

move to proceed to Executive Calendar No. 287 and make a point of order that the nomination was not properly reported.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The point of order is sustained. The nomination will be returned to committee.

#### UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST— SINHA NOMINATION

Ms. LUMMIS. Mr. President, as if in executive session, I ask consent to move to proceed to Executive Calendar No. 288 and make a point of order that the nomination was not properly reported.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The point of order is sustained. The nomination will be returned to committee.

#### UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST— WALTZ NOMINATION

Ms. LUMMIS. As if in executive session, I ask consent to move to proceed to Executive Calendar No. 308 and make a point of order that the nomination was not properly reported.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The point of order is sustained. The nomination will be returned to committee.

#### UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST— WALTZ NOMINATION

Ms. LUMMIS. As if in executive session, I ask consent to move to proceed to Executive Calendar No. 309, and I make a point of order that the nomination was not properly reported.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The point of order is sustained. The nomination will be returned to committee.

#### UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST— JACOBS NOMINATION

Ms. LUMMIS. As if in executive session, I ask consent to move to proceed to Executive Calendar No. 343, and I make a point of order that the nomination was not properly reported.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The point of order is sustained. The nomination will be returned to the committee.

#### UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST— ROSE NOMINATION

Ms. LUMMIS. As if in executive session, I ask consent to move to proceed to Executive Calendar No. 351, and I make a point of order that the nomination was not properly reported.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The point of order is sustained. The nomination will be returned to committee.

#### MEASURES READ THE FIRST TIME—S. 2748, H.R. 4553

Ms. LUMMIS. Mr. President, I understand that there are two bills at the desk, and I ask for their first reading en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bills by title for the first time.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2748) to establish a program to beautify the District of Columbia and to establish the District of Columbia Safe and Beautiful Commission, and for other purposes.

A bill (H.R. 4553) making appropriations for energy and water development and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2026, and for other purposes.

Ms. LUMMIS. Mr. President, I now ask for a second reading, and I object to my own request, all en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection having been heard, the bills will receive their second reading on the next legislative day.

#### APPOINTMENT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair, on behalf of the Democratic Leader and the Ranking Member of the Committee on Armed Services, pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 8468(a), as amended by Public Law 118-159, appoints the following Senator to the Board of Visitors of the U.S. Naval Academy: the Honorable ANGELA ALSOBROOKS of Maryland.

#### ORDERS FOR WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2025

Ms. LUMMIS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it stands adjourned until 10 a.m., Wednesday, September 10; that following the prayer and pledge, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, morning hour be deemed expired, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, morning business be closed, and the Senate resume consideration of Calendar No. 115, S. 2296, the National Defense Authorization Act.

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

#### ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Ms. LUMMIS. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask that it stand adjourned under the previous order following the remarks of Senator WHITEHOUSE.

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

The Senator from Rhode Island.

#### CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, sailors and pilots know to look out for dangerous weather ahead. Politicians can get lost in the moment. We are on the verge of a major economic shock, but Congress is lost in the moment, not paying attention.

Well, when that economic shock hits, I want people to know how and why we failed to protect them. The shock is simple. Climate change makes property insurance unpredictable, so insur-

ance prices soar, insurers withdraw from high-risk regions, and fake or flimsy insurance populates the market. As the insurance market goes, so goes the mortgage market, given the many linkages between insurance and mortgages.

As mortgage markets fail, property values fall since there is way less demand for real estate properties that are unmortgageable. The combination threatens a reprise of the 2008 great recession or worse. It is what economists call systemic rescue, the scariest word in the economic lexicon because it means the damage cascades throughout the entire economy, hitting everyone.

Remember 2008—everybody hurt. This cascade is pretty broadly predicted by insurers, economists, bankers, regulators, even the big, short guy who predicted the great recession. The Economist magazine has warned of a \$25 trillion hit to global real estate values. Yes, I said “trillion.” Even climate-shy Fed Chair Powell predicted whole regions of the United States would soon go without mortgagees.

So why the big fail here? Why aren't we paying attention to the great climate insurance collapse that is looming and predicted? To understand that, you have to understand the four phases of climate denial because fossil fuel-funded climate denial is the root of the danger.

Phase one of climate denial for the fossil fuel industry was simple: Bury the evidence. Decades ago—many decades ago—scientists in the fossil fuel industry warned about climate change. Exxon, Chevron, Shell, American Petroleum Institute all got internal warnings decades ago of the danger ahead. Instead of facing up to the problem and looking for solutions, they buried the evidence and acted as if they had never been told.

Just keep it secret was phase 1.

