

Prior to Federal service, he was the director of Rhode Island's Emergency Management Agency. For 26 years prior to his service in emergency management positions, Mr. Gaynor served as an enlisted marine and infantry officer in the U.S. Marine Corps.

Mr. Gaynor's experience will be valuable as FEMA works to implement the Disaster Recovery Reform Act. A primary goal of that legislation is to help ensure that the model for response to and recovery from natural and man-made disasters is one that is locally executed, State managed, and federally supported.

I am pleased to say that Mr. Gaynor's nomination has broad bipartisan support. Our committee approved his nomination by voice vote in November. Among others, he has received endorsements from Rhode Island Governor Gina Raimondo, Senator JACK REED, Big City Emergency Managers, and the International Association of Fire Chiefs.

I am grateful to Mr. Gaynor for his willingness to continue serving his country in this role and to his family for their continued sacrifice. I strongly encourage my colleagues to vote yes on his nomination.

I yield the floor.

#### CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

#### CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Peter Gaynor, of Rhode Island, to be Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Department of Homeland Security.

Mitch McConnell, John Thune, Ron Johnson, Mike Rounds, Richard Burr, Kevin Cramer, Pat Roberts, Roger F. Wicker, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Thom Tillis, John Cornyn, Tim Scott, Mike Crapo, Steve Daines, John Boozman, Shelley Moore Capito, James E. Risch.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Peter Gaynor, of Rhode Island, to be Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Department of Homeland Security, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY), the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER), the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM), the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE), the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. KENNEDY), the Senator from Idaho (Mr. RISCH), the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT), and the

Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. TOOMEY).

Mr. SCHUMER. I announce that the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET), the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER), the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN), the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR), the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS), the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WARNER), and the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) are necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 76, nays 8, as follows:

#### [Rollcall Vote No. 11 Ex.]

#### YEAS—76

Alexander	Fischer	Perdue
Baldwin	Gardner	Peters
Barrasso	Grassley	Portman
Blackburn	Hassan	Reed
Blumenthal	Hawley	Roberts
Blunt	Heinrich	Romney
Boozman	Hirono	Rosen
Braun	Hoeven	Rounds
Burr	Hyde-Smith	Rubio
Cantwell	Johnson	Sasse
Capito	Jones	Schatz
Cardin	Kaine	Scott (FL)
Carper	King	Shaheen
Casey	Lankford	Shelby
Collins	Leahy	Sinema
Coons	Lee	Smith
Cornyn	Loeffler	Sullivan
Cortez Masto	Manchin	Tester
Cotton	McConnell	Thune
Crapo	McSally	Tillis
Cruz	Merkley	Whitehouse
Daines	Moran	Wicker
Duckworth	Murkowski	Wyden
Enzi	Murphy	Young
Ernst	Murray	
Feinstein	Paul	

#### NAYS—8

Brown	Menendez	Udall
Gillibrand	Schumer	Van Hollen
Harris	Stabenow	

#### NOT VOTING—16

Bennet	Inhofe	Scott (SC)
Booker	Kennedy	Toomey
Cassidy	Klobuchar	Warner
Cramer	Markey	Warren
Durbin	Risch	
Graham	Sanders	

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 76, the nays are 8.

The motion is agreed to.

The Senator from Alaska.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to enter into a colloquy with my colleagues from Rhode Island and New Jersey.

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

#### SAVE OUR SEAS 2.0

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I am sure all of my colleagues are going to want to listen to this speech. I am on the floor with my colleagues Senator WHITEHOUSE and Senator MENENDEZ to talk about some very important legislation for our country, legislation that passed the Senate last week. It is the Save Our Seas 2.0 legislation.

I begin by thanking Senator WHITEHOUSE and Senator MENENDEZ for their leadership on this bill.

We are going to talk a little bit about the importance of it, why it matters to Alaska, to New Jersey, to

Rhode Island, and to the whole country. This is a significant piece of legislation. It is, really, the most comprehensive piece of legislation to pass the Congress—to pass the Senate—that has dealt with ocean debris and ocean pollution—ever. That sounds like a pretty hyperbolic phrase, but it is true. We checked with the CRS. There has been nothing more comprehensive than this piece of legislation that tackles an issue we all care about—clean oceans.

As a matter of fact, on Thursday night, 100 Senators passed this after there having been a lot of work on the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, on the Committee on Environment and Public Works, and on the Committee on Foreign Relations. After about a year of work on this, we finally got it passed. A number of Senators—Democrats and Republicans—were cosponsors. I really want to thank the two Senators who are on the floor right now. In particular, Senator WHITEHOUSE has been a real leader on these issues that deal with oceans. This is an environmental issue that we can solve. Republicans and Democrats in the Congress, the Trump administration in the White House, and environmental and industry groups are all pulling on the same oar, and we had a good start last Thursday on what this does.

