

and Health Review Commission, and other pending nominations.

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

The Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 27, 2019, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a hearing entitled “Perspective on protecting the electric grid from an electromagnetic pulse or geomagnetic disturbance.”

COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

The Committee on Indian Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 27, 2019, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a hearing entitled “The 45th anniversary of the Native American Programs Act and the establishment of the Administration for Native Americans.”

COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 27, 2019, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a hearing entitled “Made in China 2025 and the Future of America Industry.”

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS’ AFFAIRS

The Committee on Veterans’ Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 27, 2019, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON CYBERSECURITY

The Subcommittee on Cybersecurity of the Committee on Armed Services is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 27, 2019, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a hearing.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON PERSONNEL

The Subcommittee on Personnel of the Committee on Armed Services is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 27, 2019, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a hearing.

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that my intern, Cyrus Johnson, be granted privileges of the floor for the balance of the day.

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

AMERICAN HEART MONTH AND NATIONAL WEAR RED DAY

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Res. 83, submitted earlier today.

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

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 83) designating February 2019 as “American Heart Month” and February 1, 2019, as “National Wear Red Day.”

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

Mr. McCONNELL. I further ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions 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 resolution (S. Res. 83) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today’s RECORD under “Submitted Resolutions.”)

CELEBRATING BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Res. 84, submitted earlier today.

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

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 84) celebrating Black History Month.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to proceeding to the measure?

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

Mr. McCONNELL. I further ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions 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 resolution (S. Res. 84) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today’s RECORD under “Submitted Resolutions.”)

ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2019

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 10 a.m., Thursday, February 28; further, that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, morning business be closed, and the Senate proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the Wheeler nomination under the previous order.

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

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the

previous order, following the remarks of our Democratic colleagues.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, I am here today to talk about climate change and about our climate crisis.

Climate change is an existential threat to our country and the planet. We know this because the world’s leading scientists—the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change—just made that very warning last year. The U.N. report told us that we have very limited time until we are past the point of no return and the most catastrophic impacts of climate change are irreversible. Our own Federal scientists across 13 Agencies also just warned in the “National Climate Assessment” that the impacts of climate change are not in the future but are happening in our communities right now. Here is what all 13 Federal Agencies said: “Our efforts do not yet approach the scale necessary to avoid substantial damages to the economy, environment, and human health.”

These are Earth-shattering reports about the state of our Earth. These are the doomsday reports about what will happen if we do not take bold action.

The consequences of climate change will be dire: a tenfold increase in ice-free summers in the Arctic, a 99-percent loss of coral reefs, and a doubling of species lost around the world. In worst-case scenarios in the Northeast, by the end of the century, both the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Logan Airport will be underwater. Climate emissions are not slowing down. In 2018, greenhouse gas emissions in the United States increased by 2.8 percent. We have a denier-in-chief in the White House.

This week, Republicans in the Senate are poised to confirm a coal lobbyist to be the head of the Environmental Protection Agency. It is unbelievable that we will confirm a coal lobbyist to be the head of our environment in our country. Andrew Wheeler’s denial of the climate crisis should in and of itself be disqualifying. His record as a coal lobbyist should be disqualifying.

We should come together and reject Andrew Wheeler as the next head of the Environmental Protection Agency. The impact of climate change on ordinary families, on their health, on our Nation, on our security, and on our future is too urgent.

The United Nations tells us that climate change is an existential threat to the planet. It is the national security, health, economic, and moral issue of our time—of all time. We have a responsibility to act. We must be bold. We must be ambitious. That is why I have introduced the Green New Deal resolution, because it lays out a serious, bold, and aspirational set of goals

that meet the scale of the threat. It is a set of principles and not prescriptions. It challenges this country to find solutions to this problem.

The Green New Deal is a climate plan about net-zero emissions. The Republican climate plan is in zero existence. They don't have a climate plan. Republicans don't like the Green New Deal because they don't like a functional government. Republicans don't like the Green New Deal because they don't like climate science. Republicans don't like the Green New Deal because their allies—the oil companies, the coal companies, and the corporate polluters—don't like wind power or solar power or all-electric vehicles or the millions of blue-collar jobs they can create. We can save all of creation by engaging in massive blue-collar job creation in this country. Republicans don't like the Green New Deal because clean energy is a direct threat to the interests and the bottom line of Big Oil and King Coal.

