

the meaningful work that these companies are doing in Arkansas, and I commend them on leading on the issue.

The United States has the ability now to improve its waste management and recycling infrastructure and better leverage the economic and environmental benefits of recycling.

I look forward to continue my work with my cochair of the Recycling Caucus, Senator CARPER. Again, I thank him and his staff and my staff, who are doing such a tremendous job, and the other members of the caucus who develop meaningful, long-term solutions that address the challenges facing the industry.

I encourage all Americans to use America Recycles Day as an opportunity to reflect on the critical importance of recycling and to consider what we can do to support our environment through our own individual efforts.

Mr. CARPER. Would the Senator yield for a moment?

Mr. BOOZMAN. Yes, sir.

Mr. CARPER. Thank you for sharing with us the terrific ideas of what businesses around Arkansas and the country are doing to recycle. They do it for a variety of reasons. It is the right thing to do, and a lot of them are committed to being good environmental stewards. It can also be to their economic advantage. Instead of having to pay to have stuff being carted away to a landfill, the ability to recycle materials is, I think, desirable.

We used to have a big Chrysler plant in Delaware, in Newark, close to the University of Delaware and close to the Maryland line. The plant was about 60 years old, and in the middle of the great recession, Chrysler went into bankruptcy, and we lost that plant. It closed, and about 3,000 jobs were gone. We had a GM plant as well about 15 miles from there, just outside of Wilmington, and the same thing happened. About 3,000 jobs were gone, which was just really, really tough.

Having said that—in your words again, in adversity lies opportunity—the folks at the University of Delaware called me. After Chrysler had gone into bankruptcy, they announced that they were selling the plant. They were looking to sell it, and the folks at the University of Delaware and the president of the university, Pat Harker, called me and said: Do you think the Chrysler people might be interested in selling that plant to the university?

It was just about a half mile south of the University of Delaware in Newark.

I called the people at Chrysler and said: You may have an interested buyer here.

They ended up coming to an agreement on the terms of the purchase, and that old Chrysler plant has been recycled. The plant was largely taken down—not entirely, but largely taken down. The money that the University of Delaware earned and generated from the sale of the recyclables—the construction stuff that the plant was made out of—more than paid for taking down and leveling the plant.

Now the University of Delaware has a site of several hundred acres, and they are redeveloping that as a science, technology, and manufacturing facility with a lot of tenants and more to come. So there really is opportunity in adversity.

The other thing I would say is that we got some shredding machines. I had a picture up there of an old shredding machine, and we bought a new one not long ago. So we ended up with a lot of shredded paper. As it turns out, the weekly recyclers, when they come through our neighborhood and collect, they are happy to take the paper, but they don't want to take the shredded paper. What they said that we ought to do is to put it in our compost.

My wife came up with this idea of composting 10 years ago. Somebody was nice enough to build a 4-by-6 and about 3-feet high bin and then lined it with materials, and we put grass in it, recyclables, leaves, and we ended up with this great mulch. We have, I think, taken what a lot of people have seen as waste product and ended up actually turning it into something to make our lawn and our trees and our shrubs even healthier.

It is all good. I am just thrilled to be on the floor with my friend and to be able to thank those who are recycling and remind others, if you are not, that you are missing out on the fun. Come and join us. You will be glad you did.

Mr. BOOZMAN. I think you make a great point in the sense that we do things for the right reasons. That is so important. Also, it is important, too, that not only can we do it for the right reasons and benefit our environment, but it also can be cost-effective to our businesses.

A good example of that is Walmart. Several years ago, they wanted to reduce their fuel cost and then also reduce the harm in the sense of the landfills and things like that. They looked and saw that on their trucks, the limiting factor was not weight. It was bulk. You know how you go to the store and you buy something and it has got this huge box or whatever and it has got the little bitty product in it. They said, you know, we don't need to be doing that.

So they told their vendors that they would like to go in that direction, and to their credit, the vendors cooperated. As a result, they were able to put more products on the truck, thus reducing fuel costs—again benefiting the economy—and having less bulk for consumers to deal with eventually. That was putting less pressure on the environment because, you know, some people don't do a good job of recycling.

