

those involving emails stolen from my Senate colleagues that he denied knowing he had received, when, again, his emails show that wasn't the case; to another we just recently learned about—his claim that the first time he heard about Ms. Ramirez's allegations against him was when he read about them in the press, although we have now heard from people who have seen text messages showing Judge Kavanaugh personally working to coordinate a defense against the allegations before that story was ever published; to his denials over and over in different ways that he drank to extreme excess in high school and college, that he never "blacked out" or had memory lapses from drinking, when we know from so many people who have now come forward to share stories of his high school and college days that his version simply doesn't align with reality.

The Washington Post laid this out yesterday. I will read a few of the quotes from their reporting.

One friend of his from college said that Judge Kavanaugh was "a frequent drinker and a heavy drinker."

Another classmate of his in college said, "Brett was a sloppy drunk, and I know because I drank with him" and "It's not credible for him to say that he has had no memory lapses in the nights that he drank to excess."

Another classmate said: "There is no doubt in my mind that while at Yale, he was a big partyer, often drank to excess. And there had to be a number of nights where he does not remember."

I could go on and on. I have other, numerous stories from classmates that you can find yourself in the Washington Post.

It is not disqualifying to drink in college. It is not disqualifying to drink too much in college. But it is absolutely disqualifying to not tell Senators the truth under oath about doing those things. It speaks to the kind of person Judge Kavanaugh is, and it speaks to the kind of Supreme Court Justice he would be if he were to be confirmed—someone who thinks they are above the law, above the truth, and above the oath they have raised their hand and sworn by. That should absolutely be disqualifying.

Those are just a few of the honesty and credibility issues that we know about. There are many more I am sure my colleagues will discuss, and I am sure there are others that can be uncovered in a full investigation. That is the most important point. As I said before, we don't know everything just yet, but we do know some things, and everyone should agree that what we know is enough to want to dig deeper and get more information. That is why it is so telling that Judge Kavanaugh and his Republican defenders and protectors so clearly did not want any further investigation.

We had Dr. Ford willing to share her story, take a polygraph, and open herself up to any questions and further in-

vestigations to help to get to the truth. Then we had Judge Kavanaugh doing everything possible to sweep this under the rug, move through it as quickly as possible, and prevent any information from coming out. That tells us a lot.

I am so glad a few of my Republican colleagues have done the right thing and slowed down this nomination to allow further investigation. There should have been more of them speaking up, and doing our jobs shouldn't be such a brave act. But in this moment in the Republican Party, it is, and I do commend them.

Here is the bottom line: Any of my colleagues can yell and scream until they are blue in the face about how aggrieved they are about this process. They can point fingers, push conspiracy theories, call it a sham, and say that this has gone on for longer than anyone wanted it to. They can do all that. I think they are wrong, and a lot of what they are complaining about is the ranking member of the committee respecting the wishes of Dr. Ford herself. Sure, they can do that, but at the end of the day, we are talking about a lifetime seat on the highest Court in the land, the Court making final decisions about our laws, our rights, and our freedoms. Surely we should take the time to do this right. Surely we should all want to make sure we don't put someone on the Court who sexually assaulted someone. Surely we should want to take the full amount of time promised to fully investigate credible allegations and determine whether Judge Kavanaugh told us the truth under oath. That is common sense, and it happens to be our job.

My Republican colleagues held a seat open on the Supreme Court for more than a year for no reason at all other than to prevent President Obama's nominee from getting on the Court—more than a year. Now, all of a sudden, these same colleagues are in a rush? It is absurd.

We need to do this right. What does that mean? What is doing it right? First of all, it means making sure the FBI thoroughly investigates right now, that it is not limited in scope or pressured to not follow leads wherever they go.

As my colleague, the Senator from Arizona, said, "We certainly want the FBI to do a real investigation. It does no good to have an investigation that just gives us cover."

Even President Trump said, "I think the FBI should do what they have to do to get to the answer. I want them to do a very comprehensive investigation."

I completely agree. I am very concerned by some of the reporting coming out of the FBI investigation—especially hearing about the witnesses who have not yet been contacted. I am hoping they are allowed to do their jobs, and I am hoping the White House fulfills its commitment to the Democrats and Republicans focused on getting this done right.

