

see your point of view. You said, because he is raising tariffs on Canada, that he, President Trump, doesn't believe in free trade. You have said that he doesn't—he believes in tariffs. And you have said you are going—you, Mr. Carney, are going to change your tariffs.

I hope Prime Minister Carney does change his tariffs, but I hope he does so in a way that we have a race to the top and not to the bottom. Rather than the Prime Minister of Canada raising tariffs on the United States of America after the United States of America raises tariffs on Canada, which will cause us—friends, friends—to have a trade war, I would respectfully suggest to the Prime Minister Carney of Canada that he should reduce tariffs to zero. He should reduce all Canadian tariffs on United States' goods to zero and then turn to President Trump and say: I am asking you to remove all tariffs on Canada as well.

Now, if Prime Minister Carney believes in free trade—and I take him at his word that he does—and if President Trump believes in free trade, but fair trade—and I take him at his word that he does—then let's both go to zero. How much freer can trade be? How much fairer can trade be?

Let's avoid a trade war. Let's let those good Canadian companies compete with good American companies and selling goods into the United States, and let's let those good American companies compete with those good Canadian companies in terms of selling goods into Canada. And may the best, cheapest product win.

That is my respectful challenge to Prime Minister Carney tonight. If you think President Trump is being unfair and is not a free trader, then reduce your tariffs to zero, and ask President Trump to reduce our tariffs to zero on Canada, and let's go back to being friends again.

COVID

Mr. President, I want to talk briefly on another topic. Martin King famously said that “the arc of the moral universe”—the arc of the moral universe—“is long, but it bends toward justice.” Smart man. He was right. And if you believe in the fundamental goodness of humans—I am not saying that there is not some evil in all of us, but the fundamental goodness of humans, then you know he was right:

The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice.

This month, we finally got justice with respect to one of the individuals and one of the companies that, in my opinion, helped cause the coronavirus. Now let me explain what I mean. I am talking about a gentleman by the name of Dr. Peter Daszak. We have all heard that name. The name of his company is EcoHealth.

COVID, as we know, killed 20 million people across the world. It caused \$25 trillion of damage across the planet Earth.

Where did COVID come from? COVID, of course, coronavirus is a virus. That

is why we call it the coronavirus. It had to come from one of two places. First, it could have occurred naturally. It started in a bat, we know. Our scientists tell us that. And then viruses, which are very aggressive and very interested in self-survival, the virus jumped from another animal into another animal, which was consumed by a human being, and that is how the coronavirus became a human virus. It occurs naturally. It jumps from one animal to another.

But there is another way the coronavirus could have happened. It could have been engineered. We know that the FBI and we know that the Department of Energy and we know that the CIA and we know that Germany's top intelligence service all think the coronavirus was engineered.

What do I mean by engineered, engineering a virus? That means they think that someone took that virus that came from a bat and genetically altered it so that it would expose humans to the disease that the bats would get. That is coronavirus, and that is what happened. Many of our intelligence agencies think that is how the coronavirus started. They think it started in the Wuhan Institute of Virology in Wuhan, China, where the first folks who got ill first appeared.

What does this have to do with Dr. Daszak? The Wuhan Institute of Virology—the Chinese lab that was conducting this research on engineering the virus—was funded in part with American taxpayer dollars. It was funded in part by Dr. Peter Daszak and his company EcoHealth.

Dr. Daszak was good friends and professional colleagues with Dr. Tony Fauci and with Dr. Francis Collins. Dr. Collins ran the National Institutes of Health. Under him was Dr. Anthony Fauci, who ran the NIAID, dealing with infectious diseases.

Dr. Collins and Dr. Fauci gave Dr. Peter Daszak, who ran EcoHealth and is a British zoologist, millions of dollars in grants, taxpayer money. Dr. Daszak took some of that money, and he gave it to the Wuhan lab. When he gave it to the Wuhan lab, the instructions to the Wuhan lab were to use the money to “understand the risk of bat coronavirus emergence.”

What does that mean? The purpose of this project at the Wuhan lab, funded in part by American taxpayer dollars, was to take the bat virus—the virus in the bat—modify it, and make it 10,000 times more infectious for lab mice, and that is what they did.

Many commentators and many news accounts say that what Dr. Daszak—with the money from American taxpayers that he had gotten from Dr. Fauci and Dr. Collins—what they were doing was conducting gain-of-function research. You have heard that term. Gain-of-function research just means taking in this context an animal virus, a bat virus, and altering it genetically so it would jump into a human—pretty dangerous stuff.

