporate yes-man, and Mr. Bernhardt's yes-man mentality was on full display during his confirmation hearing.

When my colleague from Minnesota, Senator AL FRANKEN, questioned Mr. Bernhardt about climate change at his nomination hearing, he was all too willing to dismiss the urgency of climate change, and he pushed aside the responsibility of the Department of the Interior to act. In defiance of accepted climate science, he stated:

This President ran, he won on a particular policy perspective. That perspective's not going to change to the extent we have the discretion under the law to follow it.

In other words, don't bother me with the facts; we will just stick to whatever President Trump tells us to do.

But the rest of us can't ignore the facts. Our planet is getting hotter. The last 16 years were all among the hottest 17 years on record, and our seas are rising at an alarming rate. Our coasts are threatened by furious storm surges that can sweep away homes and devastate even our largest cities. Our economically disadvantaged communities, too often situated in low-lying floodplains, are one bad storm away from destruction. Our naval bases are under attack—not by enemy ships but by rising seas. Our food supplies and forests are threatened by droughts and wildfires that are becoming so common across the country that they barely even make the evening news.

The effects of manmade climate change are all around us, and things will only continue to get worse at an accelerating pace if we don't do something about it. We can act, and one important step is saying no to corporate raiders who are seeking to exploit public lands and gamble with our children's future.

President Trump thinks leadership is handing over management of our public lands to Big Oil and Big Coal executives who are looking to stuff their pockets while the getting is good. Mr. Bernhardt, a seasoned advocate for corporate interests, seems all too eager to please this President and corporate interests, no matter the cost to the American people. If President Trump's highest ranking agency officials are not brave enough to speak even a little truth to power about this President's climate delusions, then, who will?

The American people deserve leadership at the Department of the Interior—leadership that is committed to ensuring that our public resources and