Secondly, as we learn more, we should take that information into ac-

count. We should make sure all relevant witnesses are heard from, that all relevant information comes out—nothing swept under the rug—because there is one other thing we can be pretty sure of: Whether the information comes out now or comes out later, it will come out. We can either make sure we stop someone from getting on the Court who shouldn't be on the Court, or we can find out later that we—the Senate—didn't do our job.

This started as a look into whether Judge Kavanaugh assaulted women and whether the U.S. Senate would listen to women sharing their experiences. It is still about that—very much so—but now it is about even more than that. It is about Judge Kavanaugh's temperament, his anger, his rage, and his entitlement. It is about his telling the truth or not to the public and to us here in the Senate.

So I say to my colleagues, as we learn more from this investigation and as more and more people come out to share their stories, even if you don't think you can determine conclusively that Judge Kavanaugh committed sexual assault, do we want someone on the highest Court in the land with this kind of relationship with the truth, and do we want someone with that much rage and bitterness and entitlement? I think the answer is clear right now, and I think there is a reason Judge Kavanaugh was so desperate to stop the full investigation.

I hope we don't allow corners to be cut and a nominee jammed onto the Supreme Court without truly doing our jobs. I hope we take seriously the anger, the pain, the voices, and the experiences of women across the country today. I hope we do this right.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at the conclusion of my remarks, Senator MERKLEY be recognized for associated remarks, followed by a brief colloquy between the two of us.

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

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I am grateful to be joined by my wonderful colleague from Oregon, Senator MERKLEY, for my 222nd "Time to Wake Up" climate speech. Although there are thousands of miles between us—on the west and east coasts—Oregon and Rhode Island share a common connection; that is, our oceans. Fisheries and coastal tourism are major drivers of our economies. Our coastlines are vibrant with homes, families, and businesses. We are ocean States.

So we are here to talk about the challenges of human-driven climate change for our oceans and coasts: sea level rise, ocean acidification, deoxygenation, warming, and increased storm surge. Our local agencies and officials and our coastal residents understand the changes that are coming at

them. Not all States are prepared, however, and in the aftermath of severe storms like Hurricane Florence and last year's hurricanes, powered up by higher seas and superheated ocean water, we are seeing the consequences of this failure.

Last month was the 80th anniversary of the Great Hurricane of 1938. The storm barreled through southern New England, destroying roads and ports and businesses and homes. This is a photograph of downtown Providence. That is the roof of a car, and they built cars pretty tall back in 1938. Over 560 people lost their lives in this storm. The National Weather Service now estimates that Providence experienced a storm surge of around 20 feet, which put it 14 feet under water in the downtown area and sustained winds above 100 miles per hour—not gusts, sustained winds. If this storm were to hit Rhode Island now, it would carry ashore at least an additional 10 inches of ocean, thanks to sea level rise since the 1930s. It would probably carry ashore a lot more than that because that 10 inches of water would pile up in the storm surge as it hit.

If we continue to do nothing to slow climate change, by the end of the century, sea level rise will be on the scale of additional feet, not inches.

Hurricane Florence just brought feet of rain, high winds, and massive storm surge to the Carolinas. At around 500 miles wide, it was bigger than Hurricane Katrina, and it dumped more rain than Hurricane Harvey. Sadly, nearly 50 people have lost their lives from the effects of Hurricane Florence, and flooding recovery is still ongoing. The condolences of Rhode Islanders go out to the Carolinas and Virginia.

As Hurricane Florence was building strength and making its approach, researchers were connecting its power to climate change. A team of researchers estimated climate change made Florence's rainfall 50 percent worse than it would have been without the known effects of humankind on the climate. Hurricanes are powered by warmer oceans. One of the study's authors estimated that for every degree Celsius of ocean temperature increase, "extreme precipitation events can increase by over 60 percent."

The oceans are warmer. Oceans have absorbed more than 90 percent of the excess heat trapped by our greenhouse gas emissions. It is several nuclear explosions worth of heat per second that the oceans are absorbing. By doing that, they spare our land from worse climate catastrophe, but it wreaks havoc in our oceans. Marine heat waves are a new phenomenon—so new that they were first identified and characterized in 2011, but they have already left a permanent scar in our oceans.

