

percentage of them lose faith in elections, when they are told by leaders they trust that elections that were actually held legitimately are illegitimate, then, those individuals, of course, will naturally lose faith in public institutions themselves. If all the people who got elected were illegitimately chosen, then, so must be the actions they take once they are in office.

Now, maybe that is consistent with the general Republican project over the last several decades. I have watched as Republicans have engaged in a withering assault on the public sector. The whole idea from Republicans has been that government is illegitimate by its very nature and can't do anything to help you or to solve your problems. But that idea, if it is, in fact, the goal of my Republican colleagues to delegitimize public institutions by delegitimizing elections, is really dangerous for two reasons. One, don't assume that democracy can survive this. If the 45 percent of the country that supports Donald Trump doesn't really believe that elections are legitimate, I am not sure that democracy hangs around for another 100 years. But, second, we are living in a moment where it is really important for people to have faith in public institutions. There is no way for us to turn the corner on this pandemic unless people believe what leaders are telling them about how to conduct themselves or about how we are going to administer a vaccine or about why the business around the corner from you is limiting the number of people who can enter it. In the middle of a pandemic that has killed going on 250,000 Americans, losing faith in public institutions is deadly.

The President is delusional. There was no voter fraud. He lost. The American people, by a large margin, chose Joe Biden as President of the United States, and this delusion is not a quaint sideshow. It is an assault on our democracy that will have consequences for the future viability of democracy but also for the viability of public institutions to meet crises like the one that we stand in the middle of today.

The President's behavior and the behavior of Republicans in Congress who support him is dangerously unpatriotic. When we arrive in the Senate we swear an oath to our country, not to our party, and right now our President and congressional Republicans are not living up to that oath.

I yield the floor.

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

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

VETERANS DAY

Mr. LANKFORD. Madam President, today in Oklahoma, people are going to work, people are going to school, people are on their job, people are in their yard, people are on bikes, people are going for a quiet run in beautiful weather because tomorrow is Veterans Day. We enjoy freedom and peace today because of what those veterans have done for a very long time.

Whatever community you are in in Oklahoma, whether you are in Oklahoma City or in Tulsa, or in Lawton, whether you are in Guymon, or Idabel, Altus, or Waukomis—it doesn't matter—you are going to find drawings; you are going to find displays; you are going to find military hardware; you are going to find memorials and monuments to veterans who have served because across our State we remember extremely well the sacrifice that has been made for the quietness of this day, the ability to have an election, the ability to send our kids to school, the ability to work hard, to fight off a virus, the ability to invent and innovate because 1 percent of our Nation has set aside their life to be able to guard the rest of the 99 percent of us. We in Oklahoma could not be more grateful for the service of those women and men over the years and currently.

As a nation, we pause on Veterans Day and remember, but I think about veterans who don't just pause once a year to do it. It is part of who they are. They served our Nation in the military, and they find ways to continue to serve veterans and to serve the people around them in their community every single day.

There are people who work at the veterans centers in Oklahoma who are remarkable people who help veterans literally every week to be able to work through and navigate the bureaucracy. Our office works with them to try to get solutions and answers if they have issues with the VA or they have issues with trying to get their medals or whatever it may be. But these volunteers are scattered all across our State.

We have staff members today who are working in veterans facilities scattered all over the State who are taking care of veterans who are basically in an assisted living-type environment or in a nursing long-term care environment. Those individuals get up every single day and love on veterans. They look them in the eye, when they are now at their weakest moment of their life since their infancy, and say: Our Nation still cares about you.

There are people today in Oklahoma who work on Federal housing programs designed to help veterans who are homeless on the street to get care, to find a place to live, and to get established. There are people in Oklahoma today who are working with Federal programs to help veterans who have struggled with addiction, some who didn't reacclimate well. They are helping them right now because our Nation has not forgotten about them.

While we grieve with those who grieve—because Veterans Day also brings back the memory, for some families who are Gold Star families, of the ones they have lost—we remind them again that we have not forgotten, and we say thank you to those folks who are serving our veterans every single day.

