

Morgan which claims to be seriously and sincerely interested in climate response. J.P. Morgan, a major investor that has been warned over and over again by now more than 30 sovereign banks of the danger of an economic crash from this carbon bubble popping—they give the man who led this campaign of lies sanctuary and fees on their board.

So what is the purpose of spending all that money? The reason Big Oil spends billions on its ads is to implant favorable perceptions of fossil fuels into what Robert Brulle calls the “collective unconscious,” and it does that to support its other great influence project, which is spending hundreds of millions of dollars on lobbying and on elections to control the politics of climate change and to ensure that Republicans block any serious efforts to limit carbon pollution. That is a scheme that deserves infamy, and it is a scheme being perpetrated as I speak, right now, today.

Right now, the American Petroleum Institute—the largest trade association for the oil and gas industry—has a seven-figure ad campaign called “We’re On It.” They run ads on the internet, on TV, and on billboards—the ones I mentioned all over the DC airport—designed to fool the public and policy-makers that the oil and gas industry is “on its” carbon and methane emissions problem. Not only are they not on it, they are cheating about even reporting their methane leaks.

This is an ad in the Washington Post’s “Energy 202” newsletter just last week. It reads: “Let’s create climate solutions together.” Content from the API.

Seriously? What a joke. API, the same trade association that is furiously lobbying against efforts to control methane pollution from oil and gas facilities don’t even want to report it fairly. When Trump got in, job one was to take down the methane leakage reporting regulation that was coming. They are lobbying for expansion of off-shore drilling, and they are lobbying against any price on carbon to offset that \$650 billion subsidy, and they want to create climate solutions together? It is unreal—unreal.

Let’s take a walk back into history. In 2006, here in Washington, in the U.S. district court, a judge named Gladys Kessler wrote a long, long opinion—well over 100 pages. It was a commanding opinion, and it was an opinion that was upheld afterward by the U.S. court of appeals. It was an opinion in relation to a case that had been brought by the U.S. Department of Justice.

The U.S. Department of Justice had sued the tobacco industry, and they had asked Judge Kessler to find the tobacco companies’ PR efforts fraudulent and to order them to knock it off. They were committing fraud. Stop it. You are lying to people, enough already.

In her opinion, Judge Kessler found in favor of the U.S. Department of Jus-

tice. Indeed, she found the tobacco companies’ fraudulent PR campaigns to have amounted to racketeering. It was a civil racketeering lawsuit. I will quote her decision here. She said the tobacco industry “coordinated significant aspects of their public relations, scientific, legal, and marketing activity in furtherance of a shared objective—to . . . maximize industry profits by preserving and expanding the market for cigarettes through a scheme to deceive the public.”

So swap out “cigarettes” and plug in “fossil fuel,” and you have described exactly what big oil companies do: coordinate their public relations, scientific, legal, and marketing activity in furtherance of a shared objective to maximize industry profits by preserving and expanding the market for fossil fuel through a scheme to deceive the public.

What the fossil fuel industry is doing is precisely the conduct that was racketeering activity when done by the tobacco industry, but don’t expect Bill Barr’s Department of Justice to pursue any type of legal action like that. The fossil fuel industry is too strong, and the fix is too far in.

This is all rotten stuff. It is gross. It is banana republic behavior. It is not what we expect here in the United States of America.

It is on us. It doesn’t have to be this way. We can stop it. We have the power here in the Senate to shake off the malign influence of a desperate and greedy industry and actually tackle the defining issue of our time, like Americans should.

So let’s have a real debate on a real climate change bill. Let’s surprise the world and pass something big and bold. Let’s wake up to the threat of climate change and get ahead of its consequences before the situation becomes irretrievable.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. MCSALLY). The Senator from Alaska.