Starting in 2014, the northeast Pacific Ocean has experienced inordinately warm temperatures—"the Blob," it was called—a mass of warm water around the size of Canada. As the Blob spread toward Alaska, a trail of

millions of dead sea birds followed. The warm water drove their prey to cooler waters; unable to adapt to the sudden shift, the birds starved. Starving sea lion pups and toxic algae blooms that poisoned whales were also attributed to the Blob of warm water.

The recent massive coral die-off in the Great Barrier Reef that left half the reef dead was driven by abnormal water temperatures. Dr. Terry Hughes, one of the world's leading coral reef researchers, was quoted in *The Atlantic* as saying the Great Barrier Reef ecosystem "has collapsed . . . transformed into a completely new system that looks differently, and behaves differently, and functions differently, than how it was three years ago."

Marine heat waves are becoming warmer and more frequent, to the point that there is a movement now within the scientific community to start naming and categorizing Marine heat waves much as we do hurricanes.

Warming seas rise, and this will hit coastal properties.

The Union of Concerned Scientists recently released a report that estimated by 2100, "nearly 2.5 million residential and commercial properties, collectively valued at [over \$1] trillion today, will be at risk of chronic flooding." These numbers are based on sea level rise alone; storm surge and rain-driven flooding only amplify these risks.

Long before your house is actually flooded, long before you are walking through your kitchen in rubber boots, the value of your house can crash if the house becomes uninsurable or un-mortgageable for the next buyer. Freddie Mac has warned of this property value crash in America's coastal regions. Here is what Freddie Mac said: "The economic losses and social disruption may happen gradually, but they are likely to be greater in total than those experienced in the housing crisis and Great Recession."

The insurance industry trade publication Risk & Insurance had this to say: "Continually rising seas will damage coastal residential and commercial property values to the point that property owners will flee those markets in droves, thus precipitating a mortgage value collapse that could equal or exceed the mortgage crisis that rocked the global economy in 2008."

Despite this warning, the Federal Government has failed to prepare for these coming changes and build coastal resiliency. Congress is used to investing in our coasts only after a disaster. We have let our National Flood Insurance Program fall into billions of dollars of debt. We have let FEMA provide inaccurate and incomplete flood risk maps. And the Trump administration is purposefully blind to climate science, ocean changes, and flood mitigation requirements that would help us get ahead of the changes coming along our coasts.

We are not out of time yet. We still have a chance to avoid the worst con-

sequences of climate change and prepare America's coastal infrastructure for the rising tides. But we have to move past futile and false denial and into action.

It is time, Republicans and Democrats alike, west coasters and east coasters together, to wake up.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I am delighted to be here with my colleague from Rhode Island. This is a coast-to-coast presentation, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and on around the world, because our oceans are in deep trouble from climate chaos.

It is indeed time to wake up, and this week is my colleague's 222nd speech addressing that fact. It is so important not just that we speak but that the world act.

Driving these factors—whether we are talking about the impacts on the land or the impacts on the ocean—is carbon dioxide and carbon dioxide pollution. It is facts on the ground everywhere that people can pay attention to, but I think every now and then it is good to return to the basic science. So I am just going to share this chart which shows, with this red line, rising carbon dioxide levels. This chart ends a little bit early, but we are now well over 400 parts per million.

When I was born, we were at about 314 parts per million, and we are approaching 414. This generation over the last 62 years is the first generation to experience a 100-point climb in human history on this planet, the first one to experience this dramatic growth in carbon dioxide.

If it were just growth in carbon dioxide, if it were just a matter of changing the air chemistry a little with no impact, we wouldn't be here talking today, but now we have this set of black dots representing temperature changes. We can see, essentially, as the carbon dioxide levels rise, the temperature of the planet is rising as well. The heat that is being trapped has been well understood for a long time. It goes back more than a century.

In more recent times, in 1959, there was a scientist, Edward Teller, who was quite famous for his work on nuclear issues. He gave a speech to the 100-year anniversary of the petroleum. He said: This energy that you are pulling out of the ground—oil and coal and gas—is pretty powerful in helping humans transform the world and it can do a lot of good, but then he went on to say, it has two problems. The first problem is, there is a limited supply in the ground. It turns out there is a lot more carbon stored in the ground than Edward Teller had any idea about in 1959, but, he said, the second problem you have is that when you burn this resource, you create carbon dioxide and carbon dioxide traps heat and you are going to have a dramatic impact on the planet. He focused specifically on the issue of rising sea levels and the fact

that most people around the world live next to the sea.

