

gone into the ocean.” In fact, to be more precise, it is 93 percent. By the way, that is heating the oceans at a rate greater than setting off a Hiroshima-style nuclear bomb in the oceans and having all of the heat of the nuclear explosion absorbed by the oceans, more than one explosion per second. So it is quite a heat transfer.

I asked Ms. White about a basic scientific principle: Do you think if the ocean warms it expands? Does the law of thermal expansion apply to seawater?

After a long pause, she replied, “Again, I do not have any kind of expertise or even such layman’s study of the ocean dynamics and the climate change issues.” For somebody who wants to lead the White House Council on Environmental Quality and help guide the science in this area, it is a pretty rudimentary scientific principle that water expands as it warms. If you can’t grasp that, good luck grasping the risks that sea level rise poses to coastal communities like ours in Rhode Island.

The “Climate Science Special Report” states that “it is virtually certain that sea level rise this century and beyond will pose a growing challenge to coastal communities, infrastructure, and ecosystems.” Rhode Island has coastal communities, infrastructure, and ecosystems so this challenge is very real for my home State.

Climate change, sea level rise, and ocean acidification are challenges that require smart leadership and initiative. We need to take action to bolster our infrastructure, fortify our coasts, and help communities prepare for those challenges on the horizon. Instead, in this administration, we get the likes of Perry, Pruitt, and White.

I wish ignorance were what is driving these administration officials. Ignorance can be rectified with education, with information. We could assign them to read the “Climate Science Special Report,” for instance. They might find it illuminating and realize that what they have been saying is factually false. Unfortunately, it is a much more nefarious condition than ignorance that afflicts this administration on climate change, and it is a condition that cannot be cured with facts.

This is about fossil fuel money. The malady of fossil fuel money in politics is what prevents the stark warnings in the “Climate Science Special Report” from being a call to action in Congress.

In Bonn at the COP23 gathering, we saw that the rest of the world is not turning a blind eye to climate change. The rest of the world is confronting it head-on, along with many American States, many American cities, major American corporations, and virtually every major American university. Those are all very hopeful signs.

While our President and his administration have bound themselves to the fossil fuel polluters, the American people have not. Rhode Islanders and Americans everywhere care deeply

about getting ahead of this problem—about achieving the goals of the U.N. framework. And the American people will carry forward American leadership in combating climate change, no matter how evil the continuing influence of the fossil fuel industry is in Congress. I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

The Senator from Wyoming.

TAX REFORM

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, the Senate Finance Committee is working this week on the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act. It is a very important piece of legislation that the country is looking forward to having passed.

This is a Republican plan to give tax relief to the American people. Just as the name of the legislation says, it actually addresses both issues: tax cuts and jobs.

First of all, the legislation will cut the taxes for American workers. One of the biggest cuts in the plan is that it roughly doubles the standard deduction that people take. Right now, the standard deduction for a married couple is about \$12,000. If we double it, people will not pay any Federal income taxes at all on the first \$24,000 they earn. That is a big tax cut. It is aimed squarely at lower income and middle-income families in this country.

A lot of people will decide to take this deduction instead of going through the painstaking process of itemizing deductions on their income tax returns. It saves people a lot of time. It also saves them the cost of accountants and lawyers who help them figure out the complicated taxes that they end up paying in this country each year.

Republicans are also working to preserve other deductions that are important to American families. When we put all of these together, we are going to cut taxes for people and put money back in their pockets instead of sending it to Washington.

The second thing to know about this tax relief legislation is that it is going to be a big boost for jobs in America. In fact, it will help America create more than 900,000 new jobs.

It is also going to lead to higher pay. That is because the legislation will cut the taxes that small businesses have to pay. Small businesses create most of the jobs in America. If we let them keep more of their money, they can hire people and grow their businesses. That is what happens in this country. That is how our economy works; people hiring people matter to grow the economy. They can also give workers a raise and offer better benefits. When Washington takes less and businesses

keep more, workers are better off every time.

