

Maryland. Our State ranks number one in the Nation in R&D spending due to the presence of Federal and academic research institutions such as the National Institutes of Health, the National Institute of Standards and Technology, Johns Hopkins University, and the University of Maryland.

I have had many discussions with State government officials and leading scientists in Maryland who have told me that one of the most sensible steps we can take to improve the SBIR and STTR program were to make these programs permanent. The research SBIR and STTR funds often continues for several years before producing a product ready to go to the market. Researchers need to know that these programs will not disappear in the middle of years-long research projects.

It is our responsibility to make sure that we act timely so that there is no lapse in these programs or reduced funding that is critically needed for these programs' success.

Any such action would be short-sighted and would have a devastating impact on small businesses engaged in cutting-edge research Nationwide. Reducing the size of these programs or allowing them to lapse altogether would hinder our efforts to restore the production of critical products.

I recently convened a hearing of the Senate Small Business Committee to examine the impacts of supply chain disruptions on small businesses. One of our witnesses, Dr. Sridhar Kota, who leads an organization that advocates for increased public and private sector investment in America's manufacturing sector, called the SBIR and the STTR "one of the really good tools in the toolbox" and urged the committee to strengthen the programs to support even more researchers. I could not agree more.

Instead of leaving the researchers who are inventing the tools that will power the economy of the future guessing about the SBIR and STTR, we in Congress have an opportunity—and I would say an obligation—to reauthorize these programs before they expire in September. We should also make them permanent, which both the Pentagon and NASA have urged us to do. This is in our national security interest, as well as our economic interest and fairness to small businesses.

Arthur C. Clarke wrote:

New ideas pass through three periods: (1) It can't be done. (2) It probably can be done, but it's not worth doing. (3) I knew it was a good idea all along.

The SBIR and the STTR programs help visionary entrepreneurs get through one and two to reach three. Getting to three makes America stronger and more prosperous.

Let us make sure that we act in time.

With that, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

ENVIRONMENTAL STANDARDS

Mr. CASSIDY. Madam President, every Senator, when she or he goes home, speaks to families feeling the crushing burden of inflation, in large part driven by fuel prices—it is certainly true when I go home to Louisiana—and they hope for a better job; one, they would like a better job, but, two, they need the extra money in order to keep up with the inflation.

There is a connection with their personal economic concerns, Putin's war in Ukraine, and China doing their best to take American jobs by ignoring environmental standards, using slave labor, giving subsidies to the businesses, making it almost impossible for American businesses to work here and compete with products made in China.

As one example of just how successful China has been, in the early 2000s, China was about 19th and 20th in manufacturing and carbon emissions.

Since then, since the early 2000s, China has become No. 1 worldwide, both in the amount of manufacturing but also in the amount of their carbon emissions.

Indeed, the increase in carbon emissions for China is more than the combined decrease of the United States, the EU, and the United Kingdom in that same period of time.

We have been doing our best to improve our environmental standards for the benefit of the whole world, and China has exploited that, using their lack of enforcement of standards to attract our jobs to their country, and yet our global greenhouse gas emissions are worse off.

Now, as I mentioned, the inflation, the hope for a better job, which is not realized, Putin's war, using energy as a national security tool, and China's concerted strategy are all interwoven. There is a nexus, and that nexus is between energy and the climate, the economy of a family and of a nation, and national security.

So if we are going to improve the financial situation for that family in Louisiana, a working family in Nevada, or any of our States and do something about our national security concerns, then we must do something about energy, and that is related to emissions.

The most effective way of doing this is looking at how China addresses their emissions and how the United States does.

Now, when I speak of emissions, I speak of the fact that we now use natural gas instead of coal, and natural gas burns much more cleanly than coal, and so, therefore, we have cleaner air in the United States than we did even 20 years ago.

But China uses coal for about 60 percent of their energy feedstock. And so

to understand China as a competitor, let's look at their economic, geopolitical, and national security strategies against us, and we are going to look at it through the prism of carbon emissions because if we think about national security without thinking about energy and the associated emissions, if we don't think about them all at the same time, we are wasting our time, just wasting our time. So, again, examining as a nexus.

