SEC. 5. DUE DILIGENCE IN PAYING BENEFIT CLAIMS UNDER THE PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICERS' DEATH BENEFITS PROGRAM.

Section 1206(b) of title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (34 U.S.C. 10288(b)) is amended by striking ''the Bureau may not'' and all that follows and inserting the following: ''the Bureau—

''(1) shall use all available investigative tools, including subpoenas, to—

''(A) expedite the processing of the benefit claim; and

''(B) obtain necessary information or documentation from third parties, including public agencies; and

''(2) may not abandon the benefit claim unless the Bureau has used the investigative tools available to the Bureau to obtain the necessary information or documentation, including subpoenas.''.

SEC. 6. EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE TO DEPENDENTS OF PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICERS KILLED OR DISABLED IN THE LINE OF DUTY.

Section 1216(b) of title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (34 U.S.C. 10306(b)) is amended, in the first sentence, by striking ''may'' and inserting ''shall''.

SEC. 7. COLLECTION OF DATA ON KILLED OR DISABLED LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS.

Section 534(a) of title 28, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in paragraph (3), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(2) in paragraph (4), by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; and''; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

''(5) operate a central clearinghouse for statistics on law enforcement officers under the Uniform Crime Reporting Program, including data on law enforcement officers who, while performing their duties, were—

''(A) feloniously killed;

''(B) accidentally killed;

''(C) feloniously assaulted; or

''(D) severely and permanently disabled.''.

SEC. 8. GAO REPORT ON MEDICAL COSTS.

(a) DEFINITION.—In this section, the term ''disabled officer'' means a public safety officer to whom a benefit is payable under subpart 1 of part L of title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (34 U.S.C. 10281 et seq.) based on the permanent and total disability of the officer, as described in section 1201(b) of that subpart (34 U.S.C. 10281(b)).

(b) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate and the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives a report that estimates the average medical costs incurred by a disabled officer over the lifetime of the officer after sustaining the injury that caused the disability.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—H.R. 312 AND H.R. 2578

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I understand there are two bills at the desk due for a second reading en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the titles of the bills for the second time en bloc.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 312) to reaffirm the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe reservation, and for other purposes.

A bill (H.R. 2578) to reauthorize the National Flood Insurance Program, and for other purposes.

Mr. MCCONNELL. In order to place the bills on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I would object to further proceeding en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection having been heard, the bills will be placed on the calendar.

ALASKA REMOTE GENERATOR RELIABILITY AND PROTECTION ACT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 19, S. 163.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bill by title.

The senior legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 163) to prevent catastrophic failure or shutdown of remote diesel power engines due to emission control devices, and for other purposes.

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

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The bill was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed as follows:

S. 163

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Alaska Remote Generator Reliability and Protection Act''.

SEC. 2. REVISION OF REGULATIONS REQUIRED.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency shall revise section 60.4216(c) of title 40, Code of Federal Regulations (as in effect on the date of enactment of this Act), by striking ''that was not certified'' and all that follows through ''compared to engine-out emissions'' and inserting ''must have that engine certified as meeting at least Tier 3 PM standards''.

(b) EMISSIONS AND ENERGY RELIABILITY STUDY.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, in consultation with the Secretary of Energy, shall submit to the Committee on Environment and Public Works of the Senate and the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the House of Representatives a report assessing options for the Federal Government to assist remote areas in the State of Alaska in meeting the energy needs of those areas in an affordable and reliable manner using—

(1) existing emissions control technology; or

(2) other technology that achieves emissions reductions similar to the technology described in paragraph (1).

ORDERS FOR TUESDAY, MAY 21, 2019

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 10 a.m. Tuesday, May 21; 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 Collins nomination. Finally, I ask that the Senate recess from 12:30 p.m. until 2:15 p.m. to allow for the weekly conference meetings.

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

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. MCCONNELL. 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 Senator WHITEHOUSE.

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

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I am here today for the 243rd time to call on this Chamber to wake up to the reality of climate change. I thank my colleague Senator CORNYN for his recent statement acknowledging that the days of ignoring this are over. Now it is time to do something with keeping global warming below the 1.5 or 2 degrees Centigrade threshold target.

I speak regularly about the fossil fuel industry's relentless grip on Congress and how that grip prevents action on climate. Don't get me wrong—they are still at it, but they are not the only thing slowing progress. Another impediment is the wide swathes of our news media that cover the issue torpidly or not at all or as actual propagators of falsehood.