NOMINATION OF JOSHUA M. KINDRED

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Madam President, I have come to the floor this evening to speak in support of the nomination of Joshua Kindred to be a U.S. district court judge for the District of Alaska. We were able to move forward with the first step toward the confirmation of Mr. Kindred, but I just wanted to take a couple of minutes and speak as to why I believe he is well qualified to serve in this capacity and deserves to be confirmed by the Senate with, hopefully, broad bipartisan support.

I am glad and I am pleased that he has been willing to step into a new role for our State. Josh Kindred comes from Anchorage, where I am living. He currently serves as Alaska’s regional solicitor for the Department of the Interior. He has been doing a good job, a strong job, for us there. Before joining the Department, Mr. Kindred served as the environmental counsel for the Alaska Oil and Gas Association, as well as an assistant district attorney and

violent unit supervisor for the State of Alaska. He also served as a law clerk to Chief Justice Paul De Muniz of the Supreme Court of the State of Oregon.

One way that you know that Mr. Kindred has good judgment is that he went to the same law school I did. So it can’t be all bad there. He earned his juris doctorate from Willamette University College of Law. He served as editor in chief of the Willamette Law Review and certainly demonstrated great skills and abilities at that level.

I think it is important to speak to Mr. Kindred’s biographical details to illustrate that his experience is both considerable and is really relevant. It is directly relevant for this new role that he is seeking. It is that experience in a host of different areas that matters for our State, and I believe that will help him as a Federal jurist.

Mr. Kindred’s experience in civil, criminal, and administrative law at both the State and the Federal levels, in both the public sector as well as the private sector, is exactly what we should be seeking in a nominee for a court of original jurisdiction, such as the U.S. District Court for the District of Alaska.

Josh Kindred is no stranger to the courtroom. He has extensive trial experience, which is, of course, important for operating in the courtroom. His background also brings a welcomed and valuable understanding of Alaska’s unique Federal laws and landscape. He has extensive experience in Federal lands, mining, natural resources, oil and gas laws, and environmental laws and permitting. These are all things—all things—that are constantly litigated back home and that apply to so many of the important priorities that we have in Alaska.

You often hear me talk about the fact that Alaska is different. It is unique, and, certainly, some of our laws—many of our laws—reflect that. Not many are truly knowledgeable about ANCSA, about ANILCA. These are critically important to understand, and Mr. Kindred certainly understands them. That skill set, that operational base of knowledge on Alaska-specific laws and matters, is really vital for our State.

In addition, and perhaps of equal importance, Mr. Kindred has long called Alaska home. He was raised in our local schools. He is raising his young family there. He comes from good family. He married into good family. He is a good Alaskan. He knows Alaska. He understands our State well.

I am proud of Mr. Kindred’s continued commitment to public service and his willingness to serve our State. So, again, I would urge the Senate to confirm Josh Kindred. I know that he will do well in his new role, as he has done in all his others.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the en bloc consideration of the following nominations: Executive Calendar Nos. 558, 559, 560, and 561.

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

The clerk will report the nominations en bloc.

The legislative clerk read the nominations of John Hennessey-Niland, of Illinois, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Palau; Donald Wright, of Virginia, a Career Member of the Senior Executive Service, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the United Republic of Tanzania; Dorothy Shea, of North Carolina, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Lebanese Republic; and Todd C. Chapman, of Texas, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Federative Republic of Brazil.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the nominations en bloc.

Mr. McCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate vote on the nominations en bloc with no intervening action or debate; that if confirmed, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table en bloc; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action; that no further motions be in order; and that any statements relating to the nominations be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Hennessey-Niland, Wright, Shea, and Chapman nominations en bloc?

The nominations were confirmed en bloc.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam 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.

BIPARTISAN BACKGROUND CHECKS

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, every day, we are reminded of the dev-

astating toll of gun violence in our Nation. On average, around 100 Americans die each day from gunfire. It is an epidemic of violence. This week marks the anniversaries of three horrific mass shootings.

On February 15, 1 year ago, a gunman shot and killed five coworkers at a warehouse in Aurora, IL, and also shot and wounded five police officers who rushed to the scene. On that day, we lost Russell Beyer, Vicente Juarez, Clay Parks, Josh Pinkard, and Trevor Wehner.

