

They go on to say: “Congress should insist on preventing . . . regulators from mandating greenhouse-gas-emissions caps, or from using greenhouse-gas emissions as a means to promulgate a rule.”

In other words, what they are saying is, we are misconstruing the science, outright lying to the American people, to prevent Congress from responding to this dramatic impact on our country—not just on our country but on the world.

They also proceed to misrepresent a lot of information about the impacts of oil drilling. There is a 1985 piece in *Heritage Today* entitled “Offshore Oil Drilling: Good for the Economy. Great for the fish.” According to the article, the fears of proponents of the ban on offshore drilling that “another disaster like the Santa Barbara Channel spill in 1969, when [up to] two-million gallons of sepia-colored oil bubbled up from the ocean floor, covering hundreds of square miles of sea” were not justified.

Fears about another disaster were not justified. Why? They said because “offshore oil and gas production is carefully regulated.”

It went on to say that “every offshore operation must include three blow-out preventers and casings for drills; drills must be cemented into the surrounding earth.”

Then they said: “Oil companies must submit an oil spill contingency plan” and “frequent safety inspections, scheduled and unscheduled, further reduce the risk of spills.”

Tell that to the crew of the Deepwater Horizon, because what we learned when we investigated what happened with Deepwater Horizon and what happened at other drilling platforms all around the gulf was the exact opposite of what the Heritage Foundation put forward on behalf of the Koch brothers and the fossil fuel business. What we really found out is that the blowout preventers were poorly designed. They failed. An explosion sunk the rig, and a sea floor gusher flowed for 87 days, 3 months.

The Associated Press found that in the lead-up to the accident, Deepwater Horizon wasn’t carefully regulated. It said a quarter of the required inspections were never carried out. It said the rig “was allowed to operate without safety documentation” that was required; that they had received five or six safety citations, the most serious of which occurred in 2002, “when the rig was shut down because required pressure tests had not been conducted on the blowout preventer—the device that was supposed to stop oil from gushing out” if things went wrong.

The gulf coast is still trying to recover from this disaster: 4 to 8 billion harvestable oysters killed; 51,000 to 84,000 birds killed; 56,000 to 166,000 sea turtles killed; a 51-percent decrease in the dolphin population; an estimated \$2 trillion to \$5 trillion of newly hatched fish killed. The list goes on and on, hardly the vision the Heritage Foundation wanted to put forward.

So how does this web of deceit work? Just follow the money. Since 1998, they have received a huge amount of support from the fossil fuel industry—\$780,000 just from one company, ExxonMobil. Over the course of a number of years, the Koch Foundation gave more than \$5.7 million to fund their work. There was an additional nearly \$5 million received from the Claude R. Lambe Foundation, which happens to be one of the Koch Family Foundations. Heritage is also a member of the State Policy Network, a web of right-wing think tanks across the country that the Koch brothers own. Koch money is coming from every direction. Heritage Foundation is the puppet of the Koch cartel enterprise.

That is only the tip of the iceberg of how this system works. We can trace back all of these pieces to the fossil fuel efforts to mislead the American public, to lie to the American public, and to spread doubt about actual scientific work.

We see their connections all through the Trump administration. When the Koch brothers say jump, the President of the United States says: How high? Then he does whatever they ask. If they want Scott Pruitt as head of the EPA, that is who they are going to get. If they want the Congressman whom they have championed throughout his entire career to be our chief diplomat, that is what they get.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator’s time has expired.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, if I can wrap up in two sentences, I will say that this web of deceit is enormously damaging to our Nation. Let’s call it out. Let’s have an actual debate based on the science and not let the Koch brothers do what the tobacco industry did and mislead the American public decade after decade after decade to the great damage of the citizens of this great country.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

OPIOID EPIDEMIC

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, last month I had the pleasure of spending a lot of time with several mayors and local leaders who were in Washington with the Arkansas Municipal League. We had a lively and informative discussion on ways to continue the economic growth that has been taking place throughout Arkansas.

While much of our conversation was focused on forward-thinking ways to continue these positive trends, there was also a very frank and candid discussion about an issue that is currently holding our communities back—the opioid crisis.

Policymakers across our State have been struggling to help confront Arkansas’s heroin and opioid epidemic. The Natural State has been hit particularly hard by this national crisis. Retail data collected from pharmacies shows that Arkansas has one of the highest per capita opioid consumption rates in the Nation. CDC data shows

that we have the second highest prescribing rate in the country—enough for each Arkansan to have more than one opioid prescription in his or her name.

It is an issue that all of us—from city leaders to lawmakers in Little Rock, to our Congressional delegation in Washington—continue to work tirelessly to confront because we have seen how pervasive this crisis is and how devastating its effects are.

I know that everyone who serves in this Chamber is working just as feverishly with their State and local leaders to confront the crisis. That is why it is so important that we included substantial resources for a wide-ranging strategy to counter the epidemic, nearly \$4 billion, in the omnibus bill.

This funding will be used to provide additional resources for law enforcement and to continue important grant programs that help State and local governments offset the cost of opioid abuse. It will also support research into opioid addiction and alternative treatments.

We must ensure that we are doing all we can to supplement State and local efforts to combat the spread of opioid abuse. Unfortunately, this is not currently happening. The Department of Justice is hurting our communities’ efforts to get a handle on the crisis by withholding critical funds.

The Byrne JAG grant program was created more than a decade ago to help States and local law enforcement agencies purchase essential equipment and support drug treatment and enforcement activities. It is the largest source of Federal justice funding to help provide law enforcement officers with the tools and training to protect our communities.

Currently, DOJ is denying every State access to those funds because some communities and States are violating Federal immigration law. This leaves States like Arkansas scrambling to continue funding crucial safety programs.