These things can be so good for not only doing the right thing but also improving the bottom line and making sure that we really are putting less pressure on the environment.

We appreciate your leadership. You have been doing this for a long time, as Governor and now as Senator, helping to put these things together. We very much appreciate it.

Mr. CARPER. If the gentleman would yield the floor for a moment, I said earlier in my remarks, to paraphrase it again, that it is possible to do good and do well at the same time. It really is. I am just happy that more and more people are doing that.

While we are having this conversation, I just want to mention that when we showed up at the recycling event at Glasgow High School last Saturday afternoon, they took a bunch of our stuff to recycle—papers, bottles, cans, paint thinners, a dehumidifier, and all kinds of stuff. One thing they wouldn't take was our Styrofoam. We have one place in Delaware—and we are not a big State; 100 miles long and 50 miles wide—we have one place in Delaware that will take Styrofoam.

What I would love to do in the months to come and in the new year is for us to start on recycling projects and focus on that because it is not a problem only in Delaware; there are a lot of places where it is hard to recycle Styrofoam. We can try to figure it out. Maybe somebody around the world or somebody in other States has figured this out and they are doing it. We need to learn from them, find out what works, and do more of that. In my State, we have a hard time dealing with it.

Mr. BOOZMAN. We look forward to having a robust bunch of programs.

It is so important to educate people on what is recyclable because not everyone knows. Different things are recyclable from one area to another area. So we need education on that, and that will make it much more efficient, with people putting in the correct things.

So we have some obstacles to overcome, but the good news is, there are people working together, and we are moving in the right direction.

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, I think I will yield back the time.

Mr. BOOZMAN. With that, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. CRAMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session and be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

REDUCING PANDEMIC RISK

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, we do not have to be reminded of the more than

50 million lives lost in the 1918 influenza pandemic or the many thousands lost in the SARS, Ebola, MERS, and other recent infectious disease outbreaks to recognize that far more must be done to reduce the risk of catastrophic pandemics. Rather than waiting until disease outbreaks occur, then scrambling at great expense for 2 or 3 years or however long it takes to develop a vaccine while countless people die, we need to act proactively. It is worth noting that tens of millions of people have died, and we still lack a vaccine against HIV.

Viral threats will continue to emerge at a rapidly accelerating pace in response to expanding global populations in the least developed countries, international travel, and human encroachment into wildlife habitat. And we know that the vast majority of emerging viruses, like HIV, are zoonotic—infected diseases that can spread between animals and humans.

In an effort to strengthen global capacity for detection and discovery of zoonotic viruses, the U.S. Agency for International Development, USAID, initiated the PREDICT project in 2009. Its goal was to identify new emerging viruses with pandemic potential and improve predictive modeling to better focus surveillance, data collection, and analytics to reduce the risk of animal viruses spilling over and spreading in human populations. Through the collection and analysis of wildlife samples in areas of the world most at risk for zoonotic disease, PREDICT was able to discover disease pathogens at their source, rather than waiting for human infection.

Over the past decade and through its work in more than 30 countries, PREDICT has identified hundreds of viruses and has estimated that there are more than 1.6 million unknown viral disease species in mammalian and avian populations, of which an estimated 600,000 to 850,000 have the potential to infect humans. PREDICT has proven the feasibility of a global, systematic viral discovery program and paved the way for continued progress toward a more proactive approach to reducing pandemic risk.

As the PREDICT project comes to an end next year, USAID is exploring ways to build on its successful analytical and modeling work and is in the process of designing the next phase of programming to continue this critical effort. It is my hope that others in the international community will use the lessons learned and techniques proven from PREDICT to inform their own efforts.

Currently, the international community often targets global health investments on infrastructure, institutions, and human resources. While that approach works to strengthen public health systems and to tackle existing diseases, reducing the risk of future pandemics will require a substantially different approach. As the PREDICT project has shown, there are ways to

use data, research, and technology to proactively identify viral threats. Using existing health science and technology to continue to fill the knowledge gap for unknown viruses will save precious lives and dollars in the future.

