

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. That was the question—how soon that might be, given that we have a 2:15 vote coming up.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas is recognized.

Mr. CORNYN. So our colleagues kicked the can down the road when it came to keeping the lights on in the appropriations process in September and December, and now it looks like they are poised to do it again and will not meet the February 18 deadline.

So with the focus on partisan politics rather than bipartisan opportunities, our colleagues in the majority have simply ignored the basic responsibilities of governing. They put the demands of partisanship ahead of the needs of the American people. Rather than reevaluate the strategy and perhaps make a course correction, our colleagues have doubled down. They scheduled another vote on their partisan election takeover bill. And when it failed, they attempted to blow up the rules of the Senate to create an easier pathway to purely partisan legislation.

So there is a massive disconnect between what Democrats in the majority have been trying to accomplish here in Washington, DC, and what the American people are telling me—particularly my constituents—that they actually need.

Families in Texas are struggling to pay their gas and grocery bills, and they are worried about the increase in violent crime. But our colleagues are trying to convince them that they are wrong and that what is important is a Federal takeover of State-run elections and to provide additional tax breaks to millionaires and billionaires from blue States by lifting or eliminating the cap on deductibility of State and local taxes, as they attempted to do.

So a lot of the time we have had this last year—the opportunity to pass good and meaningful legislation—has been lost, and thus the opportunity cost of this partisanship is things that really would make a difference and improve the lives of ordinary Americans.

The American people are not asking for a radical transformation of the country. That was pretty clear by the 50-50 Senate that they elected in 2020, as well as a bare Democratic majority in the House. They want safe communities. They want an affordable standard of living. They want secure borders. They want the right to decide what is best for themselves and their families and not be dictated to or mandated by the Federal Government.

So I continue to hope that our Democratic colleagues will abandon partisanship and use the remainder of this year to support what the American people actually want and need.

Mr. President, I would be glad to yield for a question.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. No. My question was, simply, how long the Senator was going to proceed, given that the schedule for my remarks was at 1:35. So no further questions. I apologize for inter-

rupting. I was just trying to sort out the timing.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I am not very happy to be back with my trusty and somewhat battered “Time to Wake Up” poster. Almost exactly a year ago, I delivered what I hoped would be my last “Time to Wake Up” speech and took the poster off the floor.

Things looked good then. The conditions for climate progress were in place. Voters had elected a Democratic President and Democratic majorities in both Houses of Congress. So the malicious grip of the fossil fuel industry on the Republican Party was no longer a stopper.

President Biden ran on a fact-based, uncorrupted climate agenda, and many in our congressional majorities campaigned on climate action. We had reconciliation to work with, and work began on a serious climate bill.

Actually, after I stopped these speeches, the Smithsonian asked me if they could have this old poster. It is the most used poster in Senate history, it turns out. And I came pretty close to turning it over to them, but something made me hesitate. And, well, here it is back again.

We just aren’t making progress, not by the only measurement that matters: greenhouse gas emissions. We are 1 year in—with no bill, no carbon regulation, and no litigation—and look at the climate havoc.

Scientists reported that global temperatures registered between 1.1 and 1.2 Celsius above average in 2021. That is among the hottest years ever observed by human beings, and it is dangerously close to our safety ceiling of 1.5 degrees Celsius. And we are here despite 2021 being a La Nina year, when cold Pacific water usually cools global temperatures. The last 7 years are the 7 hottest years in recorded history.

Republicans may mock and disparage this, but they are paid agents of the polluters causing this. And they are wrong.

In past speeches, I have described how our oceans absorb a massive amount of the heat that is trapped by greenhouse gas pollution. It is the heat equivalent of multiple Hiroshima-sized nuclear bombs being set off in the ocean every second—multiple Hiroshima-sized nuclear devices’ worth of heat per second that we are adding to the ocean.