The Green New Deal isn't just a socialist manifesto. It isn't pie in the sky. It isn't a takeover. It isn't any of the misinformation and distortions that Republicans and their fossil fuel allies have called it. The Green New Deal isn't, as the Republican leader called it this morning, "the far left's Santa Claus wish list dressed up to look like serious policy." If it were, then Republicans in this Chamber wouldn't care enough about it to spend their entire morning remarks on it, and the majority leader wouldn't be threatening to bring it to the floor without any hearings, without any expert testimony, without any amendments, and without any science.

Let's have the debate. Let's have the hearings. Let's bring in all the experts. Let's let the U.N. testify. Let's let our own scientists and every one of the Federal Agencies in America testify. Let's bring in all of the corporate executives right now on wind, solar, all-electric vehicles, and storage batteries in our society. Bring them in. Let's hear the stories. Instead, what we have is just an attempt to short-circuit the debate.

They may not believe climate change is an existential threat to human kind, but they are smart enough to know that the bold goals of the Green New Deal are an existential threat to the Koch brothers and all of their other corporate polluter and fossil fuel allies.

Let me just read some of what is in the Green New Deal that Republicans are opposed to: securing for all people of the United States for generations to come clean air and water, climate and community resiliency, healthy food, access to nature, and a sustainable environment.

Are Republicans opposed to access to nature? That is in the resolution. Are Republicans opposed to clean air and water? That is in the resolution too. Do you know what is not in the resolution? Ending airline travel. Do you know what is not in the resolution? No more cows.

Do you know what is not in the resolution? A prohibition on nuclear energy or carbon capture and sequestration. The Green New Deal resolution is bold, and it is aspirational in its principles, but it is not prescriptive in its policies.

Let's look at some of what is actually in this resolution: to create millions of good, high-wage jobs—I guess Republicans don't believe in that; to invest in the infrastructure and industry of the United States to sustainably meet the challenge of the 21st century—I guess Republicans don't believe in that; guaranteeing universal access to clean water, supporting family farming, cleaning up existing hazardous waste and abandoned sites, ensuring economic development and sustainability on those sites—I guess Republicans don't believe in those either. Those are all part of the Green New Deal and climate solutions.

We already know that Big Oil and King Coal and other fossil fuel companies don't want to compete with clean energy because that is a direct threat to their business plan.

Clean energy makes the air we breathe cleaner, it saves consumers money, it makes us safer, and it creates jobs.

In his remarks, the Republican leader called the Green New Deal "foolish and dangerous." With all due respect to the leader and my Republican colleagues, the only foolish and dangerous thing about the Green New Deal is to ignore the \$400 billion in damage to our country over the last 2 years from supercharged storms and wildfires all over California and all over the West.

To ignore the tens of trillions of dollars in damages we will see from climate change in the United States by 2100 is something that ultimately, from my perspective, is foolish and dangerous. An ounce of prevention is better than a pound of cure. Ignoring what is happening, ignoring the warnings from all of the top scientists in the world and in the United States and continuing on the same pathway—that is foolish, that is dangerous, and that is going to cost us tens of trillions of dollars in damages that would have been otherwise avoided if we unleashed a technology revolution in our country that would create millions of new jobs.

It is also dangerous to send our men and women in the military overseas to protect tankers of oil coming from the Middle East to the United States. We are still bringing in oil from Saudi Arabia. We are still bringing in oil from other countries in the Middle East. What if we could dramatically increase the fuel economy in the vehicles we drive? What if we could accelerate the pace to use all-electric vehicles? Wouldn't it be great if we could say that the day arrived when we never have to see another tanker of oil from the Middle East coming into our country? Would that not make us safer? Would that not give us better control of our own foreign policy and where we

send young men and women in uniform? I think it would.

I think it would be foolish and dangerous not to take that pathway. The superstorms, the wildfires, the rising seas, and the other extreme weather events—the impacts of climate change if we do not act boldly to stop it—that isn't just dangerous; that is an existential threat. That is what the world's scientists have called it.

The Green New Deal is dangerous for the status quo of doing nothing on climate change. It is dangerous for the Koch brothers and those who are used to killing off every climate debate before it gets a chance to start. It is dangerous for those who want us to limp into a frightening future with no plan and no protections in place. It is dangerous for those who benefit from the continued devaluation of our workers, the historic oppression of vulnerable communities, and from the continued destruction of the environment. Those are the ones who would think the Green New Deal is dangerous.

