

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

all have something in common: hard work, good work, serious work, and bipartisan—actually, very bipartisan—work that will help America to address challenges and take advantage of opportunities. Yes, it is being done right here, today, and in the last 2, 3, or 4 weeks.

What might some of these accomplishments be just in the past few weeks? Maybe our friends in the media will write about it. I hope they do. Let's get started. Let's get started and talk about some of these.

Mr. President, as you know, we just had a bill that overwhelmingly passed the Senate dealing with the opioid crisis. This is going to the President's desk, and he is going to sign this. This is a huge issue for all of us. It is a really important issue in my State, the great State of Alaska.

The numbers are staggering—staggering. There are 72,000 Americans—rich, poor, Black, White, Native, non-Native, young, old, but, actually, mostly young—who have died of drug overdoses last year. This is hard to comprehend. In my view, this body is finally waking up to this challenge.

I am not going to go through each one of these bills, but there is going to be significant funding—billions of dollars—in this bill we just passed. This bill has the STOP Act, which is the bill of my good friend from Ohio, Senator PORTMAN. He has been such a leader on this. I was an early cosponsor of the bill. The bill focuses on stopping the killer drug fentanyl, which is coming from China and Mexico and killing all of our people. That is the STOP Act.

This bill has a provision that I authored that gets 5 percent of the funding to Native health organizations. Some of the Native organizations in the lower 48 and in Alaska have really strong and far-reaching access to some of our rural citizens. So these organizations are going to see a lot more funding.

There is a hugely important amount of good policy. We are not going to get there and we are not going to fix this opioid-heroin addiction problem for years, but at least we are focused on it. It is good legislation, and it was very bipartisan legislation that just passed the Senate and is going to go to the President's desk for his signature. That happened today. That is newsworthy.

If you are going through recovery, like so many good people I know in Alaska are, this is encouraging news. Hopefully, someone is going to write about it. This is encouraging news.

OK, what else happened today? The FAA reauthorization happened. Some people will say: Well, that sounds like a yawner. But this is basic infrastructure. This is basic aviation security infrastructure and improvements in weather reporting systems. For my State, the great State of Alaska, this bill is enormously important—enormously important.

I am not going to read all of the provisions in there that are going to ben-

efit Alaska, such as essential air service, like more funding for airport infrastructure, and improvement programs such as streamlining permitting, so you can actually build airport infrastructure. This is a bill that is going to really help the whole country.

Again, we are starting to get work done. From 2008 to 2012, there were 23 extensions of the FAA bill, or the Federal Aviation Administration Reauthorization Act—23 extensions. What does that mean? Well, essentially, it means the Senate wasn't doing its job.

This is a 5-year extension. People back home in Alaska and other places can now plan for 5 years on infrastructure for airports. There are no more of these extensions. There were 23 in 5 years. That is the Senate not doing its job. We did that today.

For some people, this is a really big deal. I hope the media will report on it. I am not holding my breath. What about this very bipartisan legislation and a lot of hard, important work to keep America at the cutting edge of drum technology and of aviation technology?

We are the home and the most innovative place in the world for aviation and aircraft. This will help us to stay that way. That happened today also. That is going to go to the President's desk for his signature. It is a bipartisan bill, important for the country.

Related to that—and I know the Presiding Officer has been a leader on this issue on our budget and appropriations process—with the enactment of the Department of Defense appropriations bill, this Senate has had more spending bills enacted on time since at any time since 1997—20 years. I know a lot of people are like: Well, that is really boring. And isn't that what you are supposed to do, pass appropriations bills and get them to the President's desk so you don't have these giant omnibuses? That is Washington speak for a bill that is \$1.5 trillion, 2,400 pages that nobody reads because nobody knows what is in it. I don't vote for those, by the way. That system was broken. A lot of us ran on that in 2014 because the system was so broken. So we are going to start to work on it, and we are doing it—success.

We have a long way to go, and, again, you are watching, and the American people are saying: Well, big deal, you are funding the government the way you are supposed to. They have a really good point, but we hadn't been doing that for almost two decades, and we are starting to do it in a serious way. By the way, it has to be bipartisan here in the Senate because we need 60 votes for these appropriations bills to pass.