Thanks to the work of USAID, we have a strong basis of knowledge on which to expand this critical research. While the large pool of viral threats lying dormant in animals has not changed, human interaction with wildlife has. In this increasingly globalized and densely populated world, where it is easier than ever for zoonotic diseases to rapidly spread across regions and continents, it is essential that the international community focus on finding innovative ways to reduce pandemic risk.

One approach is through a global viral discovery effort, in which countries share data on previously unknown viruses, which will transform the fight against pandemic threats from a reactive to a proactive undertaking. This is not a technological challenge; it is a matter of political will and resources. It will require commitments from governments around the world to collect and share data on previously unknown viruses. While I recognize that is easier said than done, better equipping humanity to protect itself against catastrophic pandemics is an investment we cannot afford not to make.

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SKIRACK

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, Vermont, the Green Mountain State, is filled with outdoor enthusiasts: people who ski, snowboard, mountain bike, hike, and do so much more. Outdoor enthusiasts who live in Chittenden County or who have visited the area are likely to have perused the walls, shelves, and aisles of the Skirack in Burlington, VT. Today I want to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Skirack, a small business that has become a staple of downtown Burlington.

Just a few blocks from its present location at the corner of Main and Pine Streets in downtown Burlington, the Skirack first opened its doors on November 22, 1969, driven by the vision of a group of University of Vermont students. The founders of the Skirack—Karen George, Zandy Wheeler, Spike Clayton, and John George-Wheeler—opened the shop with one goal in mind: to provide the finest outdoor goods and services. Over the next 50 years, their store has equipped Vermonters and visitors to our State with the essentials as they face the elements and reach new heights, both literal and figurative.

Vermont has a proud and prominent legacy of outdoor recreation. Vermonters, or those who visit, can cross country ski, swim in Lake Champlain, mountain bike, or go on a trek through any of Vermont's magnificent forest trails. Contrary to the store's name, the Skirack has been

Vermonters' one-stop shop for all of their outdoor recreational needs, regardless of the season.

Since its inception, the Skirack has been the recipient of numerous honors and accolades. The store has been named the Snowsports Retailer of the Year and Nordic Retailer by Ski Industries of America. But recognition of the Skirack goes far beyond their snow sport inventory. For 5 years in a row, from 2013 through 2017, it was named one of America's best bike shops by the National Bicycle Dealers Association and in 2018 was named one of the 20 Best Running Shops in America by Gear Patrol.

The Skirack has gone through many changes throughout its 50 years of operation. In 1974, Karen, Zandy, Spike, and John moved the Skirack from its small shop on Center Street to where it is currently located on Main Street in downtown Burlington. Over time, they were able to double the size of their store by expanding to the building next door. Then, in May 2011, they began a special partnership with Patagonia and opened a second store, Patagonia Burlington. And today, the Skirack employs more than 80 Vermonters.

Vermont's economy depends on small businesses like the Skirack. Over the years, those small businesses have become the backbone of Vermont's economy. In 2018, the more than 77,000 small businesses made up 99 percent of Vermont businesses—99 percent. In Vermont, almost 60 percent of employees, over 158,000 Vermonters, are employed by a small business. I am proud that small businesses such as The Skirack, have not only been able to not only survive but thrive.

With the holiday season approaching, it is important for Americans across the country to visit their hometown Main Street stores as they shop for friends and family. Holiday sales represent 20 percent of average annual sales across most industries and 30 percent or more for some businesses.

Marcelle and I congratulate Karen, Zandy, Spike, and John on an incredible 50 years of operations at the Skirack. We wish them all the best of luck, and we hope for 50 more strong years.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I rise to speak up for those who serve our country all around the world, courageously, selflessly, with great sacrifice. I rise on behalf of our diplomatic corps, our Foreign Service Officers, civil servants, and State Department personnel. I rise on behalf of patriotic Americans serving our country on the front lines of war zones and devastating conflicts, in countries with oppressive governments and societies hostile to our own.

Our national security is stronger because of them. American people are safer because of them. Our children's futures will be more secure, more prosperous, because of them. And because