

prevent irreversible damage. In the case of acid rain, research has been offered as a substitute for much-needed action. This policy has produced more bodies of water that cannot sustain life, more trees that are dying, and more people who find it hard to breathe.

The policy has produced more studies, not any meaningful change in policy. I hope these two days of hearings will help persuade the administration—

And the people of the country—

that inaction has its own costs, almost invariably higher than the cost of action.

George Mitchell was right. The cost of inaction is invariably higher than the cost of action.

George concluded by saying:

I represent a State that already has been affected by acid deposition. I want to do all I can to keep Maine, the rest of our country, and our planet from facing potentially more dramatic environmental damage from global warming. The best way to avoid these undesirable outcomes is to begin taking action now to prevent further damage rather than spending twice as much time and later money repairing damage.

George Mitchell was right in 1986. Tragically, he is even more right today because we did not heed his call. We did not take action. We have avoided action.

I don't want to be the generation that our children and grandchildren look back on and say: Where were you and what did you do when the climate was deteriorating, when the glaciers were melting, when the ice sheets were melting, when the sea level was rising, when the storms were increasing in intensity, when the wildfires were burning our States? What did you do, Senator?

I, for one, want the answer to be "I took action." The answer should be "we took action."

Today, this is a challenge even greater—significantly greater—than it was in 1986, but the very fact that people like Quentin Burdick, George Mitchell, John Chafee, Bob Stafford, and David Durenberger saw the future and predicted it so succinctly and profoundly should spur us to the type of action that is necessary to meet, confront, and overcome this most serious of challenges before us.

Thank you.

I yield to my colleague from Rhode Island.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. I will close out this colloquy by pointing out that the Republicans of 2007, 2008, and 2009 who were working on climate legislation before the Citizens United decision have left or died or gone to ground. It is sad to see. These Republicans of 1986, a third of a century ago, would be shocked at what has become of their party. So, today, we, their successors in five of these six States, gathered on the floor to honor their memory, to mourn what has become in the intervening years of the Republican Party, and to grieve for what this body has lost.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

S. RES. 70

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, on February 13 the Rules Committee approved S. Res. 70, which authorizes funding for the Senate's committees from March 1, 2019, through February 28, 2021. For this 24-month period, the 18 committees covered by this resolution are authorized to spend up to \$214,055,860. This is a small increase over the funding authorized by the current committee funding resolution, S. Res. 62. For the information of my colleagues, committee funding authorized by S. Res. 70 remains 13 percent below levels from a decade ago.

Committees are the lifeblood of the legislative process. It is in our committees that policy is created and programs and agencies are overseen. Our committees are where the Senate first exercises its advice and consent function over the executive branch's nominees. Well-functioning committees are crucial to the Senate's role as a separate but equal branch of the government.

The resolution before the Senate is the result of a bipartisan process Senator KLOBUCHAR, the Rules Committee's ranking member, and I undertook this year to solicit more input from committee chairmen and ranking members. The resolution reflects the needs identified by our colleagues and will help ensure our committees are able to carry out their responsibilities and duties.

I would like to thank Fitz Elder and Rachelle Schroeder from my committee staff; Lizzy Peluso and Lindsey Kerr from Senator KLOBUCHAR's committee staff; and Cindy Quallie, the Rules Committee's chief clerk. Additionally, I would like to thank Ileana Garcia and Ted Ruckner from the Disbursing Office and John Henderson from the Office of Legislative Counsel. I greatly appreciate their hard work in developing this resolution.

AUTHORIZING EXPENDITURES BY COMMITTEES OF THE SENATE FOR PERIODS MARCH 1, 2019 THROUGH SEPTEMBER 30, 2019, OCTOBER 1, 2019 THROUGH SEPTEMBER 30, 2020, AND OCTOBER 1, 2020 THROUGH FEBRUARY 28, 2021

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, as if in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 25, S. Res. 70.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The assistant bill clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 70) authorizing expenditures by committees of the Senate for the periods March 1, 2019 through September 30, 2019, October 1, 2019 through September 30, 2020, and October 1, 2020 through February 28, 2021.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. BLUNT. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 70) was agreed to.