That is a proper introduction to us recognizing that this issue has been understood scientifically for a long time, but in terms of our politics, individuals are reluctant to embrace that challenge because it requires action, and that action is sometimes hard to come by to shift the status quo to address this rising threat. In the 10 years I have been in the Senate, we have seen dramatic, dramatic impacts, and I will focus on the oceans today.

Oceans absorb 90 percent of the heat. I didn't know this statistic until my colleague from Rhode Island questioned a scientist who was being nominated for a key position in the administration and asked her that question, thinking it was just basic knowledge. I said to myself, actually, I wasn't sure how much the oceans absorb. I knew the open blue waters—non-ice-covered waters—absorb a lot of sunlight energy. I know they cover three-quarters of the Earth, but I didn't know that statistic that 90 percent of the energy is trapped by the ocean. So we see impacts around the world. We see coral reefs dying at an unprecedented rate, both from the warming of the ocean and from the increasing acidity of the ocean.

You may wonder why I raise the question of acidity. What does that possibly have to do with that? As that rising carbon dioxide level that was on the chart I just put up lifts, waves incorporate more of that carbon dioxide into the ocean, and it becomes carbonic acid. Essentially, we are pouring incredible amounts of acid into our oceans via carbon dioxide pollution.

When I stand on the shore on the coastline of Oregon and I look out to sea and see that ocean, I find it hard to imagine that we as humans could have changed the basic chemistry, but there was a rude-awakening fact that occurred when I came to the Senate back in 2008, when I was elected, and in 2009. That fact was the baby oysters being hatched in the Oregon State hatchery, the Oregon hatchery on the coast, started dying. They all started dying. So the hatchery rushed in experts from Oregon State University. They thought they would find a bacterium, they thought they would find a virus and they didn't and they were mystified. What is the answer? Why are they dying? It turned out it was simply the increasing acidity of the Pacific Ocean, the ocean having increased 30 percent over the time that humans have been burning fossil fuels for energy. When those baby oysters try to pull the molecules out of the ocean to form their shell, it is so much harder when it is a higher acidity, and they die. So now we have to artificially buffer the water in which the baby oysters are hatched in order for them to live. We lost a billion baby oysters.

Then, of course, we have the impact, and we have climate chaos in the form of hurricanes. Boy, have we received

that message through storm after storm in 2017 and 2018.

Hurricane Harvey came rolling in, September of 2017. The storm formed and dissipated between August and September. The numbers are ones you really can't get your hands around: Twenty-seven trillion gallons of water dumped in Louisiana and Texas; 34,000 people displaced; 13,000 had to be rescued from rising floodwaters. The estimated damage: about \$125 billion from that one storm, second only to Katrina.

Then, a few weeks later, here comes Hurricane Maria, devastating Puerto Rico, devastating the Virgin Islands. It knocked out the power grid in Puerto Rico for almost a year. I went there about 8 or 9 months after the storm to check it out, and I saw an island where thousands of families still had blue tarps over their roofs—a testament to the amount of destruction they had experienced, also a testament to how unprepared FEMA was to respond to that: an estimated \$90 billion in damage; an estimate of roughly 3,000 deaths coming from the storm and the aftermath, many of them affected by the knocked-out healthcare services and the heat that followed.

Together, 2017 broke the record for the cost of the hurricane season, 16 major billion-dollar weather events costing over \$300 billion. Why are these hurricanes more devastating because of climate chaos, because of carbon dioxide pollution? The energy comes from the temperature in the ocean. The warmer the ocean, the more energy, the more powerful the storms. A short explanation is that the warmer oceans produce more evaporation, more water vapor in the atmosphere. It increases approximately 7 percent for every 1.8 degrees of temperature rise. Then the storm as a whole moves across the ocean and across the land more slowly, which means not only do we have a more powerful storm, but it is more likely to hover over a given area for a longer period of time.

Between 1949 and 2016, it is estimated that hurricanes slowed down at sea by about 10 percent and by about 20 percent once they make landfall. The result: a lot more rain and a lot more wind hits any given area, a recipe for disaster.