So the Appropriations Committee has passed out every bill, as I mentioned, at a pace that we haven't seen since 1998. Almost 90 percent of the discretionary spending that runs our Federal Government is done through the regular order—the process by which most Americans think we should be doing things, but we haven't been. We

are starting to do it now. Bipartisan, important, get our budgeting process back in order—we are doing that. That is good news. You are probably not going to hear about it in the media, but that is good news.

Let me tell you about another one that is related that we did about 5 weeks ago—a little bit further back—the National Defense Authorization Act, the NDAA. I sit on the Armed Services Committee with the Presiding Officer. This is a really important bill. The President signed it about a month ago. It rebuilds our military, which the vast majority of Americans—certainly the vast majority of Alaskans—support.

People forget that from 2010 to 2016, the budget of the Department of Defense was cut by almost 25 percent. Despite serious national security challenges all over the world, we were cutting defense spending dramatically. Readiness plummeted.

This bill the President just signed significantly rebuilds our military and implements the national defense strategy of the Pentagon, written by Secretary Mattis. That is a whole new strategy for America. Yes, we still have the threat from al-Qaida and international terrorism from 9/11, but this strategy starts to focus on our big challenges, such as the rise of great power rivalries like China and Russia. We need to focus on them primarily, and that is what we are doing.

Guess how many Senators voted for that—a hugely important piece of legislation. Eighty-five. It was very bipartisan—one of the most important things this body does. I check most major newspapers; they didn't even write about it when the President signed it. That is really important. It is bipartisan, rebuilding the military, new strategy, so that is good news. In my State, that is really good news. The vast majority of Alaskans love our military, support our military. We have a lot of military bases. They think this is great news.

So I hope our friends in the media will write about that. I know it is about 4 weeks late, but I didn't see any articles on it. That is important.

Let me give a few other examples. They are not like the NDAA—huge in terms of their importance or the size of the bill—but they are important. They are bills that I authored, so I like to highlight those; when you get a bill that you work on with your colleagues here on both sides of the aisle, you pass it, you get it over to the President, and he signs it.

This week, the bill Senator WHITEHOUSE, a Democrat from Rhode Island, and I have been working on for, gosh, almost 2 years—the Save Our Seas bill is all about addressing the challenge that we have not only in America but globally, with ocean debris, ocean pollution, ocean plastics littering our oceans, hurting our wonderful, sustainable fisheries, potentially posing health risks to humans. That bill

passed this week. It is going to be signed by the President, hopefully this week or next week.

I want to thank Senator WHITEHOUSE and Senator BOOKER. It is a very bipartisan bill. It passed here, passed the House—a really important issue.

By the way, the Trump administration is doing a good job on this issue. Even the U.S.-Mexico-Canada NAFTA agreement has a provision, and we are pressing for that, on this ocean debris problem. This bill is going to do a lot to help with this challenge. It passed. A bipartisan group of Senators strongly supported that. It passed this week and is being signed into law here soon by the President. That is good news.

I am pretty sure no one wrote about it, but if you look at global challenges for the environment—the ocean pollution, plastics, ocean debris challenge is a big one.

Again, I want to thank Senator WHITEHOUSE, in particular—great leadership on this issue. We are taking important strides on this. He and I are already working on SOS 2.0, and I guarantee that is going to pass.

That is a bipartisan achievement, protecting our oceans, getting the world to clean up plastics, ocean debris. That is not bad for 1 week in the Senate, right? Hopefully someone will write about that. It was very bipartisan, that is for sure.

Another one that was signed into law 3 weeks ago is a bill that is really important to me, and it is one of the first bills I introduced as a Senator when I came here 3½ years ago, called the Pro bono Work to Empower and Represent Act—the POWER Act. That is what it is called, the POWER Act.

This is a bill that I worked on very closely with Senator HEITKAMP, a Democrat from North Dakota. She and I worked on this bill for over 2 years. It passed the Senate and finally passed the House and came back, had a couple more elements to it. We got it passed again, and the President signed it 3 weeks ago.

What does the POWER Act do? Well, we all know America has big challenges with regard to sexual assault and domestic violence. My State has huge problems with this horrible, horrendous issue. The POWER Act, through getting lawyers to step up and help victims and survivors of domestic violence, is going to provide more legal resources and services to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. That is a pretty important topic, a pretty important issue for America.