(The resolution is printed in the RECORD of February 13, 2019, under "Submitted Resolutions.")

#### DIRECTING THE SECRETARY OF THE SENATE TO MAKE CORRECTION IN THE ENROLLMENT OF THE BILL S. 47

Mr. BLUNT. Continuing as if in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H. Con. Res. 21.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the concurrent resolution by title.

The assistant bill clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 21) directing the Secretary of the Senate to make a correction in the enrollment of the bill S. 47.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the concurrent resolution.

Mr. BLUNT. I ask unanimous consent that the concurrent resolution be agreed to and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 21) was agreed to.

(The concurrent resolution is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

Mr. BLUNT. Thank you, Mr. President.

One of those items was an enrolling correction and the other was funding for committees. Our committees are beginning to do their work, and this makes it, obviously, appropriate and possible for them to do that.

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

##### THE GREEN NEW DEAL

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I just listened to the other debate on the floor, and it reminded me of the fact that our friends on the other side of the aisle introduced a resolution calling on the Federal Government to adopt what they call the Green New Deal.

From my point of view, the legislation is pretty far outside the mainstream in what it is proposing and how it is proposing the problems we should be debating. I don't have any problem with that. Those problems should be solved, and even though it seems pretty far outside the mainstream of thought, at least 12 of our colleagues in the Senate have cosponsored it. The majority leader thought it would be fair if we had that idea out there—it is

getting a lot of public attention—to have a chance to debate this legislation and vote on it in the Senate.

The Democrats have called it a sham. They said: Why should we have debate on this piece of legislation? Why would we want to vote on this piece of legislation?

Now, it is not cosponsored by a majority of the Members of the Senate, but it is cosponsored by over 25 percent of the Democrats in the Senate, and one would think that if 25 percent of their conference is sponsoring a bill, they would be glad to come to the floor and talk about that bill and talk about what it does.

So let's talk for just a couple of minutes about what that bill actually says. One of the things that it does is that it calls for the United States to use 100 percent renewable energy by 2030. That is just a little more than 10 years from now. It says, basically, that we want to have a zero-carbon-dioxide emissions by then.

I know there was some discussion in the rolling out of this bill that that would mean that ground transportation and air transportation would either be eliminated or minimized—at least the way we travel right now would be. At some point in the future that may happen, but it is highly unlikely it is going to happen in the next 10 years, which is what the bill calls for. Maybe that is why they don't want to debate it. Even President Obama's former science adviser says that this is not feasible. Harvard University professor John Holdren was quoted in the New York Times saying: "As a technologist studying this problem for 50 years, I don't think we can do it."

So that is a pretty good source who indicates that what we are talking about here can't happen. So that big headline goal appears to be impossible, but we probably could debate it anyway. Let's hear from the other side, particularly the 12 cosponsors, to say why it is possible, why we should be able to do that, and why that is in the legislation that they filed.

The rest of the legislation goes really beyond things that don't relate to the environment. There is a laundry list of policies that appear to be popular right now in the so-called progressive discussion. One is a single-payer health system and the other is a Federal job guarantee. The talking points suggested that that would be a Federal job guarantee for people who can't work or aren't willing to work. Of course, that was so controversial that immediately people began to say: Well, maybe that is something that the Republicans snuck into our talking points. But it turned out that wasn't true.

There is a provision calling for "repairing the historic oppression of . . . youth." That is sort of what this whole Green New Deal seems to focus on—accepting responsibility in a debate for things that really don't make the kind of sense one would want them to make as you move toward legislation. They

don't really say what the "historic oppression of youth" was. Probably that is not related to the economy or the environment or the greenness of the Green New Deal.