We want to support working families and support a safe climate future where all communities are protected. We welcome a debate on proposals for how to get there, but the science is clear as to where we need to end up.

The Republicans may think that the Green New Deal is just a resolution, but it is a revolution. It is a revolution. Young people want a green energy revolution in our country. They know we can do this. They know that all of these new technologies can be invented; all of these new technologies can be deployed.

It is not just a resolution; it is a revolution. All across this country, when the Republicans have refused to bring their climate plan out there because theirs is a party of science denial—the President is the "Denier in Chief" on climate science—then we are going to allow this problem to worsen and worsen and worsen.

Do you know who should know best? Donald Trump, because within 30 years, according to the science, Mar-a-Lago is going to become Mar-a-Lagoon. It is right on the coast. It has already begun to happen. It is just going to continue.

The President might be able to protect his property, but we are going to lose tens of trillions of dollars for the properties of other Americans because he decided that he was going to deny the warning that the scientists have presented to us.

When I was a boy, lying on the rug, looking at President Kennedy on the television, he challenged our country to send a mission to the Moon and to return that mission safely to the United States within 10 years.

When he gave that speech at Rice University, he made very clear in the speech that we would have to invent new metal alloys that did not exist. We would have to invent new transmission systems that did not exist, that we would have to return that mission safely from the Moon through heat half the

intensity of the Sun. We would have to complete it within 10 years, and we would have to do it not because it was easy but because it was hard. We had to be bold.

Because the challenge from the Soviet Union was so great, the United States did not have an option. Failure was not an option, and we completed that mission.

Well, the same thing is true here for a Green New Deal. Failure is not an option. The consequences will be catastrophic for our planet and for the United States of America, and the solution is to unleash this green energy job-creation engine. We now have 350,000 solar and wind workers in the United States. It is up from almost nothing in 2008. It has already happened over 10 years.

We had only 1,000 megawatts of solar in our country in 2008. We now have 62,000 megawatts of solar.

We had only 25,000 megawatts of wind. We now have 98,000 megawatts of wind.

We had only 2,000 all-electric vehicles in our country in 2008. We now have a million, and between Tesla and all of the other companies, they are going to sell 500,000 just this year in our country. They have invented new metals. They have invented new battery systems. They have invented new propulsion systems in order to solve those problems, but we still have a long way to go.

It is imperative that we put the tax breaks for wind and solar, for all electric vehicles, for batteries on the books and make them permanent because this problem is going to be solved only if we can convince the smartest young people in our country that all of the incentives, all of the policies are there and that their country has their back and wants them to solve the problem in the same way that our whole country had the back of NASA in the 1960s. If we do that, we will be successful. There is no question about it in my mind.

I am a technological optimist, and I hate the pessimism of the other side. I hate this “can’t do” mentality that they have, especially given what has happened in the last 10 years in electric vehicles and wind, solar, and storage technology breakthroughs. It is just really sad to hear this.

I think, ultimately, something is rising up across this country. Young people, especially, know it is time for the revolution. They know it is time to close the door on this era where all we do is indiscriminately use the atmosphere as a sewer for all of this carbon and all of these greenhouse gases.

I am very confident that one way or another this body will start to act or it is going to become one of the top two or three election issues in 2020 because this generation knows that the planet is running a fever. There are no emergency rooms on planets, and it is going to take action in this body in order to put the policies in place, in order to preserve this planet and hand it on better than we found it.

The challenge is great. The Green New Deal sets the framework for laying out how serious the problem is and how bold the action has to be to deal with that serious problem for our planet.

If we do it right, I think future generations will look back on ours in the same way we now look back on President Kennedy and that generation, and they will know that they discharged their historic responsibility to our country and to the planet.

With that, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

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

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

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. President, in many ways, Andrew Wheeler is a perfect example of a Cabinet appointment in the Trump era—conflicted, unethical, and hostile to the mission of the Agency he was nominated to lead.

He shouldn’t have been confirmed to this position as Deputy Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, the EPA, and he certainly shouldn’t be confirmed to lead the Agency on a permanent basis.

Prior to his service at EPA, Mr. Wheeler spent 8 years lobbying for many of the special interests that he is targeted or charged with regulating. For example, in his work for Murray Energy, whose president, Robert Murray, was among the largest donors to Donald Trump’s 2016 campaign, Mr. Wheeler worked to kill a rule that would have prevented coal companies from dumping mining waste into American streams and waterways.