In the last three decades, our oceans warmed eight times faster than preceding decades. And it is so massive that it has its own measurement term: the zettajoule. The top 2,000 feet of ocean absorbed a record 227 excess zettajoules of energy in 2021.

So what is a zettajoule? Well, a half zettajoule—a half zettajoule—is the total annual energy consumption of the planet. That little line right down there represents a half zettajoule—the

total energy consumption of planet Earth, all humans. And here is the heat that that loaded into the oceans because of the amplification of greenhouse gases—227, one-half—so about 500 times as much heat going into the oceans as our entire energy heat spend as a species.

And ocean temperatures are, of course, now the hottest ever recorded. The excess heat means dying coral reefs and lost fisheries with acidified seas. It means higher sea levels, as heated water expands; and more severe storms, as heated waters supercharge storm systems, including the sort of thunderstorm complexes that spawned Midwestern tornadoes in December.

Republicans may mock and disparage this, but remember: They are paid agents of the polluters causing this. And they are wrong.

This costs lives and dollars. The United States suffered 20 separate billion-dollar weather disasters in 2021—almost 700 deaths and \$100 billion of damage. The year before, we had hit \$22 billion disasters: tropical cyclones, coastal floods, western wildfires. The most spectacular fire didn’t actually even make it on to this list because it ripped through more than a thousand homes and businesses in suburban Denver in December. That fire didn’t even make it onto this top disasters list.

The Pacific Northwest heat wave of June 2021 smashed all records. A town in normally temperate British Columbia saw 116-degree temperatures, beating the previous Canadian national record by 3 degrees. The next day, the thermometer hit 118 degrees; the day after that, 121 degrees. And the day after that, a wildfire burned the town to the ground.

In Washington and Oregon, temperatures shot off the charts. These graphs show maximum daily temperatures in Seattle and Portland. The dots on these charts that form this gray band represent every daily maximum temperature reading over the last 42 years—over 15,000 data points. The red dots here and here reflect for Seattle and for Portland those days—way beyond the norms.

These temperatures aren’t just uncomfortable. They are lethal. Research shows more than 600 excess deaths during the June heat wave in Washington and Oregon. Those 600 people aren’t even counted in that storm death toll I mentioned before.

So why aren’t we doing anything about it? Two primary reasons: fossil fuel obstruction and corporate indifference. To be blunt, the fossil fuel industry controls the Republican Party the way a ventriloquist controls a painted wooden dummy, and the rest of corporate America lets them get away with it.

The fossil fuel obstruction isn’t new. They have been at it for decades. Dozens of colleagues have joined me here on the Senate floor, exposing the web of climate denial the industry wove to perpetrate their obstruction.

The fossil fuel industry is still at it. They have just changed it up a bit. They can't debate the science anymore, and they can't argue against the urgency, but they can still write checks. They can fund phony front groups and fill Republican campaign coffers.

And though they can't sell climate denial, they can buy climate delay. They can hire the biggest PR and advertising firms around—like Edelman, IPG, WPP—to pollute our minds with slippery greenwashing, like they pollute our skies and oceans with their carbon emissions.

Here is an example of this stuff in action. Type “fossil fuels” into Google, and this is the slick, phony paid-for result you get—a fossil fuel giant saying it is “already a willing and able player in the energy transition, read more.”

The Guardian and watchdog group InfluenceMap exposed how fossil fuel PR companies cook up these ads designed to look like Google search results. “Don't do anything, we've got this” is their Big Lie message of these ads. The watchdogs call this “endemic greenwashing.”

The industry doesn't just lie and pay politicians; fossil fuel companies also use trade associations and dark money front groups to whip up opposition to climate legislation.

Coal-heavy electric utilities and their dark money cohort mobilized against the Clean Electricity Performance Plan that would have helped decarbonize the power grid. Republicans did their bidding.

The American Petroleum Institute and other fossil fuel industry groups fight paying a price on methane emissions from their oil and gas facilities. They want to pollute for free, knowing full well the harm. Republicans do their bidding.

