

have denigrated our men and women in uniform, our veterans, and our institutions.

Service and sacrifice run deep among my constituents in the Commonwealth of Virginia. With 130,000 Active-Duty members living in Virginia, the Commonwealth has one of the highest populations of military personnel in the Nation. Virginia is home to more than 700,000 veterans, men and women who have displayed the highest level of selfless service while defending this country and who have endured hardship and have put country above self.

I am proud to call these American heroes my constituents, as well as my neighbors, and I am humbled to represent and serve them in Congress. I am thankful to them for protecting this great country.

President Trump, though, again and again, has made disrespectful remarks about servicemembers, veterans, and military leaders despite being Commander in Chief. His name-calling and disdain for the value of service is divisive and dangerous.

Remember how President Trump ridiculed the Gold Star parents of Army CPT Humayun Khan, who died in June 2004 from an IED in Iraq. Mr. and Mrs. Khan are residents of Virginia.

Remember his comments questioning whether Senator John McCain should be called a hero and remember his recent comments, even after the reports of his comments in *The Atlantic* article came out—his recent comments that our top officials at DOD want to continue fighting wars to make defense contractors happy.

Whether it is pardoning and excusing those in uniform who commit crimes or not standing up to President Putin in defense of our troops when reports emerged that bounties have been offered for killing members of our Armed forces, whether it is deploying our military in response to peaceful protests, threatening to politicize and divide our military from civilian society, the President, on each of these occasions, is on the wrong side of honoring our servicemembers. These actions and statements are an affront to everyone who serves or has served. They are unacceptable and un-Presidential.

Instead, let's stay focused on what matters in this country. Let's stay united. We need to ensure that we are expressing each and every day how thankful we are to those who serve for protecting the freedoms we hold dear.

I want to thank Senator DUCKWORTH for the introduction of this resolution and, more so, I thank her for her dedicated and exemplary military service to our country.

It is my hope that all my colleagues in the Senate will recognize the mistakes made by our Commander in Chief when addressing the heroes of our military and our Nation's veterans.

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

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

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, the world today is in the clutches of a pandemic disease that touches directly or indirectly pretty much every human being on the face of the planet. It is costing us in lives, in money, and in immeasurable human pain.

It didn't have to be this way. We could have been better prepared. President Trump was left a detailed playbook from his predecessor, but he ignored it. Trump did away with key safety systems like the National Security Council's pandemic response unit. Once the pandemic struck, Trump and his team assured us it would all go away in time—no urgency.

It is a cautionary tale, it is a lesson, and it brings me today for the 270th time to call this Chamber to action on the issue of climate change. We cannot wait flat-footed for the next foreseeable crisis to engulf us. Climate change is a foreseeable crisis. It was indeed a foreseen crisis—indeed, even foreseen by Big Oil—and it is an actual crisis right now. It is a crisis we maybe can manage if we act swiftly and decisively, but if we fail to heed the warnings our natural world is screaming at us, we will be lost.

The fossil fuel industry runs a massive dark-money influence campaign to foment fake uncertainty about climate change, but the evidence—the evidence—is overwhelming. We see climate effects in harsher wildfires, more frequent and intense storms, and more extreme heat waves. Mother Nature's warnings grow clearer and louder every day. It is the ocean—the ocean—that signals some of the strongest warnings.

The changes in our marine world are clear. Oceans are acidifying, oceans are warming, and oceans are rising against our shores. These changes are measured; they are not hypotheticals. They are measured with thermometers, with tide gauges, with simple pH tests.

The tide gauges in Rhode Island don't lie about sea level rise. Sea levels are up nearly a foot over the last century. In other areas of the globe, sea levels have risen even higher, and the rate of sea level rise is accelerating.

We just learned more about Greenland, whose melting ice sheet is an enormous contributor to global sea level rise. Over a fifth of global sea level rise since 2005 is Greenland ice melt. Last month, Greenland broke its previous record for ice loss. Again, the pace of the melting is accelerating.

A team at Ohio State University just released a new study of the Greenland ice sheet based on 4 years of satellite data. The data showed that Greenland poured an average of 300 billion tons of melted glacier into our oceans every year across that period. But over the

last two decades, that rate of melting—that glacial collapse, as the scientists put it—is up sevenfold from the earliest years they studied. The rate is accelerating. That means that Greenland's ice is now melting so quickly that winter snows that typically replenish these glaciers won't keep up. We are now on course for the entire Greenland ice sheet to disappear.