I want to turn it over to my colleague from Rhode Island because, in many ways, he has been the real leader, the driver, and is the founder of the Oceans Caucus. Bit by bit, legislation by legislation, he and I cosponsored the first Save Our Seas Act in the last Congress. To much fanfare in the Oval Office, the President signed it, and now you are starting to see people work on this. There is a whole section in the USMCA on cleaning up our oceans. We have gone from Save Our Seas 1.0, which has already passed into law, to Save Our Seas 2.0. I think it is exciting, and I think the American people don't always hear about the bipartisan work that is actually getting done on big issues that matter to our Nation. There is a lot.

Cleaning up our oceans is one that matters to everybody and, certainly, to my State, with its having more coastline than the rest of the lower 48 combined. You don't even have to live in a coastal State to care about this issue. Some of our cosponsors on this bill—on both sides of the aisle—are from States that don't even have any coastline. That is how important it is.

I want to turn it over to Senator WHITEHOUSE. I thank him for his and Senator MENENDEZ' leadership. We will talk a little bit about what is in it and what we are going to do next. This is a good day for the environment in America. It is a good day for the oceans not just in our country, not just in Alaska, not just in Rhode Island but in the world. As a nation, if we are leading on this, which this legislation does, then we are going to be able to help clean up our oceans all over the world. We had a

good start here on Thursday night in the U.S. Senate when we passed this bill legislatively unanimously.

Again, to my colleague from Rhode Island, the floor is his.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I come to the floor with a bunch of thank-yous after Thursday evening's happy news that Save Our Seas 2.0 passed the U.S. Senate by unanimous consent.

I thank all of the Senate Members of our bipartisan Oceans Caucus. The Oceans Caucus has been a really good forum for getting these bills moving to a point at which they can pass by unanimous consent. I and Senator MURKOWSKI, who is Senator SULLIVAN's colleague from Alaska, set it up years ago. It now has over 40 Members. It is very bipartisan, and it has had a really important role in moving bipartisan oceans legislation.

So, Oceans Caucus, thank you.

This bill, Save Our Seas 2.0, had to go through three committees. It had to go through Commerce, Foreign Relations, and Environment and Public Works. Let me start in reverse order because Senator BARRASSO, the chairman of the Committee on Environment and Public Works, is here on the Senate floor. I express my appreciation to him and my appreciation to our ranking member, Senator CARPER, for having shepherded this through the committee with unanimous committee support, and that gave it a lot of momentum to go on to Foreign Relations and to Commerce.

So, my friend Senator BARRASSO, thank you, sir. I do appreciate it very much. I think this is a score, a good win. A good deed was done here.

Foreign Relations was also very important, and Senator MENENDEZ, our ranking member, is about to speak, so I will not steal his thunder. He has been an incredibly valuable part of this triumvirate, and I am extremely grateful to Senator MENENDEZ.

Also, on the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, Senators WICKER and CANTWELL were very helpful about making sure this got through Commerce and were helpful once it was on the floor.

Most of all, though, my thanks go to Senator SULLIVAN, of Alaska. We started down this road quite some time ago. We tentatively got into the space of ocean plastic waste with a simple hearing in the Committee on Environment and Public Works. He had an essential role in making that happen because there was a turf conflict between our subcommittee and the EPW and the Subcommittee on Science, Oceans, Fisheries, and Weather within the Commerce Committee.

Now, if you are not from the Senate, you think that this is all crazy talk, but if you are in the Senate, it is a really serious problem to have to resolve. We had the very good fortune of having the chairman of the Fisheries Subcommittee of the Commerce Com-

mittee and the chairman of our subcommittee of the Environment and Public Works Committee being the same individual, none other than Senator DAN SULLIVAN. So he went out and had a nice debate with himself and was able to negotiate a happy resolution of that turf dispute, and the hearing went forward. Without that, it never would have happened. So that was the opening bid.

Then we got to 1.0, which, admittedly, was not a very big bill, but it was going to test the proposition: Was the Senate willing to legislate on marine plastic waste? Yes. We got a big, booming, 100-vote support for that in the Senate. Senator SULLIVAN was so happy with that outcome that we immediately went to work on crafting 2.0, which, as Senator SULLIVAN has pointed out, is not just a beachhead but is significant marine plastic waste legislation. It will push the administration to do a lot more, for more than half of the waste in the oceans comes from 5 Asian countries, and more than 80 percent of the waste in the oceans comes from 10 rivers in Asia and Africa. This is a solvable problem if we direct attention and resources and solutions to that problem, and I am really looking forward to following up on that.