But even if we agree that these ideas are good ideas, the other question is this: How much is it going to cost?

The American Action Forum looked at the biggest parts of the legislation, and they estimated that the total would run anywhere from \$51 trillion to \$94 trillion over 10 years. To put this in perspective, the Congress right now appropriates about \$1.5 trillion a year. We spend more than that through programs that are in place like Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid, but we appropriate \$1.5 trillion a year. If the estimates of the Green New Deal are right, that would suddenly become \$5 trillion to \$9 trillion a year. That is a pretty good multiplier of \$1.5 trillion a year—six times, in fact, of what we are spending now—at the \$9 trillion level. That works out to be about \$65,000 per family per year. That would probably be more government than we could afford, but that is how it works out.

There is nothing that talks about how families are supposed to come up with their share of the bill.

While some of the ideas in the Green New Deal—Medicare for all or a job for everybody, guaranteed by the government—sound like good ideas, I don't think they are going to stand the test of the debate. I think that is one of the reasons that maybe the other side doesn't want to have the debate.

Some talk about: Well, maybe we will all vote present or we will not vote at all.

I think it is pretty hard to defend what you are out there talking about when you are not willing to come to the floor and talk about it. That is a debate we are going to have. I suspect we are going to have it sometime this month, and I look forward to engaging in that debate.

This week, we are having another debate on nominees. Right now, the debate is on the nominee for the Administrator of the EPA. There has been some discussion of the environment in the debate on the Administrator of the EPA. Next, we are going to go to someone to serve on the TVA commission. This is somebody who has been voted out of committee two times in bipartisan voice votes and never allowed to have a vote in the Senate.

I will remind my colleagues again that under President Reagan, the average time in days from when a person was voted out of committee—and remember, as all of us on the floor would know, the committee is where questions are asked, and the background check has been completed. That may take a substantial amount of time, depending on the nominee and how complicated their information is—sometimes less time, sometimes more. That has all happened in the committee.

Under President Reagan, the average number of days from the time a person

was voted out of committee until they were voted on, on the floor was 5. The total number of times the majority had to file cloture to get that vote was less than a handful in the entire first 2 years.

For President Trump, the average number of days for a nominee to be voted on is 55, and the majority leader had to file cloture 128 times even to get a vote. We are going through some of those votes this week. The 30 hours of debate almost never includes debate about the nominee who is using up floor time that could be used for debating how we spend our money, how we defend our country, or what our foreign policy oversight responsibilities are going to be.

We are going to continue to look at the options and continue to talk to our friends on the other side about how 60 Senators can work together to change the rules in a way that they would be changed going forward to get the rules back more to the days of Ronald Reagan, George Herbert Walker Bush, Bill Clinton, and all of their predecessors, where nominees were never used as a way to use up time. Nominees were never held hostage so that other legislation or debate couldn't occur.

We are working hard to find 60 of us who want to return to a time when legislative priorities in the Senate still had the protections of the minority that have always been there, but those protections couldn't be used to the disadvantage of people who have stepped up and are willing to serve and are often voted out of committee on a bipartisan basis, only to be held up on the floor.

I look forward to the debate on the Green New Deal. I look forward to the other debates we are going to have on the floor of the Senate this year.

For the people who are willing to serve, who have been reported out of committee, who have been thoroughly questioned and investigated but can't get that vote and get to work, that is not what we want to do. That is not who we should want to be. I hope we can work together to find a way to change that rule as well.

I see my good friend, the Senator from Hawaii, is here. We are working on some things together right now that we would like to get to the floor and have those bills voted on later.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COTTON). The Senator from Hawaii.

#### CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. SCHATZ. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Missouri. I thank him for his leadership and levelheadedness.

As he is on his way out, I will say that I think the current way we deal with nominees is not tenable. I imagine a scenario where we have a Democratic President, and it will take even longer than it is currently taking to confirm nominees. I think there are a number of us on both sides of the aisle who are open to modifying the way we operate.