Republicans also want to bring down the rates that Washington charges other businesses. A lot of people work for small businesses, but a lot of people also work for large businesses as well. If we are able to cut taxes for those businesses, then those workers can get the same raise. How much more money are we talking about? Well, according to the Tax Foundation, it amounts to about \$2,600 for a typical middle-income family. That is what you get when you combine the tax cut and the pay raise that people will see across the country. For that family, an extra \$2,600 is going to be a very big deal. A majority of Americans say that they don’t have enough savings today to cover a \$500 emergency expense if one came up.

Millions of American families will be far better off because of the tax relief that Republicans are working on this week. It will boost the economy, help individual workers, and help their families. This is about tax cuts, and it is about jobs. That is how you keep the economy growing. That is how we keep American families thriving.

PROTECTING VETERAN MEMORIALS

Mr. President, I also want to speak about an issue that is very important to our veterans in Wyoming and across the country. The 2018 National Defense Authorization Act conference report includes a provision that allows America’s veteran memorials to be used as a political bargaining chip. I think it is a very bad idea.

There is a specific provision in this report that allows the Secretary of Defense to dismantle a veteran memorial and move it to a foreign nation.

We have one of these memorials at the F.E. Warren Air Force Base in Cheyenne, WY. This memorial honors American soldiers who were massacred more than 100 years ago in a town called Balangiga in the Philippines. On September 28, 1901, a group of 400 Filipino insurgents, armed with machetes, attacked American soldiers in Company C of the 9th Infantry. It was a sneak attack while the Americans were mostly unarmed and having breakfast.

The insurgents signaled the attack by ringing the bells of the local church. Company C had 75 soldiers, and 48 of them were killed in this attack or died of their wounds or went missing in action. It was the worst defeat for the American Army since the Battle of the Little Bighorn in 1876. These bells were used in an act of war against American soldiers.

The Army legally brought the bells back to America to honor the troops of Company C who were lost in this massacre. The 11th Infantry Regiment brought them to Cheyenne, WY, and today the bells of Balangiga are part of the memorial at F.E. Warren Air Force Base.

Over the years, the Department of Defense and the State Department have tried a few times to move these

bells to the Philippines. In 2012, President Obama's Department of Defense even tried to cover up the fact that it was secretly making plans to move the bells. I have opposed these efforts every step of the way.

The majority of veterans in Wyoming oppose dismantling this veteran memorial. The Wyoming Veterans of Foreign Wars and the American Legion have both passed resolutions against moving the bells. The American Legion has also taken a stand on the national level. It has opposed the removal and encouraged Congress to pass legislation to protect veteran memorials.

During the confirmation hearing for Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, I asked him specifically about the bells of Balangiga. He made a commitment to me that he would include Congress and our veteran organizations in any conversations regarding war memorials.

I recently received a letter from the State Department, and they said that they are unaware of any plans to move the bells to a foreign country. We need to make sure that no plans ever develop.

This conference report will take away any lines of communication between the administration and the Congress on this issue. America needs to make clear that we will never stop honoring our war dead, no matter where or when they sacrificed. To dismantle this memorial would be an insult to the memory of the men who were massacred that day in the Philippines.

Wyoming has a strong tradition of honoring our veterans, especially those who gave their lives. The United States should not be using our veteran memorials as bargaining chips to negotiate with foreign nations. For these reasons, I oppose section 2864 of the conference report on the National Defense Authorization Act.

I will continue my work to protect our veteran memorials. I will continue to use my voice for the soldiers of Company C who have no voice of their own.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the following be printed in the RECORD: the names of the 48 soldiers who were massacred in 1901; a letter from the Wyoming Veterans of Foreign Wars; a resolution from the Wyoming American Legion in opposition to moving the bells; National American Legion Resolution No. 56; a letter from the National American Legion in support of Barrasso amendment No. 738; a letter from the State Department saying that they are currently not planning to move the bells; and Secretary Tillerson's commitment to include Congress and our veterans in any discussion of our veteran memorials.

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

U.S. ARMY CASUALTIES AT BALANGIGA, SAMAR, PHILIPPINE ISLANDS, 28 SEPTEMBER 1901

Filipino insurgents overran Company C, 9th Infantry, at Balangiga, Samar, on 28 Sep-

tember 1901. On that morning seventy-five soldiers were present with the unit (seventy-three members of Company C plus two men attached to the unit). Of these, forty-eight were killed, died of wounds, or were listed as missing and presumed dead (some bodies were burned beyond recognition).