“Glacial retreat has knocked the dynamics of the whole ice sheet into a constant state of loss,” said Ohio State's Ian Howat.

Greenland's glacial collapse portends dramatic and destructive sea level rise. Scientists reckon Greenland holds enough water to raise sea levels by about 20 feet. That puts my capital city of Providence and Florida's major cities underwater. Antarctica holds enough ice to melt and raise sea water levels 60 feet. So it is not hard to see the problem—total coastal inundation.

But well before total coastal inundation, coastal property values would plummet. Financial experts have been following the sea level economic threat for years because a coastal property values crash would radiate quickly through the rest of the economy. That crash creates what financial experts call systemic risk—a threat to the entire economic system. In 2016, the top economists for mortgage giant Freddie Mac—which is no liberal environmental group—warned that climate-driven flooding along U.S. coasts will lead to economic losses “greater . . . than those experienced in the housing crisis and Great Recession.”

It is not just Rhode Island. Pulitzer Prize-winning outdoors reporter Bob Marshall has warned of losing essentially all of Louisiana south of I-10. He said: “Voting for congressmen who oppose emissions regulations is a vote to drown this coast.”

It is not even just coasts. A new study out of the University of Arkansas shows sea level rise could push inland water tables higher, flooding communities many miles from the sea. We already see this phenomenon in inland Florida.

Last, there is really no dispute about the data. A tide gauge is a simple and ancient measure. But we see this and do nothing.

Another alarm bell is ringing in the ocean, and that is temperature. Oceans are warming, and the warming is accelerating. The rate of ocean warming has already doubled, and the ocean is projected to absorb up to five to seven times more heat by 2100. Why? Because the oceans regulate our planet's temperature by absorbing atmospheric heat. The oceans indeed have absorbed over 90 percent of the excess atmospheric heat fossil fuels have caused. If you think things are bad right now, we are actually only experiencing 10 percent of the global warming we have caused. The other 90 percent has been absorbed by the ocean. It is a lot of heat. By one example, our oceans are

warming at the rate of multiple Hiroshima explosions worth of heat per second—per second. There is not a lot of dispute here either, unless you want to argue with a thermometer.

Ocean warming displaces fisheries, disrupts ocean currents, destroys coral reefs, and depletes the oxygen levels and carrying capacity of the sea. These are the kinds of changes that usually transpire across geologic time. They are happening now.

Ocean warming sends its dangers ashore because that ocean heat energy powers up storm systems. They power up into stronger storms, and they power up faster. We just watched Tropical Storm Laura spin up into category 4 Hurricane Laura in less than 24 hours. As Bob Marshall, the Pulitzer Prize-winning Louisiana writer put it: “High water temperature [is] the crystal-meth of hurricane intensity.”

Warmer seas power up stronger storms, and they power up more storms. The Atlantic has already generated a typical full year’s worth of storms, pumping out about 55 percent more energy than usual into tropical storms and hurricanes. This year delivered the earliest ever C-, E-, F-, G-, H-, I-, J-, K-, L-, and M-named storms—every single one, the earliest of its name.

In 2019, 14 separate billion-dollar disasters struck the United States, and the majority of them were hurricanes. In 2018 and 2019, Dorian, Florence, and Michael slammed into our coasts. Year 2017 brought Harvey, the most significant tropical cyclone rainfall event ever recorded; and Irma, the strongest storm ever recorded outside of the Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean, with sustained winds reaching 185 miles per hour; and Hurricane Maria, killing nearly 3,000 Americans in Puerto Rico and laying waste to the island.

Ocean warming is altering basic operating systems of our planet. Physical systems are altered; biological systems are altered; basic features of the ocean are altered; and the change has just begun. Many of these changes are oceanic, but some come ashore. We need to buckle up.