The CEO of that 800-pound, climate-obstructing gorilla, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, said the group would “do everything [it] can to prevent” Build Back Better and its climate provisions from becoming law. Republicans do their bidding.

These groups spent millions on political ads. They unleashed a deluge of lobbying and campaign contributions. They are almost certainly behind big super PAC spending. They pull out all the stops. And against them in corporate America to push back against the polluters stands who? No one. Corporate CEOs talk a big game about decarbonizing their supply chains and transitioning to renewables, and they wield enormous influence in Washington when they want to, but here in this building, where the legislative rubber hits the road, corporate America has been totally, utterly, completely MIA on climate.

One set of lobbyists even told my staff that once the corporate tax stuff they cared about got squared away in Build Back Better and was taken off the table, they didn't want to “rock the boat” by supporting climate provisions, even though they are provisions

the company publicly claims to support.

Not one corporate trade group is lifting a finger here in this building on climate—not the banks, despite their own warnings of an economic crash; not the insurance companies, despite the huge checks they write for climate disasters; not Big Tech; not Big Pharma; not anyone.

The fossil fuel industry has its choke chain around the Republican Party so tight that industry folks have told me they are scared to press for climate measures, that they might be punished by Republicans working for the fossil fuel industry—punished on the tax and deregulatory and business stuff they really care about. So they are not here. They just aren't.

The frustrating thing is that there actually is a way to get to a safe place, to get to where we can hold warming below 1.5 degrees Celsius. The key policy is a border-adjustable price on carbon. To get to safety, we need to do more than just that, but there is no pathway to safety without that. It is the necessary but not sufficient safety measure.

Take a look at this chart. This was prepared in conjunction with the White House and the leader's office. A lot of eyeballs have looked at this.

The green line here is business as usual. We do nothing, and carbon emissions do mostly nothing.

This next line down, the orange line, represents our emissions trajectory if we pass the Finance Committee's clean energy tax credit package. That gets us to here.

The gray line right below it, the third one down here, is if we could pass a clean electricity standard.

The yellow one here is the emissions trajectory if we do both of those things, both the tax credit package and a clean electricity standard.

This one—light blue—is a carbon price alone. By the way, it is a modest carbon price that starts at only \$15 per ton in 2023 and increases to \$70 per ton in 2032 and doesn't cover unleaded gasoline at all.

The dark blue line here, the safest line, is all those policies together. To get to safety, we must deploy all of these policies.

The more policies you have, the deeper the emissions reductions, the better the chance of safety. But the center pole in the climate policy tent is a carbon price. Pricing carbon reaches every corner of the economy, which will be all-important when the power sector has switched to zero-carbon generation and we need to remedy other polluting sectors.

A carbon price fuels innovation. Suddenly, every carbon-reduction strategy has a revenue proposition—no more government-chosen winners and losers.

A carbon price raises investment. Growing a low-carbon economy will take trillions in job-producing investment, maybe about \$575 billion a year from now until 2050. Carbon pricing

sends an investment market signal and produces revenues to support those billions of dollars in private job-creating investment.

A carbon price is exportable through a border adjust that will keep China and others from cheating.

Last, a carbon price helps to unravel what the International Monetary Fund says is a \$660 billion annual subsidy propping up fossil fuels in the United States. Do you want to know why the fossil fuel industry can so easily corrupt American politics? That is your answer. That is 660 billion answers. A \$660 billion subsidy every year is one hell of a motive.

Once your policies are assembled surrounding the carbon price, you then need a battle plan and the leadership to carry it out. We cannot win legislative victory without setting the conditions for victory. We are up against a fossil fuel armada of dishonest PR campaigns, phony front groups, co-opted trade associations, fake science, and political dark money. We cannot overcome the corrupting forces of the fossil fuel industry without sound countermeasures.