Key: KIA = killed in action; DoW = died of wounds; MIA = missing and presumed dead.

Officers: Major R.S. Griswold, Surgeon, KIA; Captain Thomas W. Connell, commander, Company C, KIA; First Lieutenant Edward A. Bumpus, KIA.

Non-Commissioned Officers: Quartermaster Sergeant James M. Randles, KIA; Sergeant John F. Martin, KIA; Sergeant Henry J. Scharer, KIA; Corporal Frank McCormick, KIA; Corporal Leonard P. Schley, KIA; Corporal Proal Peters, KIA; Corporal Thomas E. Baird, DoW.

Privates: Gustav F. Schnitzler (cook), KIA; John L. Covington (musician), MIA; Joseph R. Marr (artificer), KIA; Harry Wright (hospital corpsman), MIA; Cornelius F. Donahue, DoW; Jerry J. Driscoll, MIA; Eli Fitzgerald, KIA; John D. Armini, KIA; Litto Armini, KIA; John W. Aydelette, KIA; George Bony, KIA; Robert L. Booth, KIA; John D. Buhner, KIA; James L. Cain, KIA; Charles E. Davis, KIA; Byron Dent, KIA; Guy C. Dennis, KIA; Patrick J. Dobbins, MIA; Joseph I. Gordon, KIA; Joseph O. Kleinhamp, KIA; Richard Long, KIA; James Martin, KIA; James F. McDermott, KIA; John H. Miller, KIA; Daniel S. Mullins, DoW; August F. Porczeng, MIA; Charles Powers, KIA; Chris F. Recard, DoW; Floyd J. Shoemaker, DoW; Evans South, MIA; Robert Sproull, KIA; Charles E. Sterling, KIA; Joseph Turner, KIA; Frank Vobayada, KIA; John Wannebo, KIA; Christian S. Williams, MIA; Claud C. Wingo, MIA; Harry M. Wood, KIA.

SOURCES

Annual Reports of the War Department for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1902, Vol. IX (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1902), pp. 628-32.

Fred R. Brown, History of the Ninth U.S. Infantry (Chicago, Ill.: R.R. Donnelley & Sons, 1909), pp. 621-22.

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF WYOMING HEADQUARTERS,

Casper, WY, June 12, 2012.

Hon. JOHN BARRASSO, MD,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR BARRASSO: At the Department of Wyoming VFW, 79th Annual State Convention, June 9, 2012, the membership voted on and passed a resolution concerning the Balangiga Bells currently located on F.E. Warren Air Base, Cheyenne, Wyoming.

"Be it Resolved that the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Department of Wyoming strongly support keeping the Balangiga Bells here in Wyoming at the F.E. Warren Air Base, Cheyenne, Wyoming. Also, the membership is against any compromise that would in any way change the status or location of these or any "War Trophy" currently held by the United States of America".

This Resolution will remain in effect unless changed by the full membership at a State Convention.

For the Commander,

BOB DEBERNARDO,

Adjutant Dept. of Wyoming,

Member National Legislative Committee.

THE AMERICAN LEGION DEPARTMENT OF WYOMING HEADQUARTERS, CHEYENNE, WYOMING
RESOLUTION

Subject: Protection, Preservation and Retention of Federal and Military Monuments in the United States

Whereas, At different times through history there have been attempts by either the

Filipino government or other groups to petition the United States Government for the return of the church bells taken by American military forces from the belfry of the church in Balangiga, Samar, Philippines; and

Whereas, Any return of a Federal or military monument by the United States of America would set a negative and dangerous precedent on any and all Federal or military monuments; and

Whereas, Military monuments honor those servicemen and servicewomen whose sacrifice for the United States of America has preserved the nation and recognizes those who have sacrificed their lives in service to their country; and

Whereas, Returning any military monument should never be considered as contributing to the enhancement or reaffirmation of any friendly relationship with foreign countries; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, by The American Legion, Department of Wyoming Executive Committee through mail in vote on 14 March 2012, that The American Legion, Department of Wyoming urge the Congress of the United States to establish such laws to preserve and protect all Federal and military monuments within the United States from any foreign government or religious order who attempts to have any Federal and military monument removed from the United States of America. And be it

Finally Resolved: That this resolution be forwarded to the National Executive Committee for action in May 2012.