There is a petrochemical plant in Louisiana that has invested heavily in lowering their emissions. We pay a little extra for the products they produce, but we accept that extra cost so that we have this cleaner environment.

Just as an example, the plastic that is on the back of my phone, that plastic is made from natural gas usually, and the process of making that has rigorous environmental standards to make sure that we protect those who live around the plant. China does not do that. They do not enforce those standards, nor, as I mentioned earlier, do they use natural gas. They are much more likely to use coal, and they preferentially build their powerplants on the Pacific coast of China. So the emissions go into the atmosphere, and they blow across the Pacific, and they land in the United States. Much of the problems of the west coast of the United States with SO₂ and NO₂ are from plants that originate their emissions in China.

And did I say it lowers their cost of production by not enforcing those? By lowering the cost of production, you attract American jobs away from the United States of America over there. And did I say it strengthens their economy? And by strengthening their economy, they have more money to invest in their military and more money to pursue their geopolitical strategy, which is to undermine the influence of the United States of America.

By not applying our emission standards to China, giving them a free pass, we are allowing them to implement their strategy.

Now, by the way, I am not against international trade. We can look at the treaties we have with Canada and with Mexico or with Central American countries, and we can see that there are certain labor and environmental standards that are embedded in those. And it is an even playing field, of sorts. So if we have a clean air standard here in the United States, there is something like that in Mexico and something like that in Canada. If we have labor standards here, we have something like that in Honduras and something like that in Guatemala. So we are still competing, but the playing field is more even.

Now, there are other benefits of trading in the Western Hemisphere.

About 40 percent of the goods that Mexico produces are reimported from the United States. There is an exchange that goes back so that the revenue that is produced in trade disproportionately comes from Mexico

back to the United States. So while that number is 40 percent with Mexico, it is only 4 percent with China. And it is not like we are sending all this money to China. We had about a \$355 billion trade deficit with them last year. And I am not talking about the deficit; I am just saying that only 4 percent of that revenue comes back to the United States in order to reinvest in the American economy.

So I am all for trade, but I want to have something which is more mutually beneficial and one in which there is a level playing field and one in which the disregard for environmental standards is not used as a strategy to strip jobs away from Americans in order to improve an economy of a competitor that uses that money to improve their military standing and uses that money to undermine our influence and, by the way, to attempt to expand their geopolitical viewpoint.

Now, I will say once more, I love capitalism. It has the ability to elevate people out of poverty. Three generations ago, my family left Ireland and came to the United States because they didn't have enough to eat, and because this is the greatest capitalist country in the world, my family did quite well because of the system of government we have here. I am not arguing against that.

But what we cannot tolerate is the arbitrage of rules that are put in place by developed countries to protect not just our own citizens but the global environment from the ill effects of certain types of activities, say, in this case, burning energy.

If we are going to equalize the playing field, if you will, to lawfully and peacefully defeat a strategy which has explicit goals to take jobs from the United States of America and to eclipse us as a world power, we need to think strategically as to how to defeat this strategy.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

TRIBUTE TO TERESA GRAY AND RECOGNIZING MOBILE MEDICS INTERNATIONAL

Mr. SULLIVAN. Madam President, I want to say that it is Thursday, and it is my favorite time of week, 6 years' strong—almost 7 years—we have been doing our “Alaskan of the Week” series, and we love to do this because we get to recognize a special Alaskan, someone who makes the State very special.

Our pages, I think they don't always admit it, but it is probably the best speech of the week because it is interesting and we have got some cool stories. I know some of the reporters here like the speech because it means we are at the end of the week so that is good.

Today, we are honoring a really amazing Alaskan. Her name is Teresa Gray, of Anchorage, who was, by the way, recently featured by CNN as one

of their heroes for the work her organization does that Teresa founded to provide medical help to people all over the globe.

So, before I talk about Teresa and her amazing work, I always like to give a little update of what is going on in Alaska right now. I was home the last couple weeks traveling all over the State, and it didn't seem like too long ago when I had said: Hey, winter is coming. Winter is coming. Well, here is the good news. Well, I love winter, but winter is now leaving. It is leaving Alaska.