Step one is what I am doing here—call out the dark money mischief of the fossil fuel industry. It is a compelling story, actually, and people—voters—don't like being lied to, especially not by big, corrupt, polluting interests. They have been lied to for decades, and they need to know that. If we all exposed the fossil fuel industry pattern of deception the way we years ago exposed as fraud the tobacco industry's pattern of deception, that would open up real political space for the kind of legislative progress the times demand.

Over in the House, Representatives MALONEY and KHANNA are on the case. They are investigating. Hearings are underway. Let's support and amplify them.

Next, stop the flow of polluter dark money into our politics. In politics, money corrupts, and dark money corrupts absolutely.

Next, rally the rest of corporate America to the banner. If they are too chicken to go first and face the risk of Republican punishment on the stuff they really care about, join together. They can't punish everyone. Corporate America is actually rich enough, if it wanted to, to buy the damned fossil fuel industry, fire the crooks and the PR firms, shut off the money to the front groups and the trade associations, and clean up the industry from the inside. But corporate America not only doesn't do that, it does nothing here in Congress.

However we go, we have to get going. Either we act now or we pollute our way to oblivion. Either we summon a serious response or we “meh” our way to catastrophe. Either we enact a serious effective climate bill or we lose our chance at a safe climate pathway. I will promise you, that will earn the merited disgust of future generations.

We have a moment here to measure up to. We are failing catastrophically,

and we are failing for the worst and smallest and most dishonorable of reasons. So when we reignite work on a real climate bill, when we are starting to see real administration climate progress, I will see about sending this battered poster over to the Smithsonian, but if we don't, I will be back here again and again and again to call this Chamber to wake up.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. ROSEN). The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. PORTMAN. I ask unanimous consent that Senators BLUNT, BLACKBURN, and I be permitted to speak for up to 5 minutes each prior to the scheduled vote.

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

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. PORTMAN. Madam President, I am here today to discuss the crisis at the border. Unfortunately, it is not getting any better. In fact, it is getting worse by any measurement. The flow of illegal drugs and illegal migration continues to surge.

As the lead Republican on the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, I recently traveled to the U.S.-Mexican border in Nogales, AZ, just south of Tucson, to learn firsthand from Border Patrol and Customs officials and Border Patrol agents who are on duty 24-7 trying to protect our Nation from illicit narcotics, unlawful immigration, and terrorism.

It was my third trip to the border in the last year, and, like other trips, what I saw was alarming. Officials at the port of entry told me about the increasing and more sophisticated efforts to smuggle illegal and deadly drugs into the United States. They showed me some of the x rays that have been taken of some of the vehicles where the smugglers are cleverly hiding these illicit narcotics into compartments.

By the way, this is deadly stuff. This is mostly now the illicit drug called fentanyl, which is a synthetic form of opioid that, according to the Centers for Disease Control, is probably killing two-thirds of the people who are dying from overdoses. The number of overdose deaths in this country is at record levels. During the year of 2021, we believe it is going to exceed 100,000 individuals—record levels.

So why aren't we scanning more of these vehicles for drugs and other contraband? The best numbers we have are that, currently, less than 2 percent of the passenger vehicles and less than 20 percent of the commercial vehicles coming into the United States are scanned for illegal drugs like this deadly fentanyl we talk about.

That is just unacceptable. A smuggler with multiple pounds of fentanyl concealed in hidden compartments needs to know that there is no chance of getting across our border without some kind of search. It is not just a gap in our security; it is a gaping hole in our security, and it is resulting in lives being lost in my home State of Ohio,

where we have a big issue with opioids, and also all across America. In a sense, every State is a border State now.

Last year, Customs and Border Protection seized nearly 10,000 pounds of deadly fentanyl. That is a 40-percent increase from 2020. But, as officers on the line told me when I was down there recently, most of it is getting through.