As a lobbyist for Murray Energy, Mr. Wheeler also fought tooth and nail against President Obama’s Clean Power Plan, a forward-looking initiative that would have substantially reduced carbon emissions from power generation.

Mr. Wheeler’s client, Robert Murray, was present front and center as former EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt signed an Executive order to begin the process of dismantling the Clean Power Plan. I don’t think that was a coincidence.

After Mr. Wheeler’s confirmation as the EPA’s Deputy Administrator, he assured Bloomberg News in June 2018: “If I lobbied on something, I don’t think it’s appropriate for me to participate [in policymaking].”

Of course, he was lobbying on a lot of things for years. In fact, Mr. Wheeler participated in meetings with three former clients with interests before the EPA. Holding these meetings with former clients is a clear conflict of interest and ethical lapse. Andrew Wheeler fits right in with Donald Trump’s version of “draining the swamp,”

which is more like “come on in, the water’s fine.”

We have already had one EPA Administrator, Scott Pruitt, resign in disgrace over ethical lapses and potentially illegal behavior in office. We don’t need another.

Mr. Wheeler’s work at the EPA is also consistent with the hostility of Trump Cabinet officials to the core mission of the Department or the Agency that they are appointed to lead.

The EPA is the primary Agency charged with safeguarding the environment and protecting public health from dangerous and toxic chemicals. At its core, the EPA is tasked with making sure we have safe air to breathe and clean water to drink.

Yet, during his time as Deputy Administrator, Mr. Wheeler has championed a deregulatory agenda that fundamentally undermines the EPA’s core mission. Under Mr. Wheeler’s leadership, the EPA has proposed undermining the legal authority of the mercury and air toxics standard to reduce emissions of mercury and other toxic air emissions from coal and oil burning powerplants.

According to the Union of Concerned Scientists, mercury exposure can damage the nervous, digestive, and immune systems and is a serious threat to child development. The EPA’s current efforts to reverse these emission standards, in place since 2012, come after utilities across the country had already invested resources in reducing mercury emissions by 90 percent.

Under Mr. Wheeler’s leadership, the Trump administration has also proposed a dramatic weakening of fuel economy and greenhouse gas emissions standards for cars. Their proposed rule would increase air pollution from vehicles and would result in Hawaii families ending up paying thousands more dollars for gasoline to fill less efficient cars. Through his opposition to the Clean Power Plan and his efforts to repeal it at the EPA, Mr. Wheeler serves as a primary architect of the Trump administration’s assault on climate science and their refusal to act decisively against climate change. This assault can also be seen in a new proposed rule from the EPA that would exclude rigorous, peer-reviewed scientific studies under the guise of promoting scientific transparency.

At first glance, the rule sounds like something everyone should support, but like so many initiatives proposed by this administration, the rule’s true intent is much more sinister.

Insisting that policymaking rely only on studies that make all of their data public would exclude studies that rely on confidential medical information that by law cannot be made public. Limiting the factual basis on which the EPA can make decisions in this manner would have a catastrophic impact on public health.

If this rule had been in effect in 1993, the “Six Cities” study by the Harvard

School of Public Health would never have transformed the way we regulate air pollution in this country. The study showed that Americans living in cities with more air pollution have shorter lifespans than Americans living in cities with less air pollution.

Using confidential medical information, the study conclusively demonstrated that fine particulate matter that is smaller than 2.5 microns is exceptionally deadly to human beings. These findings, which have been backed up in subsequent studies, provide the basis for cost-benefit analyses done by EPA for future rules regulating air pollution. Undermining this kind of evidence-based policymaking would give industry the green light to pollute with fewer consequences.

This proposed rule is consistent with an administration-wide effort to promote ignorance in the face of the real threat climate change poses to national security, public health, and public safety.

Climate change is an issue where ignorance is not bliss. Ignorance is dangerous. The President's own top security officials agree. Director of National Intelligence Dan Coats, for example, issued a new worldwide threat that concluded that "climate hazards" like extreme weather, wildfires, droughts, and acidifying oceans are "threatening infrastructure, health and water and food security."

In 2017, then-Secretary of Defense James Mattis told the Senate Armed Services Committee that "climate change is impacting stability in areas of the world where our troops are operating." He went on to say that "climate change is a challenge that requires a broader whole-of-government government response."

Instead of accepting the conclusions of his top national security officials, Donald Trump is following the recommendation of William Happer, a notorious climate denier and now a Senior Director on the NSC, to establish a new Presidential Committee on Climate Security.