Look at the big climate stories the media ought to be covering just from 2018. The year 2018 brought two landmark climate science reports. One was the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report on what warming of 1.5 degrees Celsius above preindustrial levels will do. The other was the Trump administration's own National Climate Assessment. These two studies delivered the starkest warnings on climate change ever—that the damage from climate change is already occurring, that world economies are now at risk, and that we are almost out of time to prevent the worst consequences.

Even the fossil fuel industry and its stooges in the Trump administration didn't contest the science behind these reports. They know their science-denial campaign is phony. They know the real science is irrefutable. So it is better to hide from it than fight it, I guess.

The year 2018 also brought devastating natural disasters linked to climate change. Out West, wildfires in California broke records. Hurricanes supercharged by warming oceans slammed the east coast, gulf coast, and Caribbean. Floods, droughts, and rising seas were reported across the United States and around the globe.

Mr. President, 2018 also brought dire warnings of economic dangers from climate change. At the U.N. climate summit in December, a group of 415 global investors—not environmentalists; investors—managing $32 trillion of investments warned that unless carbon emissions are urgently cut, the world faces a financial crash worse than the 2008 economic meltdown. The group called for the end of fossil fuel subsidies and the introduction of substantial prices on carbon to rebalance the market failure.

The Union of Concerned Scientists separately found that over 300,000 coastal homes, with a collective market value of over $130 billion, are at risk of chronic flooding by 2045. UCS showed that by the end of the century, 2.4 million homes, worth more than $1 trillion, could be at risk. Decisions we make now will determine whether those risks come to pass. By the way, First Street Foundation found that coastal property values are already beginning to slide.

Unprecedented catastrophes, forceful warnings from scientists and financial experts—surely the viewers of America's top television networks should be focused on these things—or not. According to the media watchdog Media Matters, our major television networks—ABC, CBS, NBC, and FOX—aired 45 percent less climate change coverage on their marquee news programs in 2018 than in 2017. Climate coverage on network nightly news and Sunday morning political shows fell to just 142 minutes in all of 2018, down from an already lame 260 minutes in 2017. That is less than 1 minute a day of coverage from all four major networks combined.

Kudos to NBC, which actually upped its coverage by about one-quarter from the year before. Without NBC, the numbers look even worse. Media Matters found CBS's climate coverage down 56 percent from 2017 to 2018. ''FOX News Sunday'' is down 75 percent, and ABC is down a whopping 81 percent from a pretty low performance to begin with.

I have noticed this trend, so I have begun keeping an eye on the Sunday shows' coverage this year. Each month, I look at how many substantive segments on climate change each show runs. It is not good. In April, for instance, there were only two substantive segments on climate change across all five shows. They have basically become Sunday morning political gossip columns.

If you move from quantity to quality, well, with TV still the top way Americans get their news, the quality of news coverage really matters. How are television news shows doing in that department? Too often, also badly. Many of these shows still give airtime to clownish climate deniers just to create a pro and con.

The Weather Channel tracked reaction on television shows to the Trump administration's National Climate Assessment this past fall and found airtime still given to debunked climate nonsense—for instance, the American Enterprise Institute's Danielle Pletka's ridiculous falsehoods about recent cold weather; conservative political commentators Rick Santorum and Stephen Moore's argument that climate scientists cooked up the assessment to enrich themselves; and a Member of Congress's argument that ''our climate always changes, and we see those ebb and flows through time,'' as if million-year climate changes are in any way comparable to the rapid punch in the face we are giving to our climate with carbon emissions right now, manmade.

Allowing this falsehood on the air tilts Americans' perception of climate change. ''Placing a climate contrarian behind a scientist is effectively shrinking the 97 percent consensus on the issue to 50 percent—two people arguing opposite sides,'' the Weather Channel pointed out.

In the Columbia Journalism Review last month, author and journalist Mark Hertsgaard and editor and publisher Kyle Pope describe this troubling trend as follows:

> Climate deniers are still given respectful treatment by US news outlets across the ideological spectrum. [They] in fact deserve to have their social licenses revoked, just as tobacco companies did. More than anyone else, it is climate deniers who got us into this mess; they don't get to decide what we do with it now.

Again, on this front, NBC has been the best. In December, NBC's ''Meet the Press'' devoted an entire show to climate coverage, delving into the science and discussing climate solutions in detail. It began with a clear message from host Chuck Todd. He said:

> We're not going to debate climate change, the existence of it. The Earth is getting hotter. And human activity is a major cause, period. We're not going to give time to climate deniers. The science is settled, even if political opinion is not.