I am really looking forward to getting right to work on Save Our Seas 3.0 because we are not done here. There is a lot of plastic mess out there to clean up, and there is a lot of energy around getting even more done.

So, Senator SULLIVAN, you have my great appreciation.

I will close, if I may, with one unlikely thank-you. As Senator SULLIVAN mentioned, this reminded me that there are Senators who supported this who don't even have coasts. They are from those square end States in the middle of the country that don't have coasts. One of them who has been very important to this has been Senator INHOFE, of Oklahoma.

Now, on climate change, Senator INHOFE and I are at each other's throats pretty much all of the time. We are always having fights about climate change. I call him a climate denier, and he calls me a climate alarmist. We go back and forth, fighting about climate change. Yet, on this, he has been an essential ally, and having his support has sent, I think, a terrific signal to the Senate that, hey, if Senator WHITEHOUSE and Senator INHOFE can agree on this, there is room for me in there somewhere.

And so a final thank you to Senator INHOFE of Oklahoma, but the biggest thank you, of course, is to Senator SULLIVAN, who really made this happen.

With that, I yield to my colleague and friend Senator MENENDEZ, who has been so important to this, so he can add his thoughts.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, it is a pleasure to join Senators WHITE-

HOUSE and SULLIVAN on the floor today to thank our colleagues for passing the legislation that we have all coauthored to combat the environmental crisis of plastic waste in our oceans.

Our partnership represents both the geographic and political urgency behind this growing crisis. Save Our Seas 2.0 is a multifaceted effort that will help the United States to better prevent plastic pollution, respond to marine debris emergencies, and leverage U.S. foreign policy and international engagement to prevent and clean up foreign sources of plastic pollution.

We have a responsibility to protect the health of the world's oceans, which regulate our climate, produce half of the Earth's oxygen supply, and provide food to 2.6 billion people worldwide.

The environmental health of our world depends on healthy oceans, and plastic pollution and marine debris are like cholesterol clogging global ecosystems in countless ways. The reality is that plastic waste in our ocean knows no borders. What may be a plastic wrapper floating down a river in China today could be microplastic in your tuna salad tomorrow.

Let me thank Senator WHITEHOUSE, who has been so much engaged in our oceans since his coming to the Senate—well, even before that, but, certainly, as a leader in the Senate—and Senator SULLIVAN for their longstanding bipartisan leadership on this issue and cooperation on the bill.

I was happy to have supported the original Save Our Seas Act in the 115th Congress. Last year, when several international news stories exposed the tragic environmental impact of plastic on our marine environment, I began working on legislation to enhance U.S. international engagement on this truly global crisis, which served as the basis for title II of our bill. At the time, I was not immediately aware that Senators SULLIVAN and WHITEHOUSE were planning a second act, so to speak, and I dearly appreciate being a part of the Save Our Seas team.

I also want to thank Chairman RISCH for supporting and advancing the international components of this bill through the Foreign Relations Committee, as well as all of the chairs and rankings who have already been mentioned.

I think that advancing three component parts of the bill through all of these respective committees, which is no small feat, and the 20 bipartisan cosponsors shows the Senate's broad support for action on plastic waste.

New Jerseyans know all too well the threat of plastic pollution. Our pristine beaches attract millions of people to the Jersey Shore each year, and our coastal waters support everything from fishing and recreation to the flow of trade, to our ports and harbors. No one wants to swim in plastic or eat fish that fed on microplastic. That is why 25 New Jersey townships have passed local ordinances banning or phasing down disposable plastic products, and

another 26 may soon join them. There is also legislation pending in the New Jersey State Legislature to limit the proliferation of disposal plastics in New Jersey's economy.

With 40 percent of Americans living in coastal communities, my constituents back home are far from the only ones grappling with the hazards of plastic pollution in our oceans.

There is no question we still have work to do. As our bill heads to the House, I look forward to continuing these efforts with Senators WHITEHOUSE and SULLIVAN and our cosponsors as we engage House leaders to act on the bill this year.

Again, thank you to my colleagues. It is good. I know it doesn't always get the headlines. The essence of a good story seems to be conflict not cooperation, but I am thrilled to be a part of cooperation that could make a difference in the lives not just of our oceans but of our families.

I yield the floor.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I want to thank Senator MENENDEZ and Senator WHITEHOUSE again for their leadership on this.

We have all seen the pictures and the news stories. The issue, though, is a severe one. The World Economic Forum has estimated that if we don't do anything about this big crisis of ocean debris, but particularly the issue of plastics in the ocean, there are estimates that by 2050 there will be more plastics by weight in the world's ocean than there are fish. We can't let that happen.

So what we have done is we have put together this bill. As already mentioned, there were three different committees. There is an element on the domestic innovation side that creates a Marine Debris Foundation. That is a congressionally chartered private organization.

