

Maybe that is still not alarming enough to get some people's attention. Perhaps the impacts on our farmers and ranchers might sway my colleagues. Let me mention something in that regard. According to this report—the same Federal report—more frequent and intense rains, combined with rising temperatures, are likely to reduce agriculture production in the Midwest to 1980 levels. Roll back the clock to the levels of production in 1980 in the Midwest—that is where we were.

I have a corn and soybean poster here. When it comes to crops that agricultural communities depend on, such as corn and soybeans, which are big in my State, farmers could see reduced yields of up to 25 percent.

Maybe some of our colleagues don't come from States with a large agricultural sector, where it is important. Perhaps an economic impact might move them to action.

Climate change could mean up to \$500 billion in economic losses every year by 2090. Let me say that again. Climate change could mean up to \$500 billion in economic losses every year by 2090. Additionally, almost 2 billion labor hours are projected to be lost by 2090 due to the impacts of extreme temperatures. That alone would cost an additional \$160 billion in lost wages.

Here is a stark statistic: Climate change could slash up to 10 percent of our gross domestic product by 2100. Let's put that into context. Ten years ago, when we fell into the great recession—worst recession since the Great Depression—we had half of the losses in gross domestic product that we are looking at from climate change that goes unchecked. According to this report, climate change could slash up to 10 percent of our gross domestic product by 2100. That is more than double the losses of the great recession.

Many of our colleagues were here during the great recession. We saw what happened. Unemployment was over 10 percent. Banks basically stopped lending. Access to capital was greatly impeded. Trade slowed down dramatically. It was a miserable time. We fought very hard to get out of it. We are now in the ninth longest running economic expansion in the history of the country, and stuff like this is not going to help extend that recovery. To refuse to act would be to willingly usher in an economic calamity twice as painful as the great recession.

The numbers and facts don't lie. The reality of climate change is scary, especially for coastal States like mine—the lowest lying State in our country. Our State is sinking instead of rising.

The facts that this report so clearly lays out affect all of us. It doesn't matter whether you are from a coastal State, like some of us, or from a landlocked State, like our Presiding Officer—if you care about public health or the environment or if you care about our economy or national security, this report says that every sector of our economy and every person living in

this country will be affected by climate change if we do nothing.

As I see it, we have a couple of options. We can take up this fight and get serious about addressing and adapting to climate change, or we can stick our heads in the sand, as some would do, ignore the facts, and do nothing, dooming our children and our grandchildren to live in a world that is less healthy, less safe, less stable, and less economically vibrant. I say, let's fight. My hope is that our colleagues will join us and not fight against one another but fight against this threat we all face.

We have one planet. President Macron from France was down the hall about 2 years ago and spoke to a joint session of Congress. There is no plan B. We have the only planet. It is the one we have been given to take care of by our Heavenly Father, and we need to take that responsibility seriously.

All right. That is the bad news. That is a lot of bad news in 10 minutes. Before I yield to my friend from Florida, I will say this: There is some good news too. The good news is, there are ways to address these challenges—the economic challenges, the agricultural challenges, the flooding challenges, the temperature challenges. There is a way to do it. Among the smart ways to do it is to reduce the emission of carbon in this country.

The good news is, we can do that by adding and creating jobs. Two hundred million people went to work in this country today—roughly 200 million. Three million people went to work in jobs where they are involved in renewable energy, energy conservation—things that help save our planet and preserve the quality of life on our planet. There are a lot more jobs we can add in that kind of work, including building vehicles that run on batteries—and we are making great progress—and vehicles that run on hydrogen and fuel cells. The only waste product from those vehicles is water. You can drink it.

There are ways to address all these threats in a way that is economically viable. We don't have to choose between all this doom and gloom and a strong economy; we can address the doom and gloom and add a lot of jobs, and we ought to do this. It is going to be a win-win. We ought to seize the day.

I thank my colleague from Florida for his patience with me here today. I don't know if I will have a chance to stand here this close with him again before he prepares to head off into the sunset. He and I were privileged to serve together in the House. He was at one time treasurer and insurance commissioner of his State, and I was treasurer of Delaware. We walked the path together for a long time, and he has been a great servant of the people of Florida for many years. I have always been proud to stand next to him, and I am especially proud today.

