

Sea level rise adds to the storm surge of every single storm that makes landfall. In the case of Superstorm Sandy, in 2012, it added a foot to that 13-foot storm surge. One foot . . . meant 25 more square miles of coastal flooding. It meant several billion dollars worth of additional damage.

At one point during this year's hurricane season, our tropics faced nine active tropical storms. The hallmarks of these warm, ocean-fueled storms can be seen in powerful hurricanes that hit United States territories in recent years. Hurricane Harvey hit Houston; Hurricane Maria hit Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands; Super Typhoon Yutu hit the Northern Marianas, Hurricane Florence hit in the Carolinas, and Hurricane Michael hit in Florida.

No one storm can be blamed wholly on climate change, but scientists are increasingly able to link the increasingly dangerous level of storm damage to climate change, and we have had an eerie streak of record-setting storms in the past few years. Hurricane Harvey was the single greatest downpour in U.S. history, according to the U.S. Geological Survey. It dumped over 50 inches of rain on Houston and over 30 trillion gallons of water over Texas, Louisiana, Tennessee, and Kentucky. How much is 30 trillion gallons of water? For comparison, the Chesapeake Bay holds around 18 trillion gallons of water. Basically, it dumped nearly two Chesapeake Bays onto those States.

Harvey's deluge was fueled by record warm temperatures in the Gulf of Mexico. Scientists from the University of California, Berkeley, found that Hurricane Harvey was over three times more likely to have occurred due to climate change and that its rainfall was increased by around 38 percent due to climate change.

Hurricane Florence intensified over water 1 to 2 degrees Celsius above average and dumped record rainfall and flooding on the Carolinas in September. Preliminary analysis suggests that Florence's rainfall was more than 50 percent higher due to climate change.

When Hurricane Michael hit Florida just last month, it passed over water 2 to 3 degrees Celsius warmer than average. As it passed over these waters, Michael's winds increased by 80 miles per hour in just 48 hours, a phenomenon scientists refer to as "rapid intensification." It became the strongest storm ever to make an October landfall in the United States.

The direct link between sea temperature and hurricane intensification is well established: Each degree Celsius of ocean warming causes a 7-percent increase in maximum wind speed, and a storm's destructive potential increases by three times the wind speed increase.

So how does that play through? To quote Professor Mann again:

A 7 percent increase in wind speed is a 21 percent increase in the destructive potential of the storm. That is with one degree Celsius ocean warming. With Hurricane Michael, those temperatures were 2 to 3 degrees Cel-

sus above preindustrial temperatures. If you do the math, that means it was probably twice as destructive as it would have been in the absence of human-caused warming.

The result of the destructive power of Hurricane Michael was the almost complete demolition of the town of Mexico Beach, FL. Michael hit with 155 mile per hour winds and a storm surge of around 9 feet, completely demolishing 70 percent of homes and severely damaging many more.

The degree of damage and the imposing costs of rebuilding mean that many Floridians simply will leave, and that is playing out across coastal properties.

A falloff of coastal property values will spread, many sources anticipate, as people see more events like the destruction of Mexico Beach. Insurance companies, banks, and institutional property investors are already showing signs of anxiety in coastal communities.

Freddie Mac has described the effect of this property value crash on America's coastal regions as follows. Freddie Mac—the great housing powerhouse—has 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."

Any of us who lived through the 2008 mortgage meltdown should take that warning deadly seriously. It is not just Freddie Mac. Moody's now rates coastal municipalities' bonds for this risk—Moody's, Freddie Mac, Union of Concerned Scientists, the experience of coastal communities. It is all piling up, and yet we do nothing. I haven't even talked about acidification. That is a separate speech—the chemical changes happening in the ocean, in addition to the physical changes of warming and rising. Set that aside, but it is just as dangerous.

Despite these warnings just about ocean warming, Republican heads in Congress and in the White House seem determined to remain buried in the sand. I don't know how many more storms need to hit us before we are willing to take meaningful action. Americans who live and work along our shores—Rhode Islanders and people who live in other coastal States—are the ones who are suffering the most from all of this, and they are the ones who will have to explain our delay. Those Americans are entitled to a voice, not just the lobbyists of the fossil fuel industry. We must protect our coasts for when the next storms batter their way ashore.