If 2017 wasn't enough, we have already experienced Hurricane Florence this year. Again, unusually warm ocean temperatures. It is estimated that by previous understanding, this was a once-in-a-thousand-year event; that is, we go through 1,000 years, we would see something like this once, but we didn't just see Florence. We saw in the previous year Maria, Irma, and Harvey. In other words, these 1,000-year-events are becoming far more common as a result, setting record rainfalls, doing record damage. It is more deaths, more damage, and now we have thousands still in shelters as a result of Hurricane Florence and an estimated some \$38 billion in damage.

There are other effects we should realize from these massive storms. One is that when the rivers flood up over the land, they tend to flood areas that were never intended to be flooded; things like, for example, leftover waste dumps from the ash from coal-burning powerplants. That ash can turn a river into a gray pudding, and you can see it from space. That ash contains arsenic, boron, copper, lead, and mercury, and giant ponds of coal ash throughout North Carolina were flooded. It has happened before.

In 2014, there was a catastrophic event at a Duke Energy plant that spilled some 39,000 tons into the Dan River. That spill urged more regulations to strengthen those coal ash deposits to prevent them from escaping during floods, but what happened last year? Well, President Trump's EPA and the North Carolina legislature weakened those regulations. Then, last month, two other Duke Energy ponds flooded in Hurricane Florence and released tons of coal ash into rivers and onto private property. Imagine that toxic sludge flooding across your land. How would you feel about that? Imagine that toxic sludge going into the river your city takes its water from. How would you like that? I know you wouldn't.

Another source of pollution: hog waste. North Carolina has roughly 3,000 unlined, open air pits containing millions of gallons of hog waste. The hurricane's flooding released a lot of that waste into the rivers. Again, how do you imagine the impact of that hog waste spreading across your flooded property or through the river you take your water out of? Not a pretty sight.

We are in the situation where so many legislatures want to put their hands over their ears and eyes and not acknowledge the basic science that is resulting in a warmer planet, warmer oceans, and all of the effects—the coral reefs; the Pacific blob and the impact it had on sea birds; the dying oysters; the pine beetles that live through the winter because the winter is warmer and kill the pine trees; the ticks that live through the winter in New Hampshire, New England, and kill the moose; the ticks that live through the winter and spread disease that humans get—devastating disease.

We have to stop and be honest about this impact on our planet. We used to talk about computer models, and many mocked those models saying that is just some ivory tower estimate; it is not really going to happen. Now the facts are on the ground, and what we are seeing is damage to our forests and to our fishing and to our farming.

This is not an urban issue or a rural issue. It is both an urban issue and a rural issue: urban cities getting flooded, rural areas having their farming and fishing and forestry profoundly affected. So let us come together. Whether we come from an urban area or a rural area, whether we come from a Republican State or we come from a

Democratic State, this threat doesn't discriminate, nor should we make it a partisan issue. We have a responsibility to this generation, yes, but the impacts are accelerating. We have a responsibility for the next generation and the generation after that and 70 more generations that will all ask: When the facts were before you in such an obvious and dramatic way, why didn't you act?

Acting means we have to drive through massive transition from gaining energy from fossil fuels to producing energy without fossil fuels—producing energy with winds and tides and currents, producing energy with solar power.

We have this massive fusion reactor called the Sun, and it distributes energy on Earth through the wind and the sunshine. Let's harvest that for the benefit of human kind. I am pleased to be able to come to the floor to help celebrate the 222nd speech by my colleague on the Atlantic coast and to share a little bit on the perspective from the Pacific coast, but this is an issue that affects all points in between and around the globe.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Will the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. MERKLEY. I will be happy to.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. One of the touching features of the Senator's presentation was the summary of the effects on God's creatures—the sea lion pups, the fish, the sea birds, just from this particular episode. You may not have a big heart for an oyster spat, but these are all God's creatures. It is frustrating when people who wear their Christianity on their sleeve show so little interest for the protection of God's creatures.

The other angle on that is that we are taught in the Bible to look out for the least among us. One thing I have noticed is that climate change harms don't fall evenly across the population, that storms and floods are harder for some than for others, and that wealth and poverty dramatically affect the experience of climate change by different people.

I wonder if the Senator would comment on that from his experience.

Mr. MERKLEY. It is a great question or a great point because when you have resources, you can respond to the impact far more easily. You can take and say: My house has been devastated, but I have the resources to go buy another house in a safer area, in a drier area.