Think of groups that matter to Americans. There are dozens of these kinds of foundations, but they are important. They send a signal that the Congress of the United States cares about these things. Think about the Red Cross, the American Legion, and the National Parks Foundation. These are all congressionally chartered organizations. The new Marine Debris Foundation will be one of them.

The American Government is focused on this. It is an opportunity for the private sector, and we have seen some industries step up. There is a group called the Alliance to End Plastic Waste that has pledged \$1.5 billion to start addressing this problem. That is not small change. It is going to need that kind of money. Perhaps some of that can go into this foundation.

There is an innovation prize. A lot of focus in our bill is on innovation so that we can solve some of the big challenges in chemistry—a plastic bottle that could fully biodegrade. We don't have that yet, but these are some of the things that the bill looks at doing.

Of course, Senator MENENDEZ talked about the very substantial foreign rela-

tions component because so much of the plastic waste in the oceans comes from countries in Asia and Africa and 10 rivers, estimating almost 80 to 90 percent of all of the plastic waste in all of the oceans. So, again, it is solvable because it is definable.

Then, the third component is improving domestic infrastructure to prevent marine debris through new grants and foreign studies for waste management mitigation. So this covers a lot of different areas—innovation, our domestic side, the international side.

We have momentum. We had a great group of bipartisan Senators—Democrats and Republicans from all over the country and from all political persuasions—showing that momentum. We have the Trump administration fully behind this. In many ways, some of their Federal agencies weighed in significantly to help us design this legislation, and now we need to get it over to the House and move it in the House soon and get it to the President's desk.

So this is a good day for the oceans and a good day for bipartisan success in the U.S. Senate on an issue that people care about. People really care about making sure that we have clean oceans and we are making progress.

So I just want to leave it at that, and I will ask my colleague from Rhode Island, who has been the real leader on this issue, to wrap it up.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I am delighted to close this out. Again, I thank Senator SULLIVAN. I think there is reason to hope for a really good appropriations subcommittee hearing on this subject in the coming year. I think there is reason to hope for another Environmental and Public Works Committee full committee hearing on marine plastics. I expect those things will happen, and that will help us with our progress.

One of the things I have come to admire about Senator SULLIVAN is that, as a colonel in the U.S. Marines, he sets himself a mission and then he goes about it with real vigor. One of the missions that he set himself was to make sure that the Trump administration followed up on what Save Our Seas 1.0 did.

There were a lot of doors that were knocked on that had their hinges rattled by Senator SULLIVAN. There are a lot of administration officials who probably had to hold the phone an inch or so away from their ears because Senator SULLIVAN was trying to get their attention on this subject.

Having seen him in action on Save Our Seas 1.0, I very much look forward to watching him in action on Save Our Seas 2.0 and to make sure that its legislative promise is fully realized in executive implementation.

I yield the floor.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I look forward to another White House signing of this with all of our colleagues. I am sure that the administration is interested in it. You and I had a very eventful one over at the White House a couple years ago.

So, again, the momentum is there. We are just going to keep building on it.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, on to Save Our Seas 3.0.

Mr. SULLIVAN. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

## LEGISLATIVE SESSION

### MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. McCONNELL. 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.

(At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.)

### VOTE EXPLANATION

• Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I was necessarily absent for rollcall vote No. 11, the motion to invoke cloture on the nomination of Peter Gaynor to be Administrator of the Federal Management Agency. Had I been present for the vote, I would have voted yea.●

### TRIBUTE TO CONRAD JEFFRIES

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, today I honor Idaho veteran Conrad Jeffries for his service to our nation and for his efforts to address alarmingly high suicide rates in our country, especially among our Nation's veterans and servicemembers.

Conrad knows firsthand the personal costs of military service and the challenges servicemembers face returning to civilian life, and he has dedicated considerably of his time, talents, and resources to serving our country and helping his fellow veterans and military families. On January 12, Conrad Jeffries embarked on a more-than 200 mile run from Los Angeles to Las Vegas to raise awareness about rising suicide rates among veterans, Active-Duty servicemembers, and first responders. I understand his running route is intended to honor three sailors who committed suicide aboard the U.S.S. *George H.W. Bush* in September and promote the use of suicide screening forms to identify the root causes of and prevent veteran suicides. Conrad has said, "Veteran suicide is not the problem. Veteran suicide is the outcome." Conrad has admittedly faced his own personal struggles and has since dedicated his life to solving veteran suicide. This includes working to help others who struggle with mental health and substance abuse.

Conrad, who was raised in American Falls and lives in Boise, ID, served our Nation for 13 years in the Idaho Army National Guard and U.S. Coast Guard.