NINETY-EIGHTH NATIONAL

CONVENTION OF THE AMERICAN LEGION,

Cincinnati, Ohio, Aug. 30, 31, Sept. 1, 2016.

Resolution No. 56: Protection, Preservation and Retention of Federal and Military Monuments in the United States.

Origin: Wyoming.

Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security (Consolidated with Resolution No. 27 (NE)).

Whereas, At different times through history there have been attempts by either the Filipino government or other groups to petition the United States government for the return of the church bells taken by American military forces from the belfry of the church in Balangiga, Samar, Philippines; and

Whereas, Any return of a federal or military monument by the United States of America would set a negative and dangerous precedent on any and all federal or military monuments; and

Whereas, Military monuments honor those servicemen and servicewomen whose sacrifice for the United States of America has preserved the nation and recognizes those who have sacrificed their lives in service to their country; and

Whereas, Returning any military monument should never be considered as contributing to the enhancement or reaffirmation of any friendly relationship with foreign countries; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Cincinnati, Ohio, August 30, 31, September 1, 2016, That The American Legion urge the Congress of the United States to establish such laws to preserve, protect and retain all federal and military monuments within the United States from any foreign government or religious order who attempts to have any federal and military monument removed from the United States of America.

THE AMERICAN LEGION,

OFFICE OF THE NATIONAL COMMANDER,

Washington, DC, September 14, 2017.

Hon. JOHN BARRASSO,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR BARRASSO: On behalf of the 2 million members of The American Legion,

we express support for Amendment Number 738 proposed for inclusion in the 2018 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), as written. If adopted, this amendment would require Congressional authorization to move war memorials overseas and prohibit moving the Bells of Balangiga from F.E. Warren Air Force Base in Cheyenne, WY to the Philippines absent such authorization. The American Legion was proud to support your amendment to the 2013 NDAA that requires Congressional authorization to move war memorials overseas. As you know, that prohibition expires September 30, 2017.

For more than two decades, there have been attempts by either the Filipino government or other groups to petition the United States government for the return of the church bells taken by American military forces from the belfry of the church in Balangiga, Samar, Philippines in 1901 during the Philippine American War. Military monuments honor those servicemen and servicewomen whose sacrifice for this country has preserved the nation and recognizes those who have sacrificed their lives in service to their country. Returning any military monument should never be considered as contributing to the enhancement or reaffirmation of any friendly relationship with foreign countries.

The American Legion Resolution 56, Protection, Preservation and Retention of Federal and Military Monuments in the United States, passed at the 2016 National Convention, urges Congress to establish such laws to preserve, protect and retain all federal and military monuments within the United States from any foreign government or religious order who attempts to have any federal and military monument removed from the United States of America.

Again, The American Legion supports Amendment Number 738, and we thank you for addressing this important issue facing America's servicemembers and veterans.

Sincerely,

DENISE H. ROHAN,
National Commander.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE,
Washington, DC, November 2, 2017.

Hon. JOHN BARRASSO,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR BARRASSO: Thank you for your letter of September 6 to the President regarding the Bells of Balangiga. We were asked to respond on the President's behalf.

We celebrate the proud and distinguished service of Wyoming's Sons and Daughters to our great nation, and we are humbled and grateful for the service and sacrifice America's Veterans have made in support of liberty and freedom at home and abroad.

We understand and appreciate the importance of war memorials, and we share your concern that memorials be properly managed and the service and sacrifice of fallen Americans and Veterans be recognized and honored appropriately.

The Department of State is not aware of, nor involved in, any immediate plans to the remove or dismantle the Veteran's War Memorial, including the Bells of Balangiga, from F.E. Warren Air Force Base.

There is a specific war memorial provision included in the House version of the FY 18 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), and the House and Senate versions of the NDAA bills are currently in conference committee. For more information about that provision or activities on F.E. Warren Air Force Base we respectfully refer you to the Department of Defense.