Now, it is cold in many places. My house in Anchorage still has snow on the ground, but the Sun is now up high in the sky, staying up longer and longer every single day—although I was in Fairbanks and we had northern lights going. So that was awesome just last week. But today, in Anchorage, the Sun rose at 6 a.m. and set around 10 p.m. So it is getting long. It is gaining. We gain about 5 minutes a day during this time of the year. Birds are migrating back by the tens of thousands. The excitement of spring is everywhere.

So to everybody watching, if you are thinking about great summer travel plans, Alaska is the place to be. So come on up. We would love to have you.

So, now, let me talk about Teresa Gray and the organization she founded called Mobile Medics International, which is doing great work across the globe, even as we speak.

Teresa is originally from Michigan. As a paramedic, she moved to Alaska in 1999 to be with her then-husband who was from Alaska. And like so many do when they come to Alaska, she fell in love with Alaska. Now, she wasn't really an outdoorsy type, but she said:

I just felt at home.

It is the people that she loves. She said the State has such a unique group of individuals.

We [all] share a kindred spirit. We're all committed to living the Alaska[n] way.

That is what Teresa said. And for Teresa, the Alaskan way has been to put her medical skills to use. Now, initially, she worked as an instructor at the only paramedic school in the State, but within 6 months, she bought the school and created two additional schools, one in Fairbanks and one in Wasilla, and made these very successful. Eight years later, she sold those to the University of Alaska.

Then she became a flight medic for AeroMed, now known as LifeMed. She was a medical trainer for the Alaska Air National Guard unit, the 210th Rescue Squadron. These are very brave, intrepid PJs who do amazing work all over the State. And she also helped out with the Anchorage Fire Department.

When they again adopted a child, their second adopted child, Teresa decided it was time to retire. An aside here—one of Teresa's children, Boyd Jorgensen, was a U.S. marine under my

command, with the great unit ECHO Company 4th Reconnaissance Battalion up in Anchorage. So Semper Fi, Staff Sergeant. I hope you are watching.

Let's talk about your mom.

That retirement for Teresa didn't last long. One day, she was watching the news, and she saw the image—and I think a lot of us remember this image—of a 3-year-old Syrian refugee on the beach of Lesbos, face down in the water. It was very powerful. People all over the world saw that really ghastly image. She thought: Why isn't anybody doing anything about this?

She realized, well, she should and she could. So she volunteered for an Irish medical nonprofit which took her to Greece and then to other places across the globe.

It didn't take her long to see a need that wasn't being filled. There are a great many medical nonprofits, but the general model is that the doctors and other medical professionals arrive at a place and set up shop. The people in need of care come to them.

But there are so many times Teresa witnessed people who couldn't leave their communities. In the case of Puerto Rico, there was a mudslide with limited access to a road that led to a village which hadn't received medical or any kind of help in over a week. People couldn't get a doctor there.

So, back in Alaska, she put a call out on social media, and soon, Mobile Medics International was born. The group is focused on mobility, on getting to the barrios, to the villages, up in the mountains—hard places to get to, where she said that “[s]o many places are lost or forgotten in disasters” because they are so hard to get to.

Roughly, 5 years later, the group now has roughly 120 volunteers from across the globe, including from Alaska, on nearly every continent. They have been on over 30 missions. They are agile. They are expeditionary. They are like the Marines. When they go to a place that has been hit by disaster or to a place experiencing a refugee crisis, everything they need is in a backpack.

Teresa said:

We can bring our own food, our own water, our own sleeping accommodations. We try to take basically an ambulance in the backpack.

Great image. Great idea.

If someone requires more extensive care, then they help get that individual to a medical facility, maybe in another part of the country.

In addition to natural and humanitarian disasters, Mobile Medics International also trains people in medically underserved villages to provide treatment to others in their communities. So it is train the trainer. Teach someone to fish.

They find people in those communities who are willing to commit to 5 years to build their own program in that community, and they support them during that time. They visit a few times a year, get them equipped, get them supplies, get them training,