Dr. Happer is particularly notorious for his assertion that "the demonization of carbon dioxide is just like the demonization of the poor Jews under Hitler. Carbon dioxide is actually a benefit to the world, and so are the Jews."

Anyone who makes this kind of outrageous analogy should not be entrusted to lead anything on climate security, in my view.

No one should doubt that the President and Dr. Happer have a preordained outcome in mind. They want to legitimize ignorance and denial of climate change and abandon tens of millions of Americans to the disastrous impacts of climate change in the coming decades.

I repeat, with climate change, ignorance is not bliss. It is dangerous. It is dangerous for a State like Hawaii that would be the hardest hit by the impact of climate change. With extreme weather, ocean acidification, coral

bleaching, and rising seas, climate change poses an existential threat to our State. It is one of the reasons Hawaii has implemented some of the most ambitious and aggressive policies to combat climate change in the country.

Hawaii was the first State to separately ratify the Paris climate agreement and has set an ambitious goal of becoming carbon neutral and generating 100 percent of our power from renewable sources by 2045. Hawaii's ambitious effort to confront climate change and the success we have already seen in moving toward our goals demonstrate that we can embrace similarly ambitious policies at the national level.

It is one of the reasons I have signed on as a cosponsor of the Green New Deal—an aspirational effort to transform our economy to combat climate change.

In the weeks since the plan was introduced, we have endured all kinds of mocking outrage from people who would rather stick their heads in the sand as science and fact deniers. They paint the Green New Deal as something scary and dangerous for the country. What is really scary and dangerous are people like them who deny that climate change is real and refuse to do anything about it in their steadfast support and alliance with the fossil fuel industry. History will not be kind to them.

Rejecting the nomination of Andrew Wheeler to serve as Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, we can take one step forward in the fight against dangerous ignorance.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

MR. MERKLEY. Mr. President, Henry David Thoreau once said: "What use is a home if you don't have a tolerable planet to put it on?"

We might just expand that question to say what use is anything if we destroy our planet because it is the only one we have. There is no planet B, no rescuing by going to some horrific other planet nearby. We have the gem, we have the treasure, and we have the responsibility to make sure we don't destroy it.

Here we are. Within a single human lifetime, we have increased the percent of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere by a dramatic amount—about 30 percent in my lifetime and more if you are older—and that chemistry change is really unseen in geological history on this planet, such a rapid change with rapid, deep growth.

That is why we are coming to the floor to keep talking about this issue, reach across the aisle, reach across the country, and find partners to say this isn't a blue or red issue. This isn't a city or rural issue. It affects us all, and we need to all work together to respond. As we do so, we need America to lead the world in responding.

Senator CARPER's resolution says a couple simple things. It says we recognize that we have a very warming cli-

mate on Earth. It says we recognize that human activity burning fossil fuel has consequences, and it calls on us to act. There we are. It is time to confront this enormous threat to our beautiful blue-green home in the middle of the cosmos.

There are some who say: That is so scary, so intimidating, so threatening. I just can't open my eyes or ears to hear that information. I have to pretend it is not real.

We are here in the Senate. We are here where we don't have the privilege of covering our eyes, our ears, pretending it is not happening. We have the responsibility to face this when others shy away and act.

There are others who say: You know, we just can't be sure exactly what is happening so let's wait another 10 or 20 years because we can't measure it as precisely as we want. It is like saying: Oh, cancer is ravaging my body, but I am not going to take any medicine because I am not sure if it has affected 15 percent or 16 percent of my cells. Well, you know you have cancer, and you know you need to act.

So there we are. Let us not let our heads be buried in the tar sands. Climate chaos is real. It is ravaging our planet. It is because of human activity, and we do have the responsibility to respond.

The year 2018 was one of the four hottest years on record. Nine out of the ten of the hottest years on record occurred since the year 2000. If we are looking at this chart, we don't see the Earth becoming any cooler. We see the Earth becoming a lot warmer. Four of the hottest years on record, 2018, 2017, 2016, and 2015—that was the last 4 years having been the 4 hottest years on record. The odds of that happening by accident is essentially none.

We have some very serious scientific heft weighing in. In October, the United Nations climate panel said we must act dramatically within this next decade. A month later, on Black Friday, we had the release of the "Fourth National Climate Assessment"—the Trump administration's "Fourth National Climate Assessment"—and it concluded that "Earth's climate is now changing faster than at any point in the history of modern civilization, primarily as a result of human activities."