I also think about folks like Bob Ford, who lives in Okeene, OK. He is working at Shawnee Milling Company and does a remarkable job just providing for the people in the community, but he has also kept alive the memory of fellow Vietnam veterans. In so many ways, he helps not only the park and other places to remember, but he also makes sure on Veterans Day that there are speakers in local schools and that someone is retelling the message. He is the one in the community who is always making sure there is a patriotic display at some point. You see, he is a Vietnam veteran himself who is serving and working in the community but who has also turned around said, though his uniform is not on anymore, he wants to make sure the next generation knows what honorable service really looks like.

There are folks like Terry Hill from Kellyville, OK, who enlisted in the Army in 2013 as an engineer and was commissioned as an officer in 2008. He became a Black Hawk aeromedical research and maintenance test pilot. He flew 750 combat missions in Afghanistan over multiple deployments before he came down really, really hard one time and had a medical discharge.

You see, for Terry, Veterans Day is not a once-a-year thing. He founded Rapid Application Group in his home. It is an additive manufacturing company. In fact, his is the only additive manufacturing company that has a disabled veteran running it in the entire country. Every Friday, he has a hashtag "RAG Friday." Many of those who work in his company are also fellow veterans. But every Friday, he reminds everyone to watch out for fellow veterans, to watch out for issues like possible suicide senses, to engage with those folks who have made great sacrifices to serve our Nation, and to continue to check on them because some of the things they have experienced and some of the challenges they have faced leave lasting memories for them. As they stood for our freedom and our country forgets those moments, they never do because they have lived them firsthand. So his simple way to do RAG Fridays every Friday and to challenge folks to not forget veterans in your community is his way of being able to serve folks.

Again, as a nation, we have not forgotten, but we are exceptionally grateful for those who remind us as a nation not just to remember once a year but to stay engaged with those veterans who have given so much and continue to give so much.

Honestly, I don't know a veteran who is not still serving. They find ways to

serve each other. They find ways to serve their community because it is in their heart, and it is deep within their soul. They have served our Nation, and they will continue to serve our Nation. And while some need our help, I most often hear from veterans: How can I help?

So let me just say from my heart and from my State: Thank you, again, for serving the way that you serve. Allow us to say thank you to you face-to-face today and to tell you once again, we have not forgotten, and we are grateful for the sacrifice you and your family have made.

For those Gold Star families, we cannot thank you enough because every day you remember, and you need to hear from us that so do we.

When the Israelites crossed over the Jordan, they went back into that dry area and gathered stones. And they set those stones on the embankment for one specific purpose.

The purpose was simple. They said: When your children walk past these stones in the days ahead and they say "What are those stones for?" you are to remind them of the faithfulness of God. They were to be a permanent reminder.

Allow Veterans Day and the military memorials all over the State today to be a good teaching moment for our children so that when they say "Why is that there?" we remind them of the freedom that we have and the cost of that freedom and express our gratitude again to the veterans who have served us.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Madam President, as I begin my remarks, let me thank my friend Senator LANKFORD for his eloquent comments about our veterans and those who have served and given their lives for us.

I am here with my trusty and battered "Time to Wake up" graphic because, after 4 dark years on climate, there is at last a glimmer of light on the horizon.

President-Elect Biden has promised to redirect the executive branch to address climate change in the clear light of real science, out of the dark swamp of fossil fuel denial and obstruction, trying—trying—to head off a climate catastrophe while there is still time, if there is still time.

There is a lot the executive branch can do. The President can lead diplomatic and international trade initiatives. The environmental regulatory agencies of government can be freed from corrupting influence to do their duty with vigor based on science and the law. Securities regulators can put climate risk to the economy at the forefront, as the Commodity Futures Trading Commission has just done. Purchasing decisions can be directed

toward a clean energy future. Permitting decisions can be made with the social cost of carbon pollution in mind, as courts have already begun to demand even in the corrupt Trump era.