That is the right place to start the discussion in the media on climate change. Facts are facts. Falsehood is falsehood and does not deserve equal time. I hope other networks take note.

If they want to cover climate denial, cover it the way it should be covered: investigatively, as a fraudulent enterprise with big secret money behind it. Trust me, there is a lot to investigate. Don't legitimize lies.

Newspapers and online news are a mixed bag. As a group, our top national papers are improving their coverage of climate change. According to the University of Colorado Boulder's International Collective on Environment, Culture, & Politics, the five major national newspapers—the Washington Post, the New York Times, the Wall Street Journal, USA Today, and the Los Angeles Times—published 282 articles about climate change in January 2009. A decade later, January of this year, those papers published 469—282, up to 469. That is a good sign. So, too, generally is the quality of coverage. Big publications like the New York Times and Washington Post and smaller, independent, and web-based publications like InsideClimate News, Years of Living Dangerously, and Grist have brought us into the midst of climate crisis with brilliant reporting and storytelling. The Guardian, from overseas, may be the best of all. The Guardian just decided, as editorial policy, to use ''climate emergency crisis or breakdown'' instead of ''climate change,'' ''global heating'' instead of ''global warming,'' and ''climate science denier'' instead of ''climate skeptic.'' These outlets all offer readers captivating photos, videos, and graphics that illustrate exactly how the climate is changing and what that will mean.

In Rhode Island, our Providence Journal has done exceptional reporting on carbon pollution's effects on our climate and oceans. This year alone, the Journal has published indepth, front-page articles on how Rhode Island's real estate market is already experiencing the effects of climate change, on scientists' warnings of massive flooding risk to coastal towns, and on the risks facing Providence's hurricane barrier as sea levels rise and storm surges loom in the decades to come. Here is an example of that, like that from our home State paper.

Mr. President, other Rhode Island papers, like the Newport Daily News, the Westerly Sun, and ecoRI, cover climate change in their communities with vigor and skill. They supply the news Rhode Islanders need to understand and prepare for the effects of climate change.

Elsewhere, the record is not so good. Take USA Today, a paper with a circulation to 1.8 million Americans and a broad online readership. According to the University of Colorado, the paper ran 25 articles on climate change in January 2009. It ran only 14 this January.

On its editorial page, however, USA Today's editorial board wrote one of the strongest climate editorials so far this year, making the case for meaningful action on climate change. They cited real science and dismissed Republican leaders' cynical campaign against the Green New Deal. The editorial concluded: ''The critics owe this and future generations more than scorn; they have an obligation to put better ideas and solutions on the table.

Bravo and well said to that.

The reverse is the Wall Street Journal, with pretty good news coverage. It is a respectable news-gathering newspaper—in fact, a first-order one. But its opinion page emits toxic climate waste. For decades, the Wall Street Journal's editorial page has been a haven for outlandish science denial, but they truly outdo themselves when it comes to climate denial. Take a piece that the Journal published just last year titled, ''The Sea Is Rising, but Not Because of Climate Change.'' Riddled with scientific errors, it ignores all of the legitimate science on

climate change. The author whom they published, a notorious climate denier, has for years been affiliated with or funded by the Heritage Foundation, the Heartland Institute, the Cato Institute—a rogues' gallery of industry-funded climate denial front groups.

The sum of this is an American media too often asleep at the switch when warnings need to be made.

The Washington Post media columnist and former public editor of the New York Times, Margaret Sullivan, wrote this past fall:

> Just as the world, especially the United States, needs radical change to mitigate the coming crisis, so too for the news media. . . . This subject must be kept front and center, with the pressure on and the stakes made abundantly clear at every turn. . . . Just as the smartest minds in earth science have issued their warning, the best minds in media should be giving sustained attention to how to tell this most important story in a way that will create change.

There is some exceptional climate change coverage reaching readers today. Indeed, American voters increasingly name climate change as a big priority for them at the ballot box, but the pace of climate disruption demands urgency. Columbia Journalism Review's Hertsgaard and Pope write:

> ''If American journalism doesn't get the climate story right—and soon—no other story will matter.''

I yield the floor.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M. TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow morning.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 6:54 p.m. adjourned until Tuesday, May 21, 2019, at 10 a.m.