There was a report from the Global Carbon Project that which found that global carbon emissions are going up. They went up 0.7 percent in 2018, hitting a record breaking 37.1 metric tons around the world. That is human activity putting out carbon dioxide that acts as a blanket on the planet. This isn't some new thought.

We go back to 1959. We had an eminent scientist who became better known for his work in the nuclear world, but he was asked to address the 100th anniversary of the petroleum industry. At that speech in 1959, he said: The energy you have unleashed and harnessed can do dramatic things to

change the world, but you have a couple of challenges. One challenge is that there isn't an infinite amount of petroleum in the ground. Another challenge is it creates carbon dioxide. It doesn't look like a pollutant because you can't see it and you can't smell it, but in fact, it traps heat. I think he framed it more scientifically, that it traps infrared energy.

He said that is going to be a problem, and, of course, we are seeing that problem all the time now. You don't need these scientific reports out of a global panel or a fourth assessment from the administration to tell us what is going on because we see the facts on the ground.

In my home State of Oregon, you can't move around the State without seeing the impact. In Eastern Oregon, you have the warmer winter. It is not killing the pine beetles. So the pine beetles are killing the trees. More pine beetles and less trees is not a good thing.

If you are over on the coast, the oyster men will tell you they had a big crisis in 2008 and 2009 because all of the baby oysters were dying, not because of a bacteria but because the acidity in the Pacific Ocean has gone up. How is that related? Because carbon dioxide is absorbed by the ocean and becomes carbonic acid. We burn so much carbon dioxide that we changed the acidity of the ocean. Can you imagine that is possible? It seems impossible, but it speaks to how much carbon dioxide we released within a few decades of human civilization on this planet.

You can keep going on with this story around Oregon. Our kelp beds are disappearing. They provide protection for all kinds of fish species. The kelp are dying because the blue sea urchins are eating them. The blue sea urchins are expanding rapidly because the starfish are dying because the ocean got too warm for them. It is one story after another. There is less irrigation water, less snowpack, warmer streams, and harsher conditions for trout and salmon all within the State of Oregon, and there are similar stories throughout our Nation.

Perhaps the most destructive factor, though, has been the increased number of forest fires. There are bigger fires, hotter fires, and a longer fire season. They are not just ravaging our forests but producing smoke that has a huge impact on our towns. We take a lot of pride in our wine in Oregon, and a lot of our grapes had smoke taint and weren't usable this last year.

We have towns where furniture salesmen said they couldn't sell the furniture because it had the lingering smell of smoke.

It had an impact on the entertainment world. The Shakespeare Festival had to shut down and partially move inside to smaller venues, which is having a huge impact on their finances and a huge impact on the tourism attraction.

This stuff is real. It is why we should all be here, Democrats and Repub-

licans, talking about the challenge and saying: What higher calling is there in our life than to come together to discuss this honestly and to work together to find solutions?

This isn't something where we can just say that the next generation can deal with it because the effects are cumulative. They build up. They become worse. It is a lot worse now than it was 10 years ago, and 10 years from now, it will be more so.

There is no easy, fast way to strip the carbon dioxide back out of the air. We can work at it, but it is not easy. We can plant more trees, yes, but, meanwhile, those hotter fires are killing more trees. Those pine beetles are killing more trees. In other words, it is urgent. The time to act is now.

In 1988 George H. W. Bush ran for President as an environmentalist. He announced he was going to take on global warming. His opponent, the Democrat, ran on the coal industry. That is not the same partisan alliance as you might hear today. George H. W. Bush said: "Our land, water and soil support a remarkable range of human activities, but they can only take so much and we must remember to treat them not as a given but as a gift."

Those words should echo in this Chamber. We have other words in this Chamber that seem to not address all of the facts that are right in front of us. One individual said: "The satellite says it ain't happening." Well, one could probably pick out some one piece of data from one satellite somewhere and say it doesn't show the story, but you collect all the data together and it is happening.

Here is a chart of how the globe is warming over time. It shows the difference in average temperatures. Here we are with just one tiny cache where there is a significant drop in temperature. There is a little bit of white and light blue showing that it stayed about the same, and there is a whole lot of red saying things are getting a lot worse. That is the collected data. Maybe there is some satellite that took a picture of one little spot here, but to cherry-pick data like that is dishonest.