Dr. Fauci has said that didn't happen, Dr. Collins says that didn't happen, and Dr. Daszak says that didn't happen, but everybody else says it did. The FBI says it did. The CIA says it did. The top spy agency in Germany says it did. The Department of Energy says it did.

So what happened? What happened? Well, we do know that the first two people that we know of in the world who got the coronavirus—the first two humans—were not people in the city of Wuhan; they were workers in the Wuhan lab. Remember, coronavirus supposedly hit, what, January, February? These two people who worked in the lab got it in November.

We also know that when the virus became really contagious, other than these two people who were working in the Wuhan lab, it became contagious in Wuhan, China, a few miles away from the Wuhan lab—pretty curious.

We also know that when word first broke of the coronavirus, Dr. Fauci learned about it. Do you know one of the first persons he called was Dr. Peter Daszak and said: What is going on?

We also know that Dr. Daszak was trying to convince the American people and the people of the world that the virus started naturally, that it didn't start from his gain-of-function research. We know that he rounded up a bunch of epidemiologists to write a fake article and start publishing it and others in a lot of professional scientific magazines to try to convince the world that the bat virus jumped to human beings naturally. We know that. That has all come out.

We also know that after the coronavirus happened, Dr. Fauci and Dr. Collins, instead of taking money away from Dr. Daszak, gave him extra money. We are not sure why, but they did.

As a result of this, let me say—you say: How did it escape the Wuhan lab? I just want to make this point. A molecular biologist at Rutgers University, Dr. Richard Ebright, studied the Wuhan lab. He said that its safety standards were about the same level of a typical dentist's office. I mean, you would think if you are going to do this gain-of-function research, you would do it in an environment so that once you take the bat virus and make it a human virus 10,000 times more contagious, you would try to keep it within the lab. Wuhan didn't do a very good job of that, we know now.

Well, there were denials back and forth, so we asked—“we” meaning the Congress—the Department of Health and Human Services to study this, and they did. They announced their decision this month. The Department of Health and Human Services has cut off all funding and formally debarred Dr. Peter Daszak and EcoHealth Alliance—of which he is the former president—for 5 years based on evidence uncovered by a congressional committee.

This is what the Department of Health and Human Services found, according to Professor Ebright, who has read the report. He said:

EcoHealth Alliance provably defrauded the US Government, provably breached contractual terms of US-Government grants, and, through the reckless gain-of-function research it conducted in Wuhan, probably caused the COVID-19 pandemic, killing 20 million people and costing \$25 trillion.

Wow. That is what the professor said.

The Department of Health and Human Services, in its official debarment letter of Dr. Daszak and EcoHealth Alliance, said that EcoHealth and Dr. Daszak routinely ignored government oversight requests, failed to report dangerous gain-of-function experiments conducted at the Wuhan Institute of Virology, and produced a required research report 2 years late.

It took a while, and some will call this only partial justice, but we now have justice at least for 5 years and I hope forever. Dr. Peter Daszak and any company with which he is affiliated will no longer receive taxpayer dollars from the National Institutes of Health because he was doing it, according to many people smarter than me and many news reports—he was funding gain research in Wuhan. He also was given money by Dr. Fauci and by Dr. Collins to study viruses in Bangladesh, Myanmar, Laos, Vietnam, and other Southeast Asian nations. Pretty scary stuff. We know how it all turned out.

The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice. Dr. Daszak and EcoHealth Alliance received at least partial justice this month thanks to President Trump's Department of Health and Human Services. As one taxpayer, I am grateful.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

FRANCIS SCOTT KEY BRIDGE

Ms. ALSOBROOKS. Mr. President, at 1:28 a.m. on March 26, 2024—a year ago tonight—a tragedy struck Maryland. A container ship crashed into the Francis Scott Key Bridge. While many were asleep, the Key Bridge collapsed into the icy waters.

Although struck with fear and shock, Team Maryland didn't hesitate. We jumped into action right away and got to work.

We have this phrase—"Team Maryland"—that we have been saying for years, but it is true. We work as a team, one of the strongest teams in the country—a coordinated effort between our Federal delegation, our Governor, and our county executives and mayors on the local level. It is true in good times, it is true when we face adversity, and it was never truer than we saw 1 year ago today.

