

Ambassador Power has been known to be ferocious in the pursuit of justice, human rights, and democracy, always taking time to listen to other points of view with great humility.

While she disagrees with Henry Kissinger on everything from politics to the no-brainer debate of the Red Sox versus the Yankees, Henry Kissinger said that Samantha “has an excellent analytical mind, and even on matters where I might have come to different conclusions, I respected her analysis”—perhaps the highest praise ever given by a Yankees fan to a member of Red Sox Nation, of which she is proudly a member.

As an immigrant from Ireland, Samantha’s personal background gives her a unique and deep respect for this country and all that it stands for. Spending time between Pittsburgh, Atlanta, Dublin, and Boston, she received her bachelor’s degree at Yale University and went on to obtain her law degree at Harvard University. She served in several key positions during the Obama administration, including as the Special Assistant to the President, the National Security Council Senior Director for Multilateral Affairs and Human Rights, and, notably, as the youngest ever U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations.

Prior to entering government service, she began her career as a war correspondent, reporting from the siege of Sarajevo, became a Pulitzer Prize-winning author, and served as the founding executive director of the Carr Center for Human Rights Policy at Harvard University.

As she takes on the important work of leading USAID, the challenges Samantha Power will face are daunting: recovering from a global pandemic, revamping the state of global democracy, tackling the climate crisis, and extending lifesaving assistance to the nearly 1 billion people around the world who go to bed hungry every single night. I know of no person more qualified to take on this task. She embodies that bold red, white, and blue USAID logo, which states “From the American People.”

In 2015, Samantha Power invited me to be her guest to attend His Holiness Pope Francis’s address before the United Nations General Assembly. For two Irish Catholics from Massachusetts, it was the experience of a lifetime. On that day, Pope Francis spoke of the need for compassion, inclusivity, and action to tackle the world’s shared challenges. Samantha’s career personifies each of these qualities, and I know she will take her compassion, inclusivity, and unwavering desire for action and achieve great things for the people of the United States and for the world at USAID.

There is no one better qualified, ever, to serve as the head of this Agency, and I would, with the greatest of enthusiasm, recommend an “aye” vote from every Member of the Senate on her confirmation as our Administrator

of this great group who serves in every country around the world.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

#### INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, this body does not have to automatically raise taxes to pay for infrastructure. Now, I know some of my colleagues would disagree with me. Some want to raise the gasoline tax. The President—well, I think he wants to raise every tax known to man and beast to spend on infrastructure and other things. And that is—he is the President. He is an American. He is entitled to his own opinion.

But I don’t think we spent nearly enough time looking at our current spending and asking ourselves if we could reprioritize some of the ways that we are spending taxpayer money.

Let me put it another way. No person with even a casual relationship with the Federal budget and/or an IQ above a root vegetable believes that every single penny being spent today in the U.S. Government’s budget is being spent efficiently. I mean, it is just not, Mr. President. You know that. You have run a State before. You have put together a budget before. It is not. For example, we waste \$144 billion a year, every year, on improper payments. We send checks to people who are not entitled to receive them—for the earned income tax credit, for example. We spend money on people who don’t exist or aren’t qualified to receive Medicaid. We even send money to dead people, and they cash the checks—or at least their relatives do.

Now, I am not naive. I know that we will never ever—an organization as large as the Federal Government will never be able to avoid a percentage of improper payments. I understand that. But we ought to at least try, particularly on sending the checks to dead people. Even if we could reduce that \$144 billion by 10 percent or 20 percent or 25 percent, we are talking about a very large amount of recurring revenue.

A very simple solution—I suggested this to the White House, which hasn’t responded—we have passed legislation in this body, as you know, to try to stop sending checks to dead people. There is just one problem: It was made effective 3 years from now. I had to agree to it in conference to get the bill passed. There is no good reason for it other than some lobbyists insisted on it.

President Biden right now, I think, could pick up at least \$10 billion, maybe more—we are not sure how much—by just saying: Effective immediately, my administration is no longer going to send checks to dead people. I mean, who is going to get mad? Who supports sending money to dead people? The American people don’t.