We can't afford to pretend that things are OK when we are facing such a dramatic challenge to our blue-green home in the universe. NOAA, or the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, works at this, and they record all kinds of data from all around the world.

Here is another chart that shows the Earth's climate record. This one shows the zigs and zags over time. We are going back to 1880, but if we look from 1880 to 1980, we see a significant rise in the temperature of the planet. If we go from 1980 until now, it is this absolutely frightening horror show of increasing temperature. That is what is happening when we talk about snowpacks. We talk about glaciers, we talk about coral, we talk about pine beetles, and we talk about 100 of these things where there is that feedback.

All of those affect humans. Those aren't just some abstract things, like if a tree falls in the woods but nobody hears it, did it really happen? Did we really hear it? Does it matter? No.

These reverberate back on our quality of life in this planet, including security concerns. The civil war in Syria that produced millions of refugees trying to get to Europe started with an extended drought because of the stresses of a warming planet.

Our military weighs in and says that climate chaos accentuates all the security concerns we have. It creates instability around the world. If one doesn't want to listen to the scientists, how about if we listen to our own military?

That is what the discussion of Senator CARPER's resolution is all about. That is what the Green New Deal is all about. The Green New Deal says a few simple things. It says we have a big problem. Check. Yes, we do. It says we need to take it on boldly and aggressively. Check. Yes, we do. It says when we take it on boldly, we can create millions of jobs, and that will be a good thing for our economy. Check. Yes, it is.

Creating those jobs is good. It says when we do that, we shouldn't leave our frontline communities behind. We should make sure those communities—rural communities and inner-city communities that have been left behind previously in different economic expansions—can't be left behind now. Check. That is absolutely right.

Let's make this economic surge benefit everyone in every community, with special attention to communities that have been struggling.

My colleague is here from Virginia. I am so glad he is. I am talking a lot about what is happening on the west coast of America. Perhaps he will fill us in a little bit on the perspective from the east coast. This is not one isolated spot on our planet. This is a concern to all of us. We need bipartisan work on this. Some suggest we put a fee on carbon. Let's have that conversation. Some suggest we provide more subsidies to renewable energy. Let's have that conversation. Some say we should do a green workforce—green corps training. Let's talk about that. Let's talk about every strategy we can bring to bear and come to a collective plan because there is no space in the urgency of this issue for us to retreat into blue and red corners. There is no time. It is unacceptable.

I feel it is such a privilege to come to this floor and be part of this conversation, and I encourage all of my colleagues to do likewise. There are few issues that threaten us on this scale, but this one does. Let's work together to save our country and save our planet.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. Kaine. Mr. President, I rise and want to compliment my colleague from Oregon for putting on the table the

need for this body—the greatest deliberative body in the world—to deliberate upon a situation of grave importance to the world—the reality of climate change and what we as American leaders can do to tackle it. I will take the floor to talk about this in the coming days.

VENEZUELA

Mr. President, I actually rise now not on this topic, which affects Virginia significantly, especially sea level rise, but I want to talk a little about the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Venezuela. I do this on behalf of Venezuelans. I do this on behalf of Venezuelan-Americans, many of whom live in Virginia, but I also do it on behalf of democracies, because what is happening in Venezuela today demonstrates, really, in just one country, a global battle between democracies and authoritarian nations.

Authoritarian nations are supporting the regime of Maduro, and the democracies of the world are supporting the interim government of President Guaido.

If you want to know, circa 2019, in the battle being waged between authoritarians and democracies, Venezuela is a place where you can see it in one country. You see this global challenge between democracy and dictatorship.

The Maduro regime has been destroying Venezuela, which is home to the world's largest oil reserve, and it was once, in recent history, the richest country in all of Latin America. It is now in full-fledged economic and political collapse, with nearly 80 percent of the country's population living below the poverty line and more than half of the families unable to meet their basic food needs.

Right now, inflation in Venezuela is 2.7 million percent and will grow to 10 million percent this year, and most Venezuelans can't afford one meal a day. Medicines and other lifesaving commodities are too expensive for the average citizen to purchase, while Maduro and his colleagues and cronies siphon funds from state-owned enterprises into personal accounts and prohibit humanitarian assistance from entering the country.

Infants have starved to death because their families couldn't afford or access formula. Infectious diseases like malaria, measles, and diphtheria, which were previously eradicated in Venezuela, are emerging as public health system catastrophes.

