

be undertaken to help huge, multinational corporations, I think the same effort should be undertaken on behalf of workers who earned these pension benefits.

This isn't something extra. This isn't something new. This isn't something other than an earned benefit, and for some of them, they earned it in the most difficult way possible, by going underneath the ground to mine coal year after year and, in some cases, decade after decade.

Stephen Crane, the great novelist, wrote an essay in the early 1900s or just around the turn of the century, I should say, about a coal mine in my hometown of Scranton. He described all of the horrors, all of the darkness. He described the ways a miner could die. He referred to it as the "hundred perils"—life-threatening. He described the mine in a very moving way. He talked about the mine being a place of inscrutable darkness, a soundless place of tangible loneliness—loneliness because you can't see your hand in front of your face and loneliness, of course, if you were injured on the job, or if you had an injury that debilitated you, or if you, in fact, lost your life. Tens of thousands of people lost their lives in mines.

I know that is a long time ago. I know we have made advancements, but it is still hard work just as it is to do the other jobs I mentioned, whether you are a teamster or a bakery and confectionery worker. Just pick your particular work area or union.

So we have some work to do here, and we are going to have to fight through a lot, but we are grateful we have some momentum and some sense of urgency that may not have been there only weeks ago.

With that, I will yield the floor to my colleague from the State of Ohio.

Mr. BROWN. I thank Senator CASEY for his work on behalf of workers during his whole 13 years in the Senate and his work especially for mine workers and teamsters with the Butch Lewis Act and with pension and healthcare. That is so important.

Senator KAINE has been stalwart for these retirees and particularly in southwest Virginia, where he has worked as Governor, and also Senator MANCHIN who was speaking earlier.

We need to remind this body that 86,000 miners are facing a looming threat of massive cuts to the pension they have earned. What people in this body don't often understand is these miners and their widows aren't getting rich from these pensions. These pensions are \$500 or \$600 a month. Also 1,200 miners and their families can lose their healthcare by the end of the year because of the Westmoreland and Mission Coal bankruptcies.

The bankruptcy court can allow these corporations to shed their liabilities. That sounds familiar. So often big companies go to court, and these lawyers and judges don't really understand what collective bargaining is and

don't understand the sacrifices these workers made to earn these pensions. Shedding their liabilities is a fancy way of saying walk away from paying miners the healthcare benefits they earned.

Two years ago, we worked to save the miners' healthcare. We have to do it again. We can't leave these workers behind just because of the date their company filed for bankruptcy. We have to make sure they don't lose retirement security on top of that.

All 86,000 UMW union mine workers are facing crippling pension cuts. They aren't alone. The retirement security of hundreds of thousands of teamsters in Virginia and Ohio and Pennsylvania and ironworkers in Cleveland and carpenters in Dayton and Cincinnati—so many retirees and so many workers' pensions are at risk.

Congress tried to ignore these retirees, but they fought back. Workers rallied. They called, they wrote letters, and they rallied outside the Capitol on 90-degree days in July. They rallied outside the Capitol in 15-degree days in February.

We have seen those Camo UMW T-shirts around the Capitol. They are persistent. They don't give up. Many of them are veterans. They left the mines to serve their country. They went back into the mines. Now, as they fought for us, we need to fight for them.

It comes back to the dignity of work. When work has dignity, we honor the retirement and security people earn. We honor work. We respect work. The dignity of work is about their wages, about their retirement, about their healthcare. It is about safety in the workplace. This is why I wear this pin. It is a depiction of a canary in a birdcage. The mineworker took the canary into the mines. The mineworker did not always have a government that stood with them to protect their safety. That is what the union did so many times.

People in this town too often don't understand the collective bargaining process. This town is overrun with lobbyists up and down the hall and in Senator MCCONNELL's office. Lobbyists line up and get favors from the Republican leader. Never ever does organized labor, never do workers get these same kinds of favors when it comes to support like this.

With regard to collective bargaining, what people don't understand is that the people give up their wages today to put money aside for their future pensions. We made progress with the bipartisan pensions committee. I thank Senators PORTMAN and MANCHIN and all the Members—Senator KAINE and CASEY—all the Members of both parties who put in months of work in good faith on this.