This is getting worse, not better. We must take responsibility for the changes we are causing in the world's oceans. We will not be forgiven for our indolence and disregard just because there is a big industry behind our indolence and disregard. Our oceans are warning us loudly, and they are warning us clearly: It is time to wake up.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. TILLIS). The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I have come to the floor for three different reasons. Out of courtesy to the Democratic leader, who I see coming in, I will wait until he is here.

Mr. SCHUMER. I am here.

TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY

Mr. ALEXANDER. Good.

Mr. President, as the world knows, the country's largest public utility is the Tennessee Valley Authority and serves 9 million customers in our seven-state region. It is enormously important to our State of Tennessee. Its CEO, Bill Johnson, announced today that he is leaving. I will have more to say about him later, but he and the Board of Directors have led TVA in an excellent direction, and it is now up to the Board of Directors to choose his successor. It is a big job. As I said, it is a \$10 billion-a-year company.

John Ryder, of Memphis, was nominated by President Trump 282 days ago to be one of those Directors. He has been approved by voice vote by the Environment and Public Works committee. For the last 176 days, he has been waiting for confirmation. He has the approval of the ranking Democrat on the committee, the Senator from Delaware, Mr. CARPER. He has the approval of the ranking Democrat on the subcommittee, Senator WHITEHOUSE. It is time Mr. Ryder, who is consistently named one of the finest lawyers in Memphis—he has been recognized by Business Tennessee Magazine as among the 101 Best Lawyers in Tennessee and listed in Best Lawyers since 1987. In other words, he is a well-qualified, non-controversial nominee who is needed by the people of our region to select a successor to Bill Johnson, the CEO. The other nominees have been confirmed. The nominee from Alabama was confirmed. The nominee from Kentucky was confirmed but not the nominee from Tennessee.

I am taking the step today of coming to the floor to ask that he be confirmed by consent. I can think of no reason why he would not be.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—EXECUTIVE
CALENDAR NO. 856

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of executive calendar No. 856, the nomination of John Ryder to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Tennessee Valley Authority; that the Senate vote on the nomination with no intervening action or debate; that if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's actions; that no further motions be made in order; and that any statements relating to the nomination be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there an objection?

The Senator from New York.

Mr. SCHUMER. Reserving the right to object. Very simply, there has to be some comity here. Republicans cannot

block Democratic nominees and then expect Republican nominees to go through, so I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. ALEXANDER. To my friend from New York, who is he talking about? He knows my record. I worked with him three times when President Obama was there, worked with him directly to make it easier for President Obama to have nominees.

Let me go through that because I think it is important the people know the efforts we made together. In 2011, working with the Senator from New York, we got rid of secret holds. We permitted waiver of the 72-hour rule that was used to block nominations and delay. We created 272 expedited privilege nominations. In 2012, we eliminated Senate confirmations for 163 positions, all to make it easier for President Obama to make Presidential nominations. In 2013, we created some new rules which said that Executive nominees could only be debated post-cloture for 8 hours and district judges for 2 hours.

I personally made sure the current chairman of the Democratic Party, Tom Perez, got cloture so the Senate could vote on him. I voted against him, but I made certain he could come to a vote.

When President Obama had a vacancy in the Department of Education in his last year, I went to President Obama and said: Mr. President, I think it is inappropriate for us not to have a confirmed Senate nominee in a principal position like U.S. Secretary of Education. If you will please nominate John King, with whom I disagree, I will make sure he is confirmed, and we confirmed him. That has been my record in terms of dealing with nominees of the President of an opposite party.

I ask through the Chair, why pick on Tennessee? Why confirm Kentucky nominees, why confirm Alabama nominees, why work with me in three different Congresses to make it easier for President Obama to confirm nominees, why applaud me for allowing the chairman of the Democratic Party today to be confirmed as Secretary of Labor and then block a nominee for the Tennessee Valley Authority, who is eminently well-qualified, who is supported by the Democratic members of the committee who have jurisdiction and who is needed on the Board to pick a CEO for the millions of people in the seven-state region? Why pick on Tennessee, I would say to my friend from New York through the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New York.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, we have to have some bipartisanship here. I understand my friend from Tennessee. He is my friend. I hope he would work with us to create bipartisan packages to get nominees through. That is not happening. We need to do it.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I don't know what he is talking about. I am the chairman of the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee. I have, during my time, regularly confirmed Democratic nominees and Republican nominees. I have worked with the Democratic leader to make it easier for President Obama to confirm nominees and now he gives me no specific reason why he is objecting to the nominee from Tennessee.