February 14 was the date of the 2008 mass school shooting at Northern Illinois University in DeKalb, in which a mentally disturbed gunman killed 5 students and wounded 17 more. On that day, we lost Gayle Dubowski, Catalina Garcia, Julianna Gehant, Ryanne Mace, and Daniel Parmenter.

And February 14 was also the date when 17 students and staff were murdered in 2018 at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, FL.

These anniversaries and statistics are grim, but they do not capture the true impact of this horrific gun violence—so many funerals, so many families and communities devastated.

And every day we lose still more lives to gun violence in communities large and small. Just this past weekend, at least 23 people were shot in the city of Chicago, nine of them fatally.

We pray for the families and loved ones of those we have lost, and we remember the wounded who bear physical and mental scars from their trauma. We also renew our thanks for the first responders who run toward the sound of gunfire and risk their lives to help others.

There are many people throughout America who are doing all they can to try to reduce our Nation's epidemic of gun violence. This includes parents, community leaders, teachers, faith leaders, law enforcement, public officials, the medical community, and more.

I particularly want to commend a coalition of hospitals that has been working with me in Chicago on the HEAL Initiative. This is an effort to coordinate these hospitals' resources, from economic investment to community programming, to help reduce violence and improve quality of life in their surrounding neighborhoods. There are promising efforts taking place in many States and local communities to address gun violence.

But is the U.S. Senate doing all it can to protect our communities from gun violence? No, not even close.

While there is no single reform that could prevent every shooting, we know there are obvious gaps in Federal gun laws that make it easy for felons, abusers, and mentally unstable people to get guns.

Nearly a year ago, on February 27, 2019, the House of Representatives passed a bipartisan bill to close gaps in our background check system that allow an estimated 22 percent of gun

sales to occur without a check. Around 90 percent of Americans support closing the gaps in the background check system. It is a step that would save lives. Yet the Republican Senate majority refuses to call the bill up for a vote. I can't explain why Senate Republicans won't take up bipartisan, House-passed gun safety legislation that Americans overwhelmingly support. It makes no sense.

There have been too many deaths, too many mass shootings, too many grim anniversaries, and too many excuses for inaction. It is time for Senator McCONNELL to call up H.R. 8, the bipartisan background checks bill, and hold a vote.

TRIBUTE TO DR. LARRY GOODMAN

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, the Chicago area is blessed to have some of the top hospitals and academic centers in the country. Rush University Medical Center and College in Chicago, in particular, has advanced into a comprehensive and leading health care institution. Rush continues to deliver high-quality care to its patients, driving the field of innovative medical research and training the next generation of healthcare practitioners. I would like to celebrate the tenure and accomplishments of the hospital's president and CEO and the leader in the program at Rush, my friend, Dr. Larry Goodman.

In 1976, Larry earned his medical degree from the University of Michigan's Medical School. He completed his residency at the Rush University Medical Center, where he served as the chief medical resident before joining the faculty.

At Rush, Larry served as an infectious disease specialist, working to improve the lives of people affected by HIV and AIDS. He also served as the senior vice president of medical affairs and the dean of the Rush Medical College before the hospital appointed him as its president and CEO in 2002.

Under Larry's leadership, Rush has prospered. The hospital doubled its student enrollment in the last 20 years, training future physicians who will provide top-notch healthcare services in communities around the Nation. The hospital also collaborated to increase its employment of local community members. These efforts, in part through West Side United, have helped to reduce the health inequities that exist between the residents of low-income communities and those in affluent communities. In fact, it was Dr. Goodman who first told me about the alarming 16-year gap in life expectancy between people living in the Loop and in West Garfield Park—just two "L" stops, or 6 miles, apart from each other on the Blue.

More than a year ago, I joined several community leaders to announce the Chicago Hospital Engagement, Action, and Leadership, or HEAL, Initiative to help address many of the root