Maduro is using the power of the state to subjugate and repress the Venezuelan people. His security forces use detention, torture, and lethal force against demonstrators and political opposition in what the United Nations and the Organization of American States called possible crimes against humanity.

It has provoked a massive refugee crisis. There are 3.4 million people and

counting who have made the difficult decision to leave their homeland because life has become untenable. Many have come to Virginia and to the United States as they have fled two countries throughout the region and created Latin America's worst refugee crisis, which is worsening by the day. Make no mistake—this is a manmade political crisis in a beautiful nation with beautiful people that would have ample resources if it were not so poorly governed.

In May 2018, Maduro declared victory for a second term in office in an election so flawed that the Organization of American States, the European Union, and the United States refused to recognize it as legitimate.

Following months of protests, on January 23, the National Assembly, which is Venezuela's only democratic body, determined that Maduro had usurped the Office of the President, and in accordance with the Venezuelan Constitution's provision for succession—and this is important—the President of the National Assembly, Juan Guaido, assumed the role of the Interim President of Venezuela. Again, that was done pursuant to Venezuelan constitutional law. The announcement, which I supported, was swiftly backed by the United States, by the Organization of American States, and by over 50 countries worldwide, including most of the democracies of the West. In contrast, which nations are supporting the Maduro regime? They are Russia, China, Iran, Syria, Turkey, Cuba, Nicaragua, Bolivia, and Belarus—authoritarian nations.

There is a clear international divide between democracies and authoritarians. We must defend our convictions and bolster the democracies of the world. It is about supporting the Venezuelan people, but it is also about sending an important message globally that the United States remains confident that democracy is the way for people to achieve their hopes and dreams, and when authoritarians try to crush the democratic desires of populations, the United States should be an ally.

The United States should never tell another nation who its leader should be. We have no business being in regime change. We support free and fair elections. We support constitutions. That is why I support the current interim Government of Venezuela, which has been designated pursuant to the Venezuelan Constitution.

I recently met with the Guaido interim government's representative to the United States. I was encouraged to hear that the National Assembly's goal was to move to a democratic system and replace the interim government with a national government that would follow free and transparent elections, which Maduro has blocked repeatedly. Support for this goal must continue to come from the international community, the Organization of American States, and other democracies.

A caution: As a missionary in Honduras in the 1970s, I lived in a military dictatorship, and I am keenly aware of the history and the legacy of U.S. intervention in the Americas. That is why I was very troubled and remain troubled by the Trump administration's threats of military intervention in Venezuela. That would be a massive mistake. The rhetoric is reckless and counterproductive. Our leaders should not be bombastic and enflame a delicate situation that could go in the direction of violence and civil unrest. In fact, the suggestion of U.S. military intervention actually strengthens the hand of the dictator because the Maduro dictatorship would like to blame Venezuela's economic challenges on Uncle Sam or the West rather than on its own mismanagement of the economy. The United States should not be making military threats against Venezuela.

There are many steps we can take, though, that would be appropriate. I support the increase in direct U.S. humanitarian aid for the Venezuelan people as the transition unfolds. It is unbelievable that for years, the government has refused to allow humanitarian aid to enter the country to help its own people. The scenes we have seen over the past weekend of roadblocks on highways entering Venezuela and the Venezuelan military fighting to stop humanitarian aid from reaching citizens epitomizes the Maduro regime's ongoing disregard for the plight of everyday people.

I support the long needed aid package that will help international organizations provide assistance inside Venezuela that interim President Guaido welcomes and that former President Maduro should welcome as well. That is why I joined Senator MENENDEZ in cosponsoring the Venezuela Humanitarian Relief Act and the Rule of Law Act, and I will support them in their reintroductions.

I support the United States in its playing a role in convincing other nations and the Organization of American States to also stand for the people of Venezuela. OAS's leadership is very strong, but in the OAS, every member country has one vote. Venezuela has used its petroleum reserves to convince a number of Caribbean nations to back the dictatorship. I think the United States could use very plain diplomacy with Caribbean nations to get them to support the democracy, the current interim government, and we could do that and attain some significant success.

We should amplify the pressure we have applied by recognizing the interim government and deploying humanitarian assistance to the border. South America is absorbing 3.4 million refugees from Venezuela. The Trump administration condemns the brutality of the Maduro Government, but we are reducing our support for refugees from Venezuela and elsewhere.

I think the crisis warrants the extension of temporary protected status to