I ask him further—even though he has left the floor in what I would consider to be an act of discourtesy while I am speaking to him, and I mean that. I am very upset about this. I consider that an act of discourtesy when the Democratic leader leaves the floor while I am speaking directly to him through the Chair on a matter of importance to 9 million people in our area. I ask him what kind of precedent is he setting, the Democratic leader.

Let's think about this for a minute. One hundred and nineteen times the majority leader, Senator MCCONNELL, has had to file cloture to cut off debate in order to just get a vote on a nominee like Mr. Ryder, named one of the best lawyers in Tennessee since 1987, approved by Democratic colleagues, needed by the Tennessee Valley Authority, certain to be confirmed here almost unanimously. One hundred and nineteen times the Democratic opposition has required the Republican leader, Senator MCCONNELL, to use a whole week to confirm a nominee. That happened 12 times to President Obama. That happened four times to President George W. Bush. It happened 12 times to President Clinton and zero times to George H.W. Bush, whose administration I served in. That is the number of cloture votes on nominees required for previous Presidents in the same timeframe as President Trump. What kind of precedent does this set?

Let's talk about that for a moment. This is a body of precedents. For many years, we always confirmed nominees with 51 votes. That was until George W. Bush became President of the United States and the Senator from New York, before he was a Democratic leader, and others, decided they would use a cloture vote, a requirement for 60 votes, to block George W. Bush's nominees.

That was the first time that it had happened. Up until that time, the tradition of this body was that while you could require 60 votes, at least since about 1920, no one ever did. Even Clarence Thomas—and that was a very controversial Supreme Court nomination—was confirmed by 52 to 48. No one thought at the time of requiring that his nomination require 60 votes. They could have but didn't. So that was the tradition in the Senate—always nominations by 51 votes. The one exception in the Supreme Court throughout the history of the Senate was Abe Fortas, under President Johnson, and that was

an unusual situation. Never had a Federal district judge been required to have 60 votes.

In fact, what the Democratic leader—I wish he were here on the floor to hear this—may have forgotten is that Senator MCCONNELL tried at one time to require a cloture vote of Judge McConnell in Rhode Island, and I and a number of other Republicans objected because we had never done that before. We had never said that you have to have 60 votes to be confirmed as a Federal district judge. So we rejected that motion by the Republican leader, and as a result of that, never in the history of the Senate had we required 60 votes for a Federal district judge to be confirmed. Never in the history of the Senate had we required 60 votes for a Cabinet member to be confirmed. But then in the early years of George W. Bush, in 2003, I had just come to the Senate. The Senator from New York and others said: Well, we will do that for the first time. We will block George W. Bush's nominees.

I don't want to debate that back and forth today except to say that became a precedent. And, sure enough, what goes around comes around. A few years later, by 2013, things had gotten so that the Democrats decided to break the rules to change the rules and used the so-called nuclear option, and when Republicans did the same thing that the Senator from New York had done, Democrats overruled that and seated judges on the Court of Appeals.

So as a result of the precedent set by the Senator from New York on judges with George W. Bush, we had the nuclear option in the Senate, a using of that. Republicans then did what the Democrats did. That is what you call precedent.

Well, it happened a second time. That first use of the nuclear option left it so you could require 60 votes in order to have a Supreme Court Justice.

When President Trump nominated Neil Gorsuch to be a Supreme Court Justice, the Democrats filibustered Justice Gorsuch, an enormously well-qualified person. Remember, throughout the history of the country, we had not blocked a Supreme Court Justice by filibuster with that single exception of the Abe Fortas instance. Yet they did that. And as a result of that, the Republicans then said: Well, we will use the nuclear option and change the rules to 51. So that is what happened with the precedent.

Now let's look at this precedent. Are we going to block for 282 days—let me get my numbers exactly right; it is 176 days on the calendar awaiting confirmation—a noncontroversial Board of Directors member for the Tennessee Valley Authority. That is what we have come to.

So are we going to say, as the U.S. Senate minority, that we will effectively block—we will effectively block—those kinds of nominations and effectively keep an elected President from setting up a government? Is that what we are going to say?

It looks like that is what we are saying if you are going to say that 119 times the majority leader of the Senate of whichever party will have to invoke cloture. That means it takes 3 or 4 days to confirm even a noncontroversial Presidential nomination, when there are 1,200 such nominations.