We thank you for raising this important issue. We hope this information is useful.

Please do not hesitate to let us know if we can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

CHARLES S. FAULKNER,
Bureau of Legislative Affairs.

SENATOR JOHN BARRASSO

In 2012, the U.S. Department of State and U.S. Department of Defense initiated a process to remove a war memorial in Wyoming, called the Bells of Balangiga. It honors the lives of 48 soldiers who were massacred in their sleep by insurgents in the Philippines on September 28, 1901. The U.S. Department of Defense in coordination with the U.S. Department of State intentionally withheld this information from Congress. The veterans in Wyoming overwhelmingly oppose taking down this veteran memorial.

1. Will you commit to me that you will not support any efforts to deconstruct our war memorials that honor our fallen soldiers and moving them to foreign countries?

2. What is your position on the U.S. Department of State withholding these actions from Congress?

The Bells of Balangiga are an important war memorial that holds real significance for many Americans, especially our veterans. If confirmed, I will support an inclusive process with the U.S. Department of Defense to ensure that Congress is fully informed and the views of local communities and veterans are fully respected when evaluating the management of war memorials.

Mr. BARRASSO. I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

REPUBLICAN TAX PLAN

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I came to the floor yesterday to speak on the devastating impact the Republican tax plan would have on working families in my home State of Illinois and other States across the Nation.

It is no secret that the Republican plan would finance massive tax cuts for the wealthiest people in America. They just can't help themselves. Every time they look at the Tax Code, they think there has to be a way to help the wealthiest people in our country. They usually look at the estate tax, which is paid for by 1 out of every 1,000 Americans, and say: We have just got to spare these poor people who have a net worth of over \$11 million from paying any taxes to the government. We have to spare them from paying this government for the benefit that this great Nation has brought to them and their families and businesses. That is where they start.

Then they do the alternative minimum tax, which is a tax that was created so that if your accountants and bookkeepers and lawyers are the sharpest on Earth and ended up finding that

you had no tax liability, you still paid a fair share for sustaining this great Nation that you call home. They want to get rid of that, too, or at least dramatically modify it.

They start off with the premise of making these tax cuts for the wealthiest people in America the beginning point of tax reform, these giveaways to people who are not even asking for them. They can't help themselves. They always start there, and the American people know it.

When you ask the American people, what is this tax reform all about, they say it is tax cuts for wealthy people. That is where it always starts, and it does when the Republicans are the authors. That is what we face again.

They try to argue that it is going to help working families. It will help some—let me be honest about that—and yet you are going to find many working families who are going to pay more instead of less because of this so-called tax reform. Why would we ever do that?

Why would we give tax breaks to the wealthiest people in America—permanent tax breaks—and then turn around and say to working families: Sorry. Some of you will get help, but many of you will not.

In my home State of Illinois, the elimination of the State and local tax exemption is going to be devastating to our State. We are in the top five of States where the people in my State who pay income tax, sales tax, and property tax can deduct those taxes from their Federal income that is subject to taxation.

That is not a new idea. It has been around for decades. It really is premised on the following: Americans should not have to pay tax on a tax. If I pay \$100 a month, and I pay my local property taxes, I shouldn't be taxed on that \$100. It is a double hit. It is not fair, but the Republican plan believes that is what we should do.

I will tell the seven Republican Congressmen in my State, they ought to go home and ask the people whom they represent what they think about this one, the idea of double taxation that they would vote for and go home and try to defend. I think it is going to be tough, very tough.

It is no secret that these tax cuts for the wealthy and large corporations will end up raising taxes on a lot of Americans and blowing a massive hole in the deficit.

I am going to quote a fellow who has been retired a few years from Congress. His name is Dave Obey. He was a Congressman from Wisconsin. Dave Obey used to say over and over again—and I am going to repeat it, and I have credited him with it: Too many times politicians are posing for holy pictures, but when it comes to the deficit and the debt, many of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle pose for holy pictures about the national debt whenever there is a Democratic President and then get a swift case of amnesia whenever there is a Republican President.