I am happy to yield to my friend from Florida.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, the subject the Senator from Delaware speaks of—climate change especially—affects my State of Florida, as we are ground zero with so many of the consequences of climate change—the sea level rise. I will be addressing that topic within the next couple of days. I have addressed that problem over and over, but I want to give a concluding speech on that topic.

#### HEALTHCARE

Mr. President, this afternoon, I want to give a concluding speech on the topic of healthcare. I want to talk about the importance of ensuring that all Americans—and especially my State, all Floridians—have access to critical health services through the Affordable Care Act.

When the ACA passed, it stated that an insurance company cannot deny health insurance coverage because a person had a preexisting condition. In other words, that means you cannot be denied health coverage because you have something like asthma, cancer, heart trouble, diabetes, ALS, or, in some cases, even a rash. Before the Affordable Care Act, even being a woman was considered a preexisting condition.

Nearly everyone has a preexisting condition. In Florida alone, almost 8 million people have a preexisting condition. We think of our neighbors, our friends and family members, and we thought of them when we passed the ACA. We worked very hard to give them the healthcare protections they needed.

In these past few years, I have talked to folks all over our country. In Florida, I have talked to the very folks we fought so hard to ensure they have health insurance and healthcare. Last year, for example, I spoke with a well-known community leader from Hollywood, FL—Elaine Geller. Her daughter, Megan, was diagnosed with leukemia at the age of 26. At the time she was admitted to the hospital, Megan's blood count was 4. She had water on the heart. She had pneumonia. She went through one round of chemo, and it put the cancer in remission. She was initially hospitalized in New York, where she had been working as a special-ed teacher, but she returned to Florida to receive care at the University of Miami's Comprehensive Cancer Center—one of the finest cancer centers around the country.

As the story goes, Megan's doctor told Megan and her mom, Elaine, that she needed a transplant, which required a payment of \$150,000 upfront. From January until about the end of April, Megan lived at that Comprehensive Cancer Center at the university and received multiple rounds of chemo, biopsies, and various other treatments. Do you know what her mom said to me? She said that thanks to the Affordable Care Act, as a mom, she could focus all of her energy on her daughter. She didn't have to worry about all the

bills that were piling up, and ultimately she didn't have to write a check for the transplant. That is because Megan had health insurance despite a preexisting condition, and the Affordable Care Act created a transitional program to cover eligible individuals with preexisting conditions, like Megan.

After Megan left the Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center, her cancer went into remission, but then the cancer came back. The remission only lasted 63 days. They flew to Texas, to the MD Anderson Cancer Center. Why travel across the country to get cancer treatments? Because when you are dying—when a mom is watching her daughter die, there is nothing she as a parent would not do. You can't put a price on your child's life. It would do us a lot of good if we would remember that.

Sadly, Megan had a fall and hit her head. She died at the age of 28. Her total care during that battle with cancer could have cost Elaine, her mom, \$5 million. Thanks to the ACA, because she had health insurance, Megan's part of that treatment was \$70,000. That not only saved her from going bankrupt, it also gave her more time to spend with her daughter. Anyone who has lost someone knows that every second counts. We shouldn't take things for granted.

Elaine said that her daughter would be proud to know that her story of the Affordable Care Act matters. It matters to me as their Senator, and that is why I am telling it on the floor of the Senate.

And it should matter to every one of these Senators here.

Let me give you another person that I met along the trail. I met with one of the most courageous 14-year-olds whom I have ever seen, JJ Holmes, and his family, who are from Longwood, FL.

JJ has cerebral palsy and requires a wheelchair and constant attention to get around and to be taken care of. He can only communicate with his computer vocalization device. It is just amazing, since JJ can't directly communicate except by the sparkle in his eyes. He uses his left knee on a device on the wheelchair to hit it and it goes to a computer screen, and he can type out the words and the sounds in order to give him an ability to communicate with another ordinary person.

JJ has a preexisting condition—he has cerebral palsy—and all of the efforts to repeal and undermine the ACA are undermining his access to care and his ability to live. Each attempt to repeal the ACA was another threat to his very life.