Let's say we have a Democratic President one day and a Republican U.S. Senate, or a Republican President and a Democratic U.S. Senate. But let's just for purposes of discussion, since we are talking about precedent, let's say the Democrats make a big comeback and elect a Democratic President next time around. It is only 2 years before the Presidential election.

And let's say the Republicans stay in power and still have a majority in the Senate and Republicans say: Well, we are a body of precedent. We will do to the Democratic President exactly what the Senate did to President Trump.

If Republicans are in the majority, the Democratic President might not even be able to staff the government because the Republicans could say: We will not confirm anybody.

Or even if the Republicans were to be in the minority and there were a Democratic President and the Republican minority did to the next Democratic President what this minority is doing to this one, then 119 times you would see this happen, at least through the first part of the administration.

So where does that leave us as a Government of the United States?

Well, here is where it would leave us. It would leave us with a government of the United States with the Senate having no role in the appointment of its principal officers. That is what it would leave, because there is on the books legislation called the Vacancies Act, which allows any President of the United States to appoint acting people to all of the positions in the government. They can serve for 210 days at least, and there are a wide variety of people who can be chosen for those positions. They can be people who are confirmed or they can be senior people in the government.

We happen to have an example of that today in the United States Department of Justice—Matthew Whitaker. The Attorney General, Jeff Sessions, whom I admire and all of us know, resigned at the request of the President. And instead of nominating or picking a Senate-confirmed successor as the Acting Attorney General of the United States, President Trump did, as the Vacancies Act allows him to do, appointed Matthew Whitaker, Attorney General Sessions' Chief of Staff. I suppose a President could do that for every position.

I mentioned earlier that toward the end of President Obama's term, he had no Education Secretary. Arne Duncan had decided to leave, and they used the Vacancies Act to allow John King, who was not confirmed by the Senate, in effect, to be the Acting Secretary of Education.

As I said earlier, I had that conversation with President Obama. I said: Mr. President, I believe that, institutionally, we should have a Senate-confirmed Secretary of Education. Even if I disagree, as I did, with John King's education views, I will see to it that if you nominate him, he is confirmed. President Obama did that. He respected the importance of having institutionally confirmed principal officers in the government, and then we confirmed him.

So I don't know where this is leading us. I think this is the same kind of dangerous precedent that was established when Democrats for the first time used a 60-vote opportunity to block President George W. Bush's judges, and what the Democrats then did—what most of them tell me they wish they hadn't done—was that they used the nuclear option and required a 51-vote cloture. So now they can't eventually block anyone, even John Ryder, if we all decide that we want to take a whole week to confirm him. That is what Senator MCCONNELL has been doing. He has been putting a priority on district judges and on circuit judges, and the Democrats have been saying: We are going to slow you down.

But you can't win that way. All that happens is that the Senate gradually gives up its advise-and-consent authority under the Constitution to help the President form a government. That is one of the important parts of what we do in this government.

The late Justice Scalia said: Every tin horn dictator has a bill of rights. What the United States has that is different is checks and balances. One of the most important parts of that checks and balances is for the Senate to advise and consent on about 1,200 different Presidential nominees.

That is why I worked with Senator SCHUMER and other Democrats, like Senator Levin, and Republicans, like Senator McCain and Senator BARRASSO, and we took steps during the Obama administration three different times to reduce the number of Presidential nominees, to speed up Presidential nominees, and to put 272 of them at a privileged status so they could come through more rapidly.

This goes in entirely the opposite direction, and it is a terrible precedent for this institution. So I am extremely disappointed.

I am disappointed for John Ryder, who is a prominent lawyer, who thought he might get to be on the TVA Board and was nominated 282 days ago. I am disappointed for the people of Tennessee and the Tennessee Valley Authority region. There are millions of people who have had a very good Chief Executive Officer for the TVA for the last several years in Bill Johnson and now need a fully functioning Board of Directors to pick his successor, and yet the Democrats say: Even though we approve of him, even though we have no reason not to confirm him, we are just going to slow the train down just because we can.

Well, if they can, someone else can later. That does not serve the people well. I don't see any partisan political advantage to the Democrats for doing something like this. I never have thought that. I always thought that it was the right thing to do to let a President staff his administration. If you don't like the nominee, you can always vote no, but at least you can have a vote.

