

the average wages for working families across this country by over \$4,000 in the long run. That is a huge raise. This report said that more than 4 million workers are also getting one-time cash bonuses and other benefits. These one-time cash bonuses mean a great deal to American families. It says that so far, over \$2 billion in cash bonuses have been given.

Today in Wyoming, we heard another great report that Taco John's—an establishment at which I frequently ate lunch when I was in the Wyoming Legislature, as did so many members of the Wyoming Legislature. They are providing bonuses for employees. That is another case in point. The reason they say they are doing it is the tax relief tax cut benefits that people all across the country are receiving as a result of the tax law we passed.

If you remember, a lot of Democrats predicted gloom and doom if we were to pass this piece of legislation. NANCY PELOSI actually said it was Armageddon. She said it was the end of the world. Well, with all of these workers getting bigger paychecks and more take-home pay, Democrats have now started to panic. NANCY PELOSI said all the benefits people are getting under the tax law are "crumbs." That is what she called them, but that is not what people across the State of Wyoming are calling them.

I received a note the other day from a man who said he heard all the rhetoric from NANCY PELOSI and the Democrats. He said: "Here is what the crumbs mean to a fellow working in Casper, Wyoming." He said that the first thing he noticed was that his take-home pay was higher in his latest paycheck. He figures that the tax cut works out to about a 2-percent raise for him. He and his wife decided to put that money straight into his retirement savings plan and invest it. He figures that over time, as those investments grow, it could add up to an extra \$97,000 by the time he is ready to retire. He said: "A few crumbs over time really do matter."

There was a second part of his story about what the Republican tax relief means for him and his family, and that is the bonus. Because of the tax cuts, his employer gave him a bonus of \$1,500. He said: "I plan to enjoy the summer just a little bit more with this surprise income." He said he is investing the tax cut in his retirement, and he is investing the bonus in creating additional memories with his family today. He said that it means they are going to take an extra camping trip to Yellowstone this summer. They will enjoy "a few more cookouts with families and friends this summer to savor the memories that this tax reform is providing."

That is what it means for people across the country—memories, family activities, vacation, and a better retirement—all of those things because of the tax law and tax relief passed for the American people. They are going to

do things they like doing, everything from going on vacation to going out for ice cream.

Tax reform has been very good for people in Casper, WY. It is good for his family. He wrote to tell me about it. It is good for the local businesses that he will be supporting, where he will be spending his money, traveling around the State, going on vacation, camping trips, cookouts, and making memories. They are not crumbs.

I don't know why Democrats who voted against the tax cuts even came to Washington in the first place. I do know that Republicans came here with a purpose—a purpose to give families more opportunities to invest in their futures like this man is doing.

There was another new survey that came out last week. They talked with heads of companies across America, and they talked about the confidence index that we are seeing nationwide. That is because of the tax relief law. The survey found that 89 percent of these business leaders are confident in the U.S. economy's prospects this year. It is at an alltime high.

Look at 2016—the last year of the Obama administration—and 2017 and 2018. That is an enormous jump from the 39 percent that business leaders were feeling in terms of confidence back in 2016. It is even bigger than last year, when 80 percent said they were confident. The reason for the jump is simple. When we look at what has changed since 2016, there were a couple of very big things.

First is the way that Republicans have been cutting back on Washington's burdensome, punishing, and destructive regulations. It is going to save Americans a lot of money and a lot of time.

The second thing that happened is that Republicans in Congress passed the tax relief law. That is why millions of Americans are getting a pay raise. That is why Americans are more confident about our economy. The business leaders are right. They should be confident about the state of America's economy because Republicans are just getting started.

Our economy should have been growing much more quickly ever since the recession ended almost 9 years ago, but it didn't during the last administration because the politics and the policies of the Democrats in Washington held our economy back. Now we have Republican policies, and the economy is much stronger. America's economy grew by just 1.8 percent in 2016. That is tepid growth compared to what we expect and what we are used to. Last year, it grew by 2.5 percent. We added 2.2 million jobs in 2017. Confidence is soaring.