A year ago, Congress mandated that the Department of Homeland Security give us a plan and a strategy to scan all vehicles at the ports of entry for deadly narcotics such as fentanyl. Unfortunately, even with this crisis that demands these new approaches, the Biden administration has failed to deliver this report, which was due more than 6 months ago. Let's get that report done. Whether it is crystal meth or cocaine or whether it is fentanyl—sometimes pressed into pills to make it look like something else—it is flowing across the southern border. Let's have a plan to stop this.

We also face challenges between the ports of entry. In Nogales, the Border Patrol agent in charge rode with me to look at the border. What he described was an overwhelming, recordbreaking number of unlawful migrants and a recordbreaking number of drugs like fentanyl and these other drugs coming into the United States. He talked about the urgent need for more Border Patrol agents to be able to cover the border; new vehicles—vehicle maintenance is a huge issue for Border Patrol right now; and technology, particularly cameras and sensors.

There is a lot of discussion here always about the wall, but what is really important about a fence or a wall is the technology that goes along with it. When the Biden administration came in and they stopped construction of the wall, what they really did was they stopped the technology.

In the El Paso Sector where I have been, as an example, only about 10 percent of the technology had been completed for the fence that was being erected there. So they stopped building the fence—and you can see all the metal on the ground, which is very demoralizing for the Border Patrol because they have to fill the gaps 24-7 or figure out other ways to stop people—but most importantly, only 10 percent of the technology had been done, and they cut off all of that. We have already paid for it, by the way. Taxpayers have paid for all of that.

My thinking is, Democrats and Republicans alike talk about the need for technology—this is, again, monitors of some kind; there are various kinds out there that are very effective—cameras, and the ability to respond quickly.

I toured the border area that had huge gaps in the fencing, too, which I don't get. Why would you want to spend all this money to build the border barriers and then leave the gaps in the middle? I saw broken areas of fencing that need repairs. I saw the need for new fencing in some areas.

I walked up to one large gap only several miles from the city of Nogales.

There is 15- to 20-foot fencing on either side of this gap, and then there is about 40 feet with just a four-strand barbed wire fence to keep cattle from coming into the United States and vice versa. So that is where human smugglers go. They know about these gaps.

I saw lots of evidence of foot traffic, lots of plastic bottles and plastic bags discarded in the area from migrants who crossed right there.

Leaving these gaps is one of the reasons we face a crisis.

We just learned in December that the Border Patrol apprehended more than 170,000 unlawful migrants in December. That is the highest number ever in December. And the Biden people say: Well, this is seasonal so it will stop in December and January because it is colder and people aren't going to go or when it is really hot in July and August. That has not happened.

For the first time ever, we see a continual flow of people. It is not slowing down at all. These dramatic increases in unlawful entries and illegal drugs in the last year are clearly due to the policy changes, again, that were put in place on day 1 of the Biden administration—not just fewer deportations and a more lax approach to immigration generally but a specific issue of stopping the installation of this technology and fencing.

Also, they made a major change immediately with regard to asylum policy. So now people know if they claim asylum, they will be released in the United States pending a court date, which, on average, is going to be 5 or 6 years away. They say the backlog is at least 1.3 million people now—the backlog.

Now, is there any wonder that when people come to my home State of Ohio or go to my colleague's State in Missouri or go to Nevada, with 5 or 6 years ahead of them, that it is sometimes not possible to find them when the court date comes up, and that is happening, obviously, increasingly.

So we need a policy that just makes sense, that doesn't tell the smugglers, hey, if you get somebody in the United States, you can tell them that they can get in; they can work; they can get their kids in school. And that is what the smugglers do to people all over the world. It is not just Central America. In fact, there are more people coming from Ecuador now than there are from Honduras. I am told in the last week there were five Syrians who were apprehended coming across the border.

It is a lot of people from around the world who are being told by these smugglers who are exploiting them and their families, hey, just come on with me, and we can get you in. Pay me 10,000 bucks or whatever it is. That is one reason we have right now this pull factor because of a policy issue we have got to address.

The administration also chose to end the "Remain in Mexico" policy, which says to people, hey, you can come and apply for asylum, but you have got to