So he is talking about bipartisan packages. This nominee has been waiting for a long, long time. So I am not through with this. I think this is something that the people of Tennessee are going to be very disappointed about, and I would ask my friend from New York again: Why are you picking on Tennessee? Why would you confirm the Alabama nominee? Why would you confirm the Kentucky nominee? And why would you not confirm the Tennessee nominee? Why would you make him swing in the wind for 176 days when everybody approves of him—even the Democratic ranking member of the committee and Democratic ranking member of the subcommittee? Something smells here, and it is a bad precedent for the Senate. It is not good for our country, and it is completely contrary to the way that I have enjoyed working with the Senator from New York in 2011, 2012, 2013 to make it easier, then, for President Obama, but later for every President of the United States, to have his Presidential nominees promptly considered by the Senate and voted up or down.

While I am on the subject of the Tennessee Valley Authority, I want to mention the fact that Bill Johnson, who has been the Chief Executive Officer of the Tennessee Valley Authority for the last several years announced today in a Board meeting of the TVA of Mississippi of his intention to retire next year. My hope would be that John Ryder, whose term could have begun earlier this year, would be there to help select his successor. Bill Johnson and the board have done a good job for the last few years with TVA. They have reduced its debt. They have kept electricity prices low. They provided a reliable, ample supply of electricity for a rapidly growing part of America, making it easier for us to recruit jobs, and the air is clean.

As I will say more about this in just a minute, the new Foothills Parkway opened just outside the Great Smoky Mountains this past weekend, and it was packed with local people. On Sunday I was up there myself. We can see the mountains because TVA, over the last several years, has put pollution control equipment on all of its coal plants, and we could immediately see the difference. Other Federal regulations have made the air cleaner.

In fact, a lawsuit from North Carolina with TVA to keep dirty air from Tennessee from blowing into North Carolina has now been made a Federal regulation, and dirty air from Kentucky or Texas or other States can't

blow into Tennessee. The result is that when you come see the Great Smoky Mountains, you can call them the Great Smoky Mountains and not the great smoggy mountains, which they were some time ago.

So I would congratulate Bill Johnson on his tenure as CEO. He has got TVA on the right track, and I would urge the Board of Directors to think long and hard as they select someone to fill his shoes because as a former Governor of that State and now as a U.S. Senator from Tennessee for 16 years, I know the importance of having ample supply of low-cost clean electricity to heat our homes, run our computers, and attract our jobs.

Now, I have a Thanksgiving thought, to move away from the disagreeable, acrimonious dealings of the Senate for a moment.

GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS

Mr. President, I suggest two more things that Tennesseans can be grateful for this Thanksgiving.

One, there is a new 16-mile section of the Foothills Parkway, creating a spectacular view of the Great Smoky Mountains, and, two, because the air is now so much cleaner, you can actually see the mountains from this spectacular drive.

In the 1990s, on the clearest days, according to the National Park Service, you could see for around 50 miles in the Smokies. Today you can see more than 90 miles on the clearest days. Even on the haziest days, visibility has improved. In the 1990s, visibility was less than 10 miles. Today you can see more than 30 miles on the haziest days, according to the Park Service.

While that is still less than the natural visibility of 150 miles on the clearest days—by natural visibility, I mean the blue haze the Cherokees used to sing about that exists because of the moisture in the Smokies—and 90 miles on the haziest days, we have made great improvements in the last two decades, and visibility is continuing to improve in the park.

The new section of the Foothills Parkway between Walland and Wears Valley is one of the prettiest drives in America. If you want the best view of the highest mountains in the Eastern United States, you will drive the Foothills Parkway. Last Sunday, when my wife and I drove it on the third day, it was open; it was packed, most of it with local people taking pictures of each other because they were so astonished by the view. It was a view so magnificent it surprises even those of us who grew up driving through the Smoky Mountains. Soon this drive will attract many of the more than the 11 million visitors who come to our park each year—twice as many as any national park.