No. 2, we could repurpose the money—a lot of the money that we have already appropriated. I have lost

count on how much money we have appropriated for coronavirus—not just on public health but also for our economy. Look, I voted for many of the bills. I didn’t vote for the last one because I felt the last one was unnecessary, it was too expensive, and it really wasn’t about the coronavirus.

But I think all fairminded people can agree right now on two things: No. 1, a lot of the money we appropriated in the last coronavirus bill has not been spent, and No. 2, we are no longer in an economic crisis. The main crisis we have right now is that our small business women and small business men can’t find workers.

So we are currently not in an economic crisis, and I think we can go back and take some of that money—and my State, Louisiana is going to take—some aspects of my State government—it will take them 10 years to spend all the money we sent to them in the last bill. I can tell you, given the option in my State, they are going to choose to spend that money on infrastructure and not on what Congress sent them the money to spend it on.

No. 3, there is a very interesting study by the CBO taking the years—I think it was 2013 to 2017. The CBO took the entire Federal nonmilitary workforce, on which we spend \$220 billion a year because we have to have workers, and they took every job in the Federal Government and compared it to every equivalent job in the private sector. It was a massive study. So it is apples to apples. The CBO found that the Federal Government, on average, pays a Federal worker 17 percent more annually than we pay the same worker in the private sector.

Now, I won’t begrudge anybody a living, but what if we could reduce that to 15 percent or 12 percent? What if we could just not automatically fill every vacancy? What if we actually stopped and asked ourselves, if this position has been vacant for 8 months, maybe we don’t need it. I think there are enormous savings to be had.

The final thing I will point out: Doing is better than having. Doing is better than having. You are happier when you have earned something than when somebody has just given it to you.

We are the most generous Nation in all of human history. The American people spend about \$1 trillion a year helping our neighbors and some folks who are not our neighbors but are less fortunate than we are. But we spend about \$76 billion a year on Medicaid and on food stamps for adults who are able-bodied, who are 55 years of age and younger, and who don’t have children. Many of them could work. Now, I know there are obstacles to them being able to work. Maybe they need help looking for a job. Maybe they need employment counseling. Maybe they need help with transportation. But we could save enormous amounts of money, and our citizens, our people, and our neighbors, who are receiving this money, would be better off if they had a job.

We don't have to reinvent the wheel. All we have to do is look to Denmark. Denmark does an extraordinary job. They are very generous in Denmark with their payments for unemployment, but they also have an infrastructure set up in government, which we could do, which works with people to get them a job and to get them off welfare. And Denmark has saved an enormous amount of money. Let me say it again. Doing is better than having.

Am I saying we could save 100 percent of that \$75 billion? No. I don't know how much we could save. Nobody else does either because we have never tried.

Now, in about—I don't know—7 minutes, I have just given you four or five ideas. I am not suggesting that this is anything. I am not pretending that I just discovered gravity or something. This isn't Earth-shaking. I mean, you can find this with just a cursory amount of research. Just call the folks over at the Congressional Budget Office and ask them: What are some ways we can save money in our Federal budget?

I just think we would all feel so much better. I know the American taxpayer would feel a lot better, if just for a little while, as we talk about the importance of infrastructure, true infrastructure—roads, bridges, broadband—if we just spent a little while, as we talk about infrastructure, on how to pay for it without putting our hand even further, deeper, and more frequently in the taxpayers' pockets, because it can be done. I watched the Presiding Officer do it in Colorado. I have seen too many public officials do it. I think we need to at least try.

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

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

S.J. RES. 14

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, I rise today to speak in support of S.J. Res. 14, which we will vote on later today. I want to thank Senator HEINRICH, Senator MARKEY, and Senator KING for their leadership on this resolution. And I might be mistaken here, but I understand that when the Presiding Officer was Governor of Colorado, the Presiding Officer might have set the precedent for the creation of this point of view that is expressed in the resolution before us. So the Navy salutes Colorado.

The American people rely on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to ensure that our Nation has clean air, clean water, a clean environment, and a safe climate. Unfortunately, in 2020, under the previous administration, the EPA strayed from its mission any number of times.

One of those missteps was that Agency's methane rescission rule, which de-

regulated methane emissions from the oil and gas industry—our Nation's largest industrial source of this dangerous greenhouse gas. By passing this resolution, Congress, today, will reject and nullify this dangerous rule and restore clean air and climate protections from our Nation's largest sources of methane pollution.