Democrats don't want to hear about it. They don't want to talk about it. They don't want to hear from their constituents who are getting a raise and getting more money in their paychecks. They consider it crumbs. They almost appear to be rooting for the

economy to stall. Some may want the economy to look more like it did when they were in charge.

The American people are going to look at what the Democrats did and realize that what the Republicans did made a huge difference in their lives. People are going to look at the fact that every Democrat in the Senate voted against the tax cuts. Then people are going to look at what Republicans have done and what it means for people's take-home pay. That is why Republicans are here. It is what we promised to do. That is what we are going to continue to do.

ENERGY INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. President, I would like to speak about energy infrastructure. President Trump has shown that he intends to be a champion for upgrading our country's aging highways, bridges, and water infrastructure. As chairman of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, I will be working with President Trump to modernize our infrastructure. This includes working to upgrade America's energy infrastructure, things such as electric transmission lines and natural gas pipelines. These facilities need to be repaired and modernized, and we need to build new facilities as well.

Often, these investments can be made without any taxpayer funding. People get the benefit of new jobs, economic growth, and the affordable and reliable energy that these projects supply. It is good for everybody, including the taxpayers. We just need to make sure the government doesn't get in the way.

Recently, there was an important reminder of the need for energy infrastructure development. It was that blast of cold weather and heavy snow that hit the Northeast part of the country earlier this year. Normally, natural gas accounts for about 48 percent of the power generated in New England. During this big winter storm in January, gas accounted for only 16 percent. That is because there aren't enough natural gas pipelines in the region to deliver all of the gas they needed for heating and for power. This shouldn't happen in America, where we are the No. 1 natural gas producer in the world.

To meet the demand in New England, powerplants and utilities have had to take the drastic step of importing liquefied natural gas from Russia. Can you imagine such a thing? This is a tanker, and it carried gas from a Russian company called Yamal LNG—liquefied natural gas. The gas came from a facility in Siberia, and they were taking it right into the Boston Harbor last month. This is the location of the Boston Tea Party, and we are bringing in Russian LNG.

You might think that local leaders in the region would want to avoid importing gas from our adversaries, like Russia. You might think they would want more American pipelines to power our communities. That is not what is happening in the Northeast part of this

country. Instead, leaders in that region have been vocal opponents of new pipelines. They blocked the pipelines.

People who have been vocal opponents of the new pipelines include some of the Democrats who represent that part of the country right here in the Senate. They refused to allow responsible and safe energy development to give people in the Northeast the natural gas the families and businesses need. These Democrats claim they are protecting the environment. That is simply not true.

There was a headline in the Boston Globe a couple of weeks ago. The headline was "Our Russian pipeline, and its ugly toll." That was in the Boston Globe. The article pointed out that Russia actually has much lower standards than the United States when it comes to protecting the environment. Democrats are just playing the old game of "not in my backyard." We see the same thing so often when it comes to energy infrastructure projects.

We should be looking for ways to make energy as clean as we can, as fast as we can, without raising costs for American families. When it comes to actually producing the energy, Democrats put up roadblocks to keep it from happening.

If we are going to build America's infrastructure, we need to streamline the process, and we need to start cutting the redtape. We need to build faster, better, cheaper, and smarter. It is true for roads and bridges and also true for our energy infrastructure.

Let me conclude by telling you that this article in the Boston Globe called on leaders in the Northeast to stop prioritizing short-term political gains at the expense of energy security and the environment. I urge my colleagues in the Senate to do the same. We should be talking about not just energy security and energy independence and not being dependent on foreign sources of energy from our enemies but focus on American energy, U.S. energy, and American jobs. We certainly shouldn't put America in a position of being dependent on Russia or others to heat our homes and power our economy. We should all support responsible energy infrastructure development so American communities can run on American energy.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado.

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Wyoming for his remarks on American energy and American energy independence, particularly the work we have done in Wyoming and Colorado. When you think about the opportunities we have to free up markets for Colorado and Wyoming produced oil or gas, it is truly remarkable.