I am committed to these miners. I know my friend TIM KAINE is committed to these miners, to these workers, to these small businesses. For their success and their livelihood, they depend on getting these pensions they have earned.

We will continue to work for a bipartisan solution. If you love this country, you will fight for the people who make it work—people like these mineworkers.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. KAINE. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CRAMER). Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### FACEBOOK CRYPTOCURRENCY

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, yesterday the Banking Committee heard from one of Facebook's executives about, if we can believe this—it almost doesn't seem possible—how Facebook wants to create its own monopoly money. That is right, after scandal after scandal with Facebook, where they betrayed the public trust, with the damage they have done to journalism and the damage they have done to democracy, the compromising and betrayal of people's privacy.

Again, believe it or not, even the United Nations said what Facebook did to contribute to the humanitarian disaster in what we know as Burma, Myanmar, where literally hundreds of people died—the United Nations said Facebook contributed to the genocide. That almost doesn't sound believable, but they contributed to the genocide, a U.N. report said, in that part of the world.

Now, after scandal after scandal, Facebook expects Americans to trust them with their hard-earned paychecks. It is pretty breathtaking.

When you think about it, in this body, you know what happens when corporations want something. They always get it. With the leadership in this body and with the White House looking like a retreat for Wall Street executives and the big banks, they always get what they want.

When have big corporations ever been held accountable? Look how the majority leader and President Trump treated Wall Street banks. Of course Facebook thinks they can make mess after mess, they can refuse to clean it up, and they face no consequences.

We know that big banks scam customers and break laws. Not only do they get away with it, they get rewarded. Last year, as we know, this Congress passed and President Trump signed legislation rolling back laws protecting working families from Wall Street greed, as if Wall Street weren't doing well enough. They had record profit and record executive compensation.

Remembering 10 years ago and what happened with Wall Street—there is a collective amnesia in this body. My

colleagues seem to forget what Wall Street did to our country 10 years ago.

I have said this on the floor before, and I will say it again: My ZIP Code in Cleveland where Connie and I live is 44105. That ZIP Code had more foreclosures in 2007 than any other ZIP Code in the United States of America. I still see the remnants of those foreclosures—high levels of lead-based paint, homes abandoned, property values going down. Yet this Congress and President Trump want to do more for Wall Street.

The big banks ask for weaker rules, even though it put millions of families at risk—job losses, the evisceration of retirement plans, people losing their jobs, people losing their homes. President Trump said: OK. Let's do what the banks want.

The year before that, Congress passed and President Trump signed a \$1.5 trillion tax cut for corporations, big banks, and the richest Americans. Since the Republican tax bill passed, corporations have moved jobs overseas. They spent hundreds of billions of dollars on stock buybacks because the executives apparently weren't making enough money with their record compensation. Corporations have spent \$1 trillion in these stock buybacks. Of the eight companies with the most stock buybacks last year, half of them were on Wall Street.

The big banks and the big investment houses have done very well with this Trump economy. They have done very well because of the goodies this body continues to bestow on them.

One thing we also know is that Wall Street can never get enough handouts. They always want one more. Not too long ago, a bank lobbyist said: "We don't want just a seat at the table, we want the whole table." That is so brazen and arrogant. Unfortunately, this Congress and this President seem to want to give it to them.

They let banks haggle over their stress test results. We require these banks to take a stress test, but before they take the test—imagine getting to do this in high school or college. Before you take the test, we will tell you a little more about what will be on the test.

They take away consumers' right to have their day in court when banks scam them.

They go easy on foreign megabanks. You could name them. So many of the foreign banks have gotten their way so often in this body and done damage to our economy.

We gave them breaks in the rulings that the Federal Reserve made. Last month, we saw the Fed once again go easy on Wall Street banks during their annual stress test. They basically gave them extra credit for even submitting to these tests at all. What does that mean for the giant banks? The Fed will let them do even more stock buybacks. The Fed ought to understand that megabank CEOs are not playing T-ball, where everyone gets a participation

trophy just for showing up; they are playing with family's lives.