The third ocean alarm bell is acidification. Oceans absorb not just 90 percent of the excess heat; they absorb about 30 percent of the carbon pollution—the excess carbon dioxide from fossil fuel emissions, and they have sucked up a lot of excess carbon. Since the Industrial Revolution, oceans have absorbed about 525 billion tons of CO₂—22 million tons per day. That added carbon dioxide chemically changes the ocean’s pH, making oceans more acidic. It looks like the oceans are acidifying at their fastest rate in at least 50 million years. As with warming and sea level rise, the rate of acidification is accelerating. Again, there is no real dispute; pH testing is pretty reliable stuff.

A new Texas A&M study shows carbon dioxide levels rising at alarming rates in the Gulf of Mexico—bad news

for shrimp, coral, and other marine life that are highly sensitive to acidity. Texas A&M warns of the acidification threat to the gulf’s commercial fisheries, worth roughly \$1 billion per year.

The Woods Hole Institute made startling findings about acidification of coral reefs triggering a kind of osteoporosis for coral, hampering the organism’s ability to grow skeletons. Reefs, of course, are the nurseries of the sea. Without coral reefs, marine biodiversity plummets and our oceans become unrecognizable.

The University of Alaska has an entire ocean acidification research center because of the dangers to Alaskan fisheries. The lowly pteropod is a base species along the northern Pacific coast. It is damaged in acidified seas, and no one quite knows what becomes of that ocean food chain when a foundation species like the pteropod collapses. We know it is not good.

All of these warnings are stark. Our oceans are in crisis. Our natural world hurdles toward a point of no return. Meanwhile, the fossil fuel industry keeps deploying lies and political influence in a carefully orchestrated covert operation run against our own government.

The fossil fuel industry’s menacing climate denial apparatus has captured one of America’s major political parties. In the wake of Citizens United, fossil fuel dark money has so thoroughly corrupted American politics that Congress has lost an entire decade—the lost decade—to industry mischief. Even today, we still fritter and dawdle.

Eventually, we will see the full contours of the covert operation the fossil fuel industry has run against us as if we were an enemy nation. One day will come a full accounting of this industry’s wanton deception of the American people. One day we will see just how much money this industry paid for its malign influence and who accepted that money and denied the science and ignored the problem. History will judge those involved harshly, and deservedly so. It is a crime in progress against our own children and the world they will inhabit.

After the lost decade of Citizens United, time is short to heed the warnings of our oceans and end the fossil fuel pollution that threatens them. It is truly getting to be now or never.

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.

Mr. MCCONNELL. 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. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session for 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.

REMEMBERING JIM THOMPSON

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, in 1978, I was the Democratic nominee for Lieutenant Governor of Illinois, running with Michael Bakalis, the Democratic nominee for governor. We squared off against a ticket headed by six-foot-six Governor Big Jim Thompson. Big Jim was 40 years old and a relatively new Governor, only elected 2 years earlier. Bakalis and I were underdogs, but we were hopeful. We shouldn’t have been.

Our fate was sealed when Jim and Jayne were joined by their beautiful daughter Samantha right after Labor Day. Election day came, and we were clobbered. We found out what many Democrats would learn over the years. Big Jim was hard as hell to beat. Why? He may have campaigned as a partisan, but he governed in bipartisanship. His talent for working to get things done helped make him the longest serving Governor in Illinois history.

Last month, Jim passed away. I was honored to call him a friend and, today, I would like to pay tribute to his life.

James Robert Thompson, Jr. was born on the West Side of Chicago in 1936. Jim was known to be shy but ambitious. He listed his ambition as “President-Politician” in his yearbook. In one classmate’s yearbook, he wrote “Jim Thompson, Pres. of U.S. 1984–1992.”

Jim attended the University of Illinois at its campus on Navy Pier in Chicago. He transferred to Washington University in St. Louis in his junior year and attended law school at Northwestern in 1959.

In 1961, Jim worked for the Cook County State’s attorney and argued two cases before the United States Supreme Court. He also joined Northwestern University Law School as an assistant professor.

For 5 years, Jim taught at Northwestern, inspiring many students to pursue criminal law. In 1969, he became the head of the criminal division of the U.S. Attorney’s office. As fate would have it, he was the lecturer on criminal procedure in my bar review course. In 1971, President Richard Nixon appointed him to be the U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois.

At the age of 35, Jim was a crusader against corruption in both parties, leading investigations against Chicago aldermen and Vice President Spiro Agnew. His efforts made him look like a political outsider—just what Illinois