His mom told me that there is so much of a daily struggle, worry, and heartache when you have a child who is severely disabled, and the ACA finally gave that family the much needed security, and it lifted a huge burden of how in the world were they going to cope with this medical condition of their child.

I will give you another example in Florida. Earlier this year, I was joined at a local roundtable on healthcare by Elizabeth Isom from St. Petersburg. Elizabeth told me that the ACA had saved her life and allowed her to purchase insurance for the very first time. She doesn't know how she is going to be able to afford coverage if the lifetime caps of the law are reinstated and if essential health benefits are not provided as the ACA provides.

Elizabeth was a productive member of society. She was a social worker, and then she developed a sinus tumor. She went without insurance for 3 years, during which her health was constantly deteriorating and it was to the point that she thought she was dying. She had vital organ damage and reached complete disability. The mass in her sinus had extended into her skull.

After the ACA became the law of the land, she purchased insurance through healthcare.gov. She said it is the best insurance she has ever had because it covered essential health benefits like the preventative services.

So let's think about this just in these three cases that I have given. The ACA protects people like Megan with preexisting conditions from being charged more simply because of their diagnosis. It protects people like JJ from being unable to afford care because they have hit annual or lifetime limits on coverage. It protects people like Elizabeth from being denied treatment because insurers are now required to cover essential health services—services and benefits like hospitalizations and prescription drugs.

These folks are not the only ones that I have talked to about how the ACA has changed their life. The American people—not just Floridians—have been writing to us, have been calling to us, have been showing up in our town-halls, have been showing up at our roundtables, have been approaching me on the street corner, at the airport, at events all over Florida to share how important the ACA is to them. The Affordable Care Act has given people healthcare they otherwise would never have had. Over and over, they have come to me and said: We want to see a bipartisan fix—a fix to the ACA, not a repeal. Why can't you just get together and fix the ACA?

How many times have I made that plea on the floor of the Senate? And they are right. There is a lot of work to be done to bring down the cost of healthcare, to make insurance more affordable, and to increase coverage for people who still don't have it. But in the meantime, the Trump administration is doing everything in its power to undermine and undo the existing law that has helped so many so much.

We have seen an Executive order of President Trump's stating that the policy of his administration was to "seek the prompt repeal" of the ACA. We have seen rules coming out of the Trump administration cutting in half

the length of time that people had to enroll in plans on healthcare.gov, eliminating low-income subsidies, and cutting outreach and advertising for enrollment by 90 percent.

Why would you make it harder for people to sign up for health insurance if your intention wasn't to undermine the Affordable Care Act, which is exactly what the Trump administration's intention is?

We have seen the implementation of expanding short-term health plans. These are plans that are less than a year or, as they really are designed, junk plans, and that is just what they are. They don't offer essential health benefits. They offer extremely limited coverage so that people don't have the coverage and they don't have the coverage of preexisting conditions. They remove protections for people with those preexisting conditions. They do not cover that list of 10 or 12 things called essential health benefits, like maternity care and prescription drug costs.

We have seen multiple Republican repeal-and-replace bills that have come before the House and before this Senate. We have seen this Trump administration claim that they do care about those with preexisting conditions. Just last month President Trump tweeted that "Republicans will protect people with preexisting conditions far better than the Dems!" But that is not what they are doing, nor is that what they have done.

Well, Mr. President, if that is the case, then why is your administration supporting the lawsuit *Texas vs. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services*—that very lawsuit that was brought forward by Republican attorneys general, including Florida's attorney general, urging a Federal court to strike down preexisting conditions and patient protections as unconstitutional, and it would cause a chaos in our healthcare system.

You are not protecting 133 million Americans with preexisting conditions. No, what you are doing is eliminating their healthcare, and that includes 17 million children.

The administration should better look at their situation and do the opposite of what they have been doing. I ask the American people to demand that the Trump administration stop undermining the ACA, get to work as an administration, do its job, and implement all parts of the existing law, the Affordable Care Act. We should be looking for ways to help people like Elaine, JJ, Megan, and Elizabeth. We should be looking for ways to help them get through the tough times. We should be working together in a bipartisan way to make the ACA work better, not try to kill it.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CRUZ). The Senator from Hawaii.

NOMINATION OF THOMAS FARR

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. President, I thank my friend, the Senator from Florida,