Think about this: If you are an accuser—if you are someone who is a perpetrator of one of these horrendous crimes, a sexual assault crime—you get a Sixth Amendment right to counsel. That is under the Constitution. If you are the victim, you get nothing—nothing. Well, our bill, which is now the law of the land, is going to help change that. We envision an army of lawyers all over the country helping these survivors. So that passed. It is bipartisan.

It passed 3 weeks ago. It is an important issue, certainly, for Alaska but also for the country. We all know that we can do much better in this area, so that is going to help. I think it is going to help thousands of survivors personally as we work to implement it. That is good news. It is bipartisan.

What else? NAFTA. This isn't in the Senate yet, but it will be coming our way. The President and his team announced that they have reached agreement with Mexico and Canada on an updated NAFTA agreement. I think most Americans think that is very important. We will see if it is bipartisan. I certainly have been one who has been encouraging the President and his team. I am working hard on making sure we get there and address some of our other economic challenges and trade challenges. But that was announced a couple of days ago. That is good news.

We have to get to the details of it. We will debate it here on the Senate floor. It is important for the country, for our allies, for the American worker and American families. That is positive.

Then, related to NAFTA, of course, is bipartisan good news that should make every American smile; that is, finally we are once again unleashing the might of the U.S. economy—something I know the Presiding Officer cares a lot about, and certainly it is a bipartisan issue. We would rather have 4.2 percent GDP growth like we had last quarter than 1.5 GDP growth, which was the average over the last 10 years. There is a debate here—it is a healthy debate—on what is causing this robust economic growth. I think it is tax reform and regulatory reform and unleashing the promise and power of American energy. So there is a debate here, but there is no debate on the fact that everybody in this body, I hope, thinks that 4.2 percent GDP growth, thinks having the lowest unemployment rate in almost 50 years, thinks having wages finally start to go up after being stagnant for 20 is good news. It is good news, and everybody here should have bipartisan agreement on that. We will debate how we sustain it, how we keep it going, but nobody debates that it is bipartisan good news.

So I am just going to ask my friends in the media—it is not 1850; sorry, I know conflict sells. We are not on the verge of civil war. We don't all hate each other; we actually like each other. We work together. I certainly respect my colleagues here. Yes, we have our tough debates; we are having one right now. But for my friends in the media, it is OK to report on bipartisan successes. I just gave examples of a number of bipartisan initiatives that occurred over the last 4 to 5 weeks that are actually really good for the American people. They are good for the people I represent back in Alaska.

But even if you are not going to read about this or see it on TV, for anyone watching, for the people in the gallery,

for my constituents back home, there is a lot going on here that is bipartisan, that is significant, that helps us address challenges like opioids, helps us take advantage of industries like the aviation industry which, for Alaska, is so important. So keep the faith.

Again, to my friends in the media, it is OK to report on bipartisan successes. The American people care about them. You might not care about them, but the American people do. So let's work together and try to make sure everybody is understanding that there is some important work being done here, and a lot of it is going to help the people we represent.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate engage in its routine legislative wrapup as in morning business during today's session of the Senate.

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

FAA REAUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, today the Senate passed a preconference Federal Aviation Authority bill without amendment offered or accepted by myself or my colleagues. I voted against this bill primarily for three reasons.

First, this FAA reauthorization does not include a critical and necessary consumer protection bill, the FAIR Fees Act. The FAIR Fees Act would have limited the amount that airlines could gouge consumers when they wanted to change flights. Now, without this provision, working Oregonians will still have to pay absurd prices, such as \$200, to change a simple \$80 flight.

Second, Senator MERKLEY and I had introduced legislation to qualify the Crater Lake-Klamath Regional Airport to receive Essential Air Service funding, and despite our attempts to include it to this 5-year FAA authorization, the legislation was excluded. The airport near Klamath Falls is currently without commercial air service, and Essential Air Service funding would help them recruit an airline to return commercial air service to the region. I was disappointed this important provision was not included by either the House or the Senate because it would have increased economic development and tourism for the Klamath region. I will continue to pursue any and all avenues to help restore commercial air service to the Crater Lake-Klamath Regional Airport, a must for quality of life and economic development in the Klamath Falls area.

Third, this bill includes the Preventing Emerging Threats Act, legislation aimed at empowering Federal agents to prevent drone-based crime.