Arkansas law enforcement agencies have received millions of dollars through this program to support training, personnel, equipment, supplies, and information sharing. Arkansas is eligible for more than \$2 million in funding from fiscal year 2017 to help fund multijurisdictional programs like drug task forces.

Earlier this year, I met with Arkansas drug director Kirk Lane to discuss how crucial the Byrne JAG program is to our State’s efforts to combat opioid abuse. Director Lane stressed that limited funds threaten the abilities of task forces to accomplish their missions.

Matching funds from the State are running dry. So unless DOJ releases Byrne JAG funds, the critical work done by officers who are part of these task forces to fight the opioid epidemic will be seriously compromised. That is why earlier this year I led a bipartisan effort to express these concerns to Attorney General Sessions. Half a dozen

of our colleagues joined me in an effort to relay to the Attorney General that withholding these vital funds will have long-term negative consequences for our communities.

Since we have not received a response from DOJ, I raised the issue again with the Attorney General at yesterday's Appropriations subcommittee hearing. As I said to the Attorney General, when I speak with local law enforcement and county sheriffs back in Arkansas, they all inquire about when these funds will be released and made available.

While it may not seem like a whole lot of money, Byrne JAG grants make a huge difference. It is often the sole reason police departments in small communities are able to stand up a drug task force. I was encouraged by the Attorney General's response that the Department is determined to get the money out and that it is a high priority for him personally. It simply has to get done. I urge DOJ to rectify this situation quickly. With each passing day that local law enforcement is being denied these resources, lives that could be saved are lost.

While we look for new ways to tackle this problem, one step Washington took years ago continues to help. The National Prescription Drug Take Back Day initiative, spearheaded by the DEA, has helped remove expired, unused, and unnecessary opioids from homes.

Research has found that the majority of opioid abusers get their drugs from friends and family, often lifting pills from a familiar medicine cabinet. Removing them from homes helps to reduce experimentation and overdoses.

In early 2010, a coalition of Federal and State law enforcement officials, prevention professionals, and private organizations launched an ongoing education program to encourage Arkansans to monitor, secure, and dispose of their prescription medications. The coalition organized Arkansas's participation in the DEA's National Prescription Take Back Day initiative and has hosted Arkansas Take Back Day collection events for the last 8 years.

Despite our State's modest population, Arkansas ranks 13th in the Nation in total weight collected over the course of 14 statewide take-back events. That is a testament to the coalition's efforts. These events have produced the return of almost 132 tons of unneeded medications, which amounts to over 400 million pills.

This campaign is clearly succeeding in getting unnecessary prescription drugs out of circulation and in helping to break the cycle of addiction in our communities. Besides that, it is so important in getting rid of these prescriptions in the right way, as opposed to just flushing them in the toilet where they get in our water supply.

The next take-back event is Saturday, April 28. There are more than 130 permanent dropoff sites across Arkansas, and many law enforcement agen-

cies host temporary dropoff sites on this day as well. I encourage Arkansans to once again participate in this worthwhile event in full force this year.

Programs like the prescription drug take-back, in combination with local, State, and national efforts to combat the opioid crisis and help stem the tide of drug overdose and abuse, need to be supported and strengthened if we are serious about ending this crisis.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CORKER. 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. CORKER. Mr. President, Mr. Grenell has a deep background in diplomacy and strategic communications. He received his master's degree in public administration from Harvard University at the John F. Kennedy School of Government. He spent 8 years as spokesman for the U.S. Mission to the United Nations in New York and worked for every U.N. Ambassador appointed by George W. Bush.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel is scheduled to arrive in DC tomorrow for a 1-day working trip to meet with President Trump. Her visit comes at a time of heightened importance, with a number of critical items on the agenda, including transatlantic trade, the Iran nuclear deal, as well as Russia and Syria.

I think it is very fitting that we are voting on this Ambassadorship today. I hope he will be quickly confirmed and sworn in.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Grenell nomination?

Mr. INHOFE. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH) is necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PERDUE). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 56, nays 42, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 85 Ex.]

YEAS—56

Alexander
Barrasso
Blunt
Boozman
Burr
Capito

Cassidy
Collins
Corker
Cornyn
Cotton
Crapo

Cruz
Daines
Donnelly
Enzi
Ernst
Fischer

Flake
Gardner
Graham
Grassley
Hatch
Heitkamp
Heller
Hoeven
Hyde-Smith
Inhofe
Isakson
Johnson
Jones

Kennedy
Lankford
Lee
Manchin
McCaskill
McConnell
Moran
Murkowski
Paul
Perdue
Portman
Risch
Roberts

Rounds
Rubio
Sasse
Scott
Shelby
Sullivan
Tester
Thune
Tillis
Toomey
Wicker
Young

NAYS—42

Baldwin
Bennet
Blumenthal
Booker
Brown
Cantwell
Cardin
Carper
Casey
Coons
Cortez Masto
Durbin
Feinstein
Gillibrand

Harris
Hassan
Heinrich
Hirono
Kaine
King
Klobuchar
Leahy
Markey
Menendez
Merkley
Murphy
Murray
Nelson

Peters
Reed
Sanders
Schatz
Schumer
Shaheen
Smith
Stabenow
Udall
Van Hollen
Warner
Warren
Whitehouse
Wyden

NOT VOTING—2

Duckworth

McCain

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The majority leader.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 673.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Kurt D. Engelhardt, of Louisiana, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Fifth Circuit.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The bill clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Kurt D. Engelhardt, of Louisiana, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Fifth Circuit.

Mitch McConnell, Jerry Moran, John Cornyn, John Hoeven, John Kennedy, Johnny Isakson, Chuck Grassley, Cory