Governor Moore and Mayor Scott raced to the bridge. Our Federal delegation immediately started asking questions, pushing for funding to rebuild. County executives across the

State, like me at the time, sent our resources and our first responders to help with rescue efforts. We are so grateful we had a President and administration willing to help.

Team Maryland is just that—a team. We have always been, and we always will be. That is how you get through moments of crisis—together. And we have stayed as a team every day since the collapse of the bridge, working together in coordination to ensure we can rebuild.

Our teamwork in the face of a crisis is proof of how your government should work for you: jumping into action when tragedy strikes, asking questions, demanding answers, and rebuilding—doing what needs to be done on behalf of the people.

Team Maryland responded quickly and capably, but we lost a lot that morning, none more priceless than the six lives that perished: Maynor Yassir Suazo Sandoval, Miguel Angel Luna Gonzalez, Jose Mynor Lopez, Alejandro Hernandez Fuentes, Dorlian Ronial Castillo Cabrera, and Carlos Daniel Hernandez. They are irreplaceable. Their names are forever remembered—six hard-working men devoted to their community, beloved by their families, and forever Marylanders in our hearts.

Maynor was a father of a 5-year-old daughter and an 18-year-old son. He moved from Honduras to America in search of a better life for his family, a life that included working through the nights to repair our infrastructure—all in the name of building a better life for his wife and two children.

Maynor had dreams of one day owning a small business. He would say: You had to triple your efforts to get ahead.

He said: It didn't matter what time or where the job was; you had to be where the work was.

Maynor's outlook reminds me of my own father, who worked as a newspaper deliveryman and a car salesman. I once went to work with my dad on a very early morning, delivering newspapers.

He said to me: You know, I hop up and down on this dirty truck every morning so you don't have to.

Just like my own father, Maynor worked day in and day out, hard and long hours, to build a better life for his family.

Miguel was a Marylander for more than 19 years. He made such an impact on his State and community. A husband to Maria and a father of three, Miguel was known for his kind and hard-working spirit.

Miguel and Maria had a food truck in Glen Burnie. Just days before Miguel's tragic death, he brought Maria, his wife, to a storefront they soon planned to rent to continue to build their business. His coworkers remember him fondly as always wanting to share his food with them.

Jose moved to the United States from Guatemala over two decades ago. His life surrounded his family—his wife Isabel and his children.

Alejandro was a man of faith, just like me and so many others in this Chamber. He was active in his church and devoted to his loving family. A father of four, Alejandro was a big personality. Some even described him as a "fireball."

Dorlian moved from Guatemala to the United States to pursue his dreams and to help his mother. He was only 26 years old.

Carlos came from Mexico, seeking a better life, and was willing to work hard for it. He was only 24 years old—taken from us far too soon.

Six individual lives, connected to their coworkers through service, connected to their families through love, connected to our community through their work to make our infrastructure stronger—1 year later, we remember their loss. They are greatly missed. One year later, their families and communities are still grieving. May we continue to pray for their strength and peace.

We also remember the two men, including Julio Adrian Cervantes Suarez, who miraculously survived the devastating collapse.

As Julio was falling into the Patapsco River, he prayed to God, giving thanks, asking for protection over his wife and family and asking for forgiveness. Determined to survive, he was able to hang onto a piece of the bridge to stay afloat. He immediately started calling for his coworkers, including his brother-in-law and his 18-year-old nephew, who, unfortunately, lost their lives.

Thanks to a light on his work helmet, which he was still wearing in the water, search boats were able to rescue him. Today, he continues to keep the memories of his coworkers and friends alive.

These men were essential workers, working the dangerous jobs that build and strengthen our State's infrastructure. It is in their loving memory that we dedicate our own efforts to rebuilding the Key Bridge.

When the bridge collapsed on that early morning, people across the globe immediately predicted our economy would crash. One of the world's biggest ports was instantly shut off to traffic, and we would be challenged to recover. But Team Maryland proved them wrong. We were quickly and efficiently able to perform a controlled demolition in May. By June, we reopened the Fort McHenry Federal Channel and the Port of Baltimore, and last month, we revealed the design for the new Key Bridge—the State's first cable-style bridge—which will stand 40 feet taller than the original bridge and is set to open as soon as fall 2028.

Some may doubt our ability to rebuild. Team Maryland will prove them wrong again.

Now, we still have a lot of work to do to get to fall 2028, but we are in this together on every level. Here in the Senate, I will use my position as ranking member of the Environment and Public