The Senator and I also share the great work that takes place at F.E. Warren Air Force Base. F.E. Warren Air Force Base has a significant role to

play in the nuclear triad, with facilities in both Colorado and Wyoming. That is obviously something very important to our national security.

One of the other things I think is important to bring to this conversation that the Senator from Wyoming talked about is the national security component that energy can play and the important role that it has. We can export our energy not just to the Midwest or to the eastern parts of this country, but we can take that gas produced in Wyoming and Colorado and export it to Asia and Europe, to countries that want American energy, that desire American energy resources, not energy resources from tyrants and dictators like Russia and other places we see around the globe.

This is an opportunity for us to really show, and I commend my colleague for his leadership on energy.

MODERNIZING THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Mr. President, I have come to the floor today to talk primarily about the work Secretary Zinke has done in the Department of Interior and to thank him for taking a bold approach to modernizing the Department of the Interior. I commend him for taking this approach.

The Secretary knows that 93 percent of all Federal land is located in the western part of the United States. This map shows the Federal lands around our country. If you look at the eastern seaboard, you can see a lot of patches of white, with a few patches of red in Virginia, West Virginia, the George Washington National Forest, the Shenandoah National Park. In Florida, you can see the Everglades National Park, the Great Smoky Mountains, but you can see the predominant shade of the western part of this country is red. Red signifies all the areas that are owned by the Federal Government.

Look at the State of Nevada. Almost the entire State of Nevada is owned by the Federal Government—is public land. Look at the State of Colorado. It is public land owned by the Federal Government.

Nationwide, the Bureau of Land Management is responsible for managing approximately 700 million acres of Federal mineral estate located underground and all of the Federal land management agencies' holdings. So it is not just land that is held by the Bureau of Land Management in Colorado, in fact, they hold even more when it comes to our mineral holdings.

The BLM is also responsible for administering 245 million acres of Federal surface lands. As this map points out, nearly all of it in this country is in the 11 western-most States and Alaska.

Historically, local BLM field offices have been diligent and effective managers of the public land for multiple use, as they are charged to do under the Federal Land Policy and Management Act.

In fact, when I meet with county commissioners and others in the West,

they all talk about the good relationship they have with their field offices and the good decisions they are able to reach with those field offices.

Although, unfortunately, in recent years, directives and management coming from the BLM headquarters in Washington, DC—a long ways away from these publicly held lands out West, the 200-plus million acres of Federal land held by the BLM thousands of miles away from Washington, DC—have favored deep-pocketed, radical special interests over field office decisions and the opinions of those who live near and who actually use this land.

Whether it is the withdrawal of mineral leasing or the reduction of grazing permits, the concept of multiple use—something that was fundamental to the founding of our public land agencies—has fallen out of favor with the Bureau of Land Management.

When you don't live in the communities that are among and surrounded by these lands, it is easy to make these decisions that close off energy development or close off recreational opportunities or close out cattle ranching because the consequences are felt out West, 1,000-plus miles away from the decision makers in the Potomac.

The BLM Headquarters Relocation Act is legislation I have introduced to fix this problem.

I was pleased to see within its budget request that the Department of the Interior is planning a modernization of their organization and infrastructure for the next 100 years. At the very top of this modernization plan should be relocating the BLM headquarters out West. Move it out of Washington and put it exactly in the middle of these lands.

Grand Junction, CO, the Western Slope of Colorado, is a beautiful place, a great city that can accommodate an agency headquarters and has the benefit of a populous that is intimately familiar with public land management policy and decision making. It makes perfect sense. It has a great airport, interstate access, a county with well over half of its land held by public land agencies. It is a community surrounded by public land. It is a community that is surrounded by people who are affected by those public land decisions. Doesn't it make more sense to have those decisions coming from the lands that they are regulating than from the beltway of Washington?

This proposal has strong bipartisan support—Republicans and Democrats who agree. Let's put the decision makers into places where those decisions are felt first and foremost. Making this agency more accountable to the people who have to deal with its management decisions by putting its headquarters among the land managers would be a huge start and a great recognition that we can modernize this agency and this Department for the next 100 years.

Thank you, Mr. President.