We know all over the country what happened to people's retirement, what happened to their jobs, what happened to their homes. People in this town may have collective amnesia and have forgotten the financial crisis and housing crisis, but families who lost their homes and jobs and retirement savings and their college funds haven't forgotten what happened. This town has forgotten what happened 10 years ago, and it could happen again.

The more we roll back these rules and look the other way when corporations want to take big risks—not with their money but with other people's money—the higher the chance one of these big risks doesn't pay off. You know who pays the price. You remember who paid the price 10 years ago when the economy tanked because of Wall Street greed and Wall Street overreach. When Wall Street bets don't pay off, it is workers, families, taxpayers, and people in my neighborhood who pay the price. It is your money they are gambling with.

Hard-working Americans face real consequences when they break the law, and so should Wall Street executives.

#### BORDER SECURITY

Mr. President, this past weekend, my wife Connie and I went to El Paso, to the U.S.-Mexico border, to bear witness to this humanitarian crisis. We met with children and families coming to our country to flee violence and persecution. These are families just like our own who only want a safe place for their kids to lay their heads at night. It underscored the inhumanity and coldness of President Trump's family separation policy—something I still can't believe our country is doing. In fact, the leader of our country is almost gleeful and bragging about this family separation policy of taking their children away from their parents.

We talked to one mother from Honduras. She and her teenage son and 6-year-old daughter were fleeing violent gangs who already murdered her brother. She choked back tears as she told her story. She arrived in the United States and was sent back to Juarez, Mexico, where she and her children slept outdoors on rocks and were given no access to even basic hygiene. She told us how hard it was to see her daughter cry, that "it was very hard for me seeing her treated as if she was a criminal." We are talking about a 6-year-old little girl. That is something no Member of this body would stand for if it were their child, but it happens to be a child from somewhere else who wants to be able to live a decent, safe life.

This story is a reminder of why the policy the Trump administration announced yesterday makes no sense for the American people and is so dangerous for those families. The President wants to require refugees to apply for asylum in the first country they pass through. For refugees like this

mother, that country would be Guatemala, but people are fleeing Guatemala too.

I talked to one volunteer at Annunciation House, the shelter we visited that takes in refugees after they are released from CBP custody. She said their numbers at the shelter were down recently. That has her worried because she knows that when families make it to the Annunciation House, they will be safe and well cared for. The staff are overwhelmingly volunteers, people in their churches and neighborhoods who want to help their fellow human beings. Now she is terrified that even more families are trapped in Juarez and other dangerous cities.

It is despicable how little compassion the President and his administration have. It is mind-boggling. It is not who we are as a country. It is not what people in Ohio think we should do. Yet this government thinks it is proper to separate children from their families.

As we were in El Paso, throughout the day, what went over and over in my mind was Matthew 25: When I was hungry, you fed me. When I was thirsty, you gave me drink. When I was sick, you visited me. When I was a stranger, you welcomed me.

I have read a lot of translations of that, and some translations say: When I was thirsty, you gave me drink. When I was hungry, you fed me. What you did for the least of these, you did for me.

There are other translations that I like more than that: When I was hungry, you fed me. When I was thirsty, you gave me drink. When I was a stranger, you visited me. What you did for those less important, you did for me.

I have read many translations, but do you know what translation I have never read? When I was hungry, you fed me. When I was thirsty, you gave me drink. When I was in prison, you visited me. When I was a stranger, you welcomed me but only if I had the proper paperwork.

That is not in Matthew 25. Only this administration that splits up families will say: When I was a stranger, you welcomed me but only if I had the proper paperwork.

These are families whose lives are in danger. They are victims of drug violence and sexual violence. They are people who came hundreds of miles—not because they want so much to come to America, but they want to get away from the violence and the chances of death.

As I said, I met a mother and her son and her daughter. Her brother was murdered by these gangs. She came north. And President Trump, having no empathy, not caring about other human beings—especially if they look like they might be from Honduras or Guatemala or El Salvador—calls them names. He says: Go back to the countries you live in. Whether you call it racist or not, it is simply inhumane.

Despite seeing the inhumanity of this administration's policies—when we