But 16 years ago, these visitors would not have had such a good view. In 2002, the year I was elected to the Senate, the National Parks Conservation Association said that the Great Smoky Mountains National Park was the most

polluted park in America. There were 3.5 million people who would visit the park in the summertime and the air was hazardous to breathe. The views were extremely limited due to pollution. Instead of the blue haze I mentioned earlier, we saw smog. The Great Smoky Mountains had become the great smoggy mountains just 16 years ago. Then a lot of people went to work. Federal clean air regulations, which I supported, required cleaner burning diesel fuels and cleaner vehicle engines, which also helped lower emissions. This especially helped the Smokies because of the large number of visitors' vehicles and because three interstates carry heavy truck traffic through nearby Knoxville, TN.

I also voted to support other Federal clean air regulations that limited emissions from smokestacks of sulfur, nitrogen, and mercury and established rules to prohibit dirty air from blowing from one State into another. I have always thought that operating a coal-fired powerplant without air pollution control equipment on it was like driving at night without the lights on. We have equipment and TVA has proved, as other utilities have, that you can burn coal in a clean way if you will simply put on pollution control equipment for mercury, nitrogen, and sulfur.

One of the biggest impacts, therefore, came in 2008, when the Tennessee Valley Authority began installing pollution control equipment on some of its coal-fired powerplants near the park. TVA has invested nearly \$6 billion to reduce air emissions. That is money out of our pockets—we ratepayers. These efforts have resulted in a 94-percent reduction in sulfur dioxide emissions and a 91-percent reduction in nitrogen oxide emissions. Nitrogen and sulfur emissions have harmful effects on human health, the environment, and visibility.

Those of us who live near the park can see the impact of TVA's actions almost immediately. Today, TVA has installed some type of emission control equipment on all of its coal-fired powerplants and continues to improve that equipment so that the air will become even cleaner.

Over the years, I met and worked with mayors in counties surrounding the park who did what they could locally to make the air cleaner; that is because one of their top priorities is clean air. The Sevierville Chamber of Commerce, when I walked in there not long ago, told me it was their top priority because tourists come to spend money in Sevierville and Pigeon Forge to see the Smokies, not to see the smog. Now ground-level ozone that creates the smog that is harmful to human health and the environment and reduces visibility has improved significantly—by 36 percent according to the Great Smoky Mountains Association. All of the counties in the region around the park meet the EPA's environmental quality standards for ozone pollution.

On the parkway, in 1944—that was the year Congress first authorized the Foothills Parkway—this is what was going on: Allied Forces were invading Normandy Beach, Franklin D. Roosevelt was President, and Bing Crosby was singing "I'll Be Seeing You." The State of Tennessee began acquiring right-of-way to the parkway and donating it to the Federal Government.

In 1960, the construction of the parkway actually started. Dwight D. Eisenhower was President. Elvis had just come home from 2 years in the Army, and American women were wearing beehive hairdos. That was 1960, when construction on this parkway began.

When I became Governor in 1979, the State had completed acquiring the right-of-way, and the State took the lead on 10 miles of the parkway between Carrs Creek and Wears Valley. Then construction halted because of environmental problems.

By the time I got to the Senate in 2002—the same time the Smokies was declared the most polluted national park—all of the parties had agreed on a plan to build bridges to complete the so-called 1.65 mile "missing link" on the parkway. Then President Bush's administration and the 2005 Federal highway bill, President Obama's administration, and Governor Bill Haslam's State administration in Tennessee all chipped in effort, time, and taxpayer money to finish the job after 50 years and \$200 million of construction.

Since it was first authorized, it has taken 75 years to build a parkway and two decades to make the air clean enough so that visitors can see the mountains for 90 miles. So if you are looking for something else to be grateful for on Thanksgiving, try being grateful for the many visionaries, park officials, road builders, engineers, scientists, editors, and political leaders who have had the foresight to make it a priority to build the Foothills Parkway and clean up the air so that we can see the mountains. It has taken 75 years, but the views are so picturesque that it has been well worth the wait.

SENATE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Mr. President, on another subject, to people who come up to me with some wonderment and ask what it is like working in the U.S. Senate, I often say: Think of Washington, DC, as a split-screen television.

Let's take the 30 days between September 4 and October 6, between the beginning of Judge Kavanaugh's hearing and his confirmation. On one side of the screen there was as much acrimony as you could ever expect to see in the U.S. Capitol—protesters, Senators upset, Judge Kavanaugh upset. It was a very difficult situation. That was on one side of the television set. But on the other side of the television set was one of the most productive 30 days we have ever had in the U.S. Senate, with 72 Senators working together—half Democrats, half Republicans—to pass landmark opioids legislation to deal