Let me explain what methane is and why it is so harmful to our climate and to our health.

Methane is a super pollutant that damages our lungs and our planet. Compared to carbon dioxide, methane is a small part of our overall greenhouse gas emissions. Having said that, though, scientists tell us that methane is responsible for roughly one-quarter of the manmade global warming that we are witnessing today. Let me say that again: Methane is responsible for roughly one-quarter of the manmade global warming that we are experiencing and witnessing today.

Over a 20-year period, methane is 84 times more harmful to our climate than carbon dioxide—84 times. For a small molecule, methane punches above its weight when it comes to its contributions to climate change.

The oil and gas industry is our Nation's largest source of methane, responsible for nearly 30 percent of total methane emissions. For comparison, this amount of methane pollution has the same climate effect as the emissions from our Nation's entire fleet of passenger vehicles in a year.

In addition to damaging our climate, methane emissions also contribute to ground-level ozone, known as smog. Breathing in smog harms our lungs, and it aggravates lung diseases like bronchitis and asthma. Exposure to smog has been linked to premature death, and children and the elderly are particularly vulnerable to these health risks. If we want to meaningfully tackle the danger to our health and our climate, we need to reduce methane emissions from the entire oil and gas sector.

In 2016, as I was alluding to earlier, the EPA acted to do just that. Building on State actions, such as in Colorado, whose former chief executive is presiding at this moment, the EPA put into place commonsense Clean Air Act regulations that required the oil and gas industry to update its equipment. The rule also required the industry to inspect frequently in order to find and repair leaks and malfunctions that are such a big source of our methane problem.

Based on feedback from the oil and gas industry meeting, these new emission requirements did not place an undue burden on companies or raise costs for consumers. In fact, many oil and gas companies and industry groups supported the measures, and they still do. That is why it was so surprising when, in September of 2020, the EPA issued the final methane rescission rule to roll back what so many believed to be commonsense approaches for reducing methane risks.

While the Trump administration moved forward with this damaging policy, the consequences of climate change were roiling—roiling—our Nation. California, for example, experienced its worst wildfire season on record, with historic forest fires covering an area about the size of the State of Rhode Island. Other Western States—including Oregon, Montana, and Colorado—were ablaze with unprecedented damaging wildfires.

At the same time, other parts of our country were being battered by violent, extreme weather. The people of Iowa experienced one of the most costly thunderstorms in history, with hurricane force winds, causing \$7.5 billion in economic damage. It flattened, I am told, over half of that State's corn and soybean crops in one day.

Coastal towns in Southern States like Florida, like Louisiana, and like South Carolina were battered by hurricane after hurricane after hurricane. In the summer of 2020, last summer, we saw the most hurricanes in the Atlantic Ocean in recorded history.

Despite all of this, the Trump administration took a step to undo one of the key tools available to us to combat methane emissions that contribute greatly to climate change. The methane rescission rule was a stark departure from the widely accepted, science-based, and commonsense view that we should protect people and our planet from the dangers of methane.

In promulgating the methane rescission rule, the Trump administration ignored the global scientific community, including EPA's own Agency scientists, who warned that the extreme weather events of 2020 were just the tip of the iceberg of consequences we can expect if we don't keep global warming below an increase of 1.5 degrees Celsius between now and 2040.

The bottom line is that the Trump methane rescission rule would allow more methane pollution, increase public health dangers, and bring us ever closer to the brink of irreversible climate catastrophe. It is this Trump EPA action that my colleagues and I reject today through the resolution before us.

The methane rescission rule stated that methane couldn't be regulated under the Clean Air Act. We reject that. The methane rescission rule stated that EPA couldn't regulate the entire oil and gas sector from wellhead to storage. We reject that. The methane rescission rule stated that greenhouse gasses couldn't be regulated. We reject that. The methane rescission rule also reversed EPA's longstanding position on what is required to regulate a pollutant, making it harder for EPA to implement clean air and climate protections. We reject that as well.

With approval of this resolution, though, EPA can and should still move forward to strengthen methane standards for the oil and gas sector in the future. This effort is also very timely, coming on the heels of President