Take, for example, the flooding of New Orleans. When New Orleans was flooded after Katrina, we saw that affluent families moved, and poor families had two options: One was to leave everything behind, leave the State, and start over but start over with no assets, which meant they were in extremely difficult circumstances, or stay and hope to rebuild. It was extremely difficult for low-income individuals to be able to do so.

As we look at the disparate impacts around the world, we can look within

the United States and realize, for example, the impact on the Native American populations of Alaska are being significantly impacted by the shoreline eroding, by the ice disappearing, and with that, the traditional way of life is disappearing. Various groups have, therefore, had to appeal for help to be able to move their villages, as a result.

There is very little to be done to address the very changing nature of the commerce they have carried on with the sea. Their fishing or their hunting, which has gone on for thousands of years, now is being dramatically impacted. We do see a hugely disparate impact.

If we broaden this discussion to look at countries such as Syria, we find that when climate change affected the farmers and they had drought year after year, they had to abandon their farmlands and flee to the city, and they had no resources. It created competition for resources. It helped to launch the civil war and Syria has been in deep, massive conflict ever since, just as an example.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. I believe it was Tom Friedman, the very well-known author, who first wrote comprehensively about the connection between the unprecedented drought in Syria driving farmers and herdsmen away from their former farms and herds—the farms dried up and the herds died off—and into the city, into that conflict, and into that crucible that led to the initial conflict and now to the complete collapse of Syrian society and into an international boxing match of forces.

I yield my time.

I thank Senator MERKLEY for joining me and for the longstanding passion that he has exhibited for the oceans, the coasts, the forests, and the well-being of the people of Oregon. We are very proud of our State of Rhode Island, but Oregon has a great deal in terms of natural assets to be proud of, and there is no stronger voice for them than the Senator from Oregon.

I yield.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LEE). The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PERDUE). Without objection, it is so ordered.

BIPARTISANSHIP

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, the Senate is debating right now, obviously, a really important issue. It is the confirmation of Judge Kavanaugh. It is a very serious and important debate. It is a contentious debate. There are a lot of emotions out there, and it is going to continue to be that way, but I want to talk about something that is not actually related to that. In some ways, it is actually related to something very different.

I heard in the news this morning—actually, I hear this in the news all the time. I say to our friends in the media, this speech that I am going to give has a little bit about something I want you to focus on and to try a little harder in certain ways to report. There is a conventional wisdom out there that the Senate is the most contentious it has ever been—that there is hyperpartisanship, that nobody talks to each other, and that nobody likes each other. I have heard people talk about 1850, the Civil War, and that nothing gets done.

Now, I am not a media basher. I walk out, and I do my interviews. I am very open. Back home in the great State of Alaska, I am open to the media all the time. I am respectful. I don't see the media as the enemy of the people or anything like that. They certainly have their biases, but I will say that I believe, to some degree, this narrative of "hey, this place is so partisan; I haven't seen this since the 1850s; nothing gets done here" is driven by the media.

Conflict sells. We know that. Senators fighting and bashing each other is kind of interesting to sell newspapers or to have a place on social media, but bipartisan, hard work—the good work for the Nation—let's just admit, can be a bit boring. It can be a bit boring.

People say: Wow, these guys are working together. These men and women are working together.

That is a little boring in the media space. So it doesn't get written about nationally and, certainly, a lot of times, locally in some of our home States. I think this is a shame. I think it is a shame.

Of course, the media can write about the contentious issues. We are seeing a really important one right now, and it deserves a lot of print and a lot of press. It is getting it. That is for sure. It is a shame because this can be a bit dispiriting, not only for the Members of this body but much more importantly for the people we represent, for the Alaskans I represent.

They see this when they read the newspaper, and they think: Jeez, is this the only thing going on there?

So tonight what I want to do is something that is a bit of a shocker to some watching back home, and we still have people in the Galleries. It is going to be a bit of a shocker, and I am almost sure no one is going to write about it or do a story about it, but, nonetheless, the Alaskans I represent and the American people whom we all represent need to hear about it.

In the past few weeks—heck, in the past few hours—this body right here, the U.S. Senate, has gotten some important, bipartisan work done for America. You might not read about it back home, but that doesn't mean it didn't happen.

Some of these bills are big, important bills. Some of them are smaller, maybe less important bills, but they