On the investigative side, the administration can begin a hard look at the forces of corruption that have blockaded action on climate change: Who did this and how? Did their political spending violate campaign finance, conflict of interest, or other laws? Did their toxic propaganda violate laws against fraud, as the tobacco industry's did? Was their occupation of regulatory agencies a rolling conspiracy to violate the Administrative Procedures Act, and if so, how and for whom was it organized? Has their interference in the judiciary compromised the rights of parties or the integrity of courts?

American citizens deserve a full and fearless exposition of why Congress has thwarted the public will to do something—anything—meaningful to address this climate crisis and at whose behest.

What were the forces of corruption, and how did they accomplish their nefarious purpose? There is a lesson in democracy here for the citizens of this great Republic—a lesson that is now hidden behind phony front groups and subterranean rivers of anonymous money. There is every reason to believe that the biggest covert op in history has been run in and against our own government. That is no way for a "city on a hill" to be governed.

But with all the executive branch policy work and all the investigations that are due and overdue, there is no pathway to climate safety that does not go through Congress. Action by Congress is a necessity, not a luxury. I have seen no study showing any pathway to safety without action by Congress.

To make that pathway to safety possible, we will have to change a few things. One is, as I said, to investigate the denial and obstruction campaign run by the fossil fuel industry, how it used its dark weaponry of political spending—much of it anonymous—and political propaganda. The executive branch can do this, but so can the House. Sadly, here in the Senate, the power of the fossil fuel industry assures no such investigation will happen in our committees if Republicans keep control of the Senate. But the House or a high-level Presidential commission or our Department of Justice all have tools to bring the light of transparency into these dark and slimy corners.

Separately, we can display to the American people what corporate America says about climate change versus what it does in Congress. It may even surprise some CEOs what their corporate lobbying posture actually is. If you are a CEO who is sincere about this, you ought to commission an audit of your corporate lobbying and electioneering on climate. Here is what you will find, unless you are maybe

Patagonia or Ben & Jerry's: Most every major American corporation does nothing in Congress on climate—zip, zero, nada.

TechNet lobbies for the supposedly climate-friendly Silicon Valley giants like Apple, Google, Facebook, and Microsoft. It even represents green energy companies. Yet this year its glossy, 13-page menu of priorities for Congress never even mentioned climate change or green energy.

Coke and Pepsi lobby Congress through an American Beverage Association that doesn't lift a finger on climate. That corporate behemoth, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce—three times the lobbying muscle of its next nearest rival, sometimes the biggest dark-money spender in elections, a persistent voice in our courts and regulatory agencies—that chamber is in a statistical tie for America's worst climate obstructer—worst.

Representing Ford and GM, Abbott Labs and Johnson & Johnson, Citibank and Bank of America, Delta and United, Target and Home Depot, Intel and AT&T, and dozens of other big businesses is a worst climate obstructer in America. That deserves some explaining.

Don't just blame Congress. By doing nothing, Congress is exactly following what corporate America actually asks of Congress: Do nothing. Do nothing. We don't care.

Want to open a pathway for a safe climate through Congress? Republicans in Congress are going to have to hear that their corporate benefactors demand climate action. They aren't hearing that now. They are hearing the opposite. They are hearing: We don't care.

Democrats are ready. We have been ready for a decade. Republicans, at least since Citizens United—it was quite bipartisan before that decision—won't touch the issue, and by an amazing coincidence, that party is almost entirely funded by the unlimited and often anonymous donations of the fossil fuel industry. The money is often hidden, of course, behind donor trusts and shell corporations and 501(c)(4) tax organizations, but it is there, and it is billions.

The rest of corporate America has not pushed back. They have their own tax breaks to protect and their own industry priorities to pursue, and climate change just doesn't make it into their corporate political agenda. Getting the so-called good guys off the bench and onto the field could make a big difference, but they are not there now—not yet.

If corporations are going to fail this moral test so catastrophically, it is fair to ask what good it does to give corporations any role in our politics, let alone the commanding role they now assert in the U.S. Congress. The Founding Fathers, for one, would be astonished to see these monsters loose in our politics at all, let alone so large and in charge.