Phase 2 was to begin actively misleading the public. Two things coincided to kick off phase 2. One was scientists outside the fossil fuel industry beginning to publicly discuss the climate dangers of fossil fuel combustion—and not just fringe scientists either but leading scientists from places like NASA. NASA is pretty good with science—you know, man on the Moon, rovers driving around Mars. Anyway, Congress perked up. Hearings were held, and what Exxon and others knew was brought out into the public daylight.

The second thing that kicked off phase 2 was a Federal court decision against the tobacco industry and its front groups for fraudulently misleading the public about the dangers of tobacco. Federal Judge Gladys Kessler—God rest her soul; she passed away 2 years ago in March—put the tobacco industry and its front groups under court order to stop the lying and knock off the fraud. No more lying? No more fraud? That decision put the tobacco industry's denial operation out of work, at least on tobacco.

But it gave fossil fuel a prefab denial operation to take over. And suddenly, a lot of people and a lot of front group who had been expert in how tobacco smoke wasn't bad for you suddenly became expert in how fossil fuel emissions wouldn't wreck the Earth's climate. So that kicked off phase 2 with public recognition of the dangers and attention of Congress. The tobacco fraud operation became the fossil fuel fraud operation—same entities, same people, same tactics.

For years, the fossil fuel industry used that operation. It actually expanded and multiplied that tobacco operation to sow false doubt about climate science and to fraudulently suggest we would all be worse off if we solved the fossil fuel emissions problem.

One sidebar here. That all seems terribly expensive. Well, yes and no. Yes, in that billions and billions of dollars were spent on the climate denial fraud operation. Just the work to capture the Supreme Court so it would be friendly to fossil fuel polluters has been estimated at roughly \$600 million. And that work was just one aspect of the vast climate denial fraud operation.

On the other hand, you have to understand what the climate denial fraud operation was protecting. The fossil fuel industry floats on the biggest economic subsidy in human history thanks to its free-to-pollute business model. The value to fossil fuel interests of that subsidy from being allowed to pollute for free has been calculated by the International Monetary Fund at north of \$600 billion every year—every single year, \$600-plus billion worth of free pollution that we all pay for in various ways. Honest calculations of what is called the social cost of carbon pollution differ a bit, but they are all in the hundreds of billions of dollars.

So when the fossil fuel industry picked up the tobacco fraud operation and multiplied it, cost was no object. Imagine, for example, if they spent \$6 billion a year on their climate fraud operation. That pays them back over \$100 every year for every single dollar spent. If they spent \$60 billion a year, it is a 10-to-1 payback. It makes the climate fraud operation likely the most lucrative segment of the fossil fuel industry.

So let's just say, phase 2 was robust—over 100 front groups, billions of dollars, stables of fake scientists, massive Madison Avenue propaganda campaigns, even attack goons to go after scientists and reporters. It was and is probably the biggest fraud operation in history. But a fair campaign of lies against truth, even with billions of dollars behind the lies won't guarantee a win for the lies.

So phase 2, even with all of its billions, had its limits. That brings us to phase 3, unleashed by the Citizens United decision, a truly toxic decision delivered by an all-Republican panel of five on the Supreme Court. That deci-

sion did two things. One, as a legal matter, it unleashed infinite special interest money into our political system. Two, as a practical matter, it allowed that money to be anonymous—what is called dark money—flowing into the political system through front groups that obscure the actual donor, keeping citizens in the dark about who is who in the political arena and who is behind what they are being told—basic information to accomplish the office of citizen, in this great Republic, denied to the citizens.

The fossil fuel industry sought that decision, was prepared for that decision, and moved aggressively to flood dark money into elections.

It is a whole separate speech about fossil fuel's role in that Citizens United decision. But the important thing was that they won. Dark money corruption now could buttress climate denial fraud. In the contest between truth and lies, lies now had not only billions, but an enormous new dark money thumb on the political scale.

There is a famous saying that it is hard to get someone to understand something when their salary depends on them not understanding it. Thank you, Upton Sinclair. Well, right away, the Republican Party came to depend on that fossil fuel money. And, no surprise, its understanding of climate change vanished.

It wasn't always like this. It was not always like this, not on corruption, not on climate denial. Super PACs didn't even used to exist. Nondisclosing 501(c)(4)s stayed out of political elections. Entities like DonorsTrust that exist solely to launder off donor identities just were not a thing. Shadowy political front groups and shell corporations weren't even worth setting up until secret political spending could surge into the billions. That whole new corrupting, toxic political ecosystem has developed to enable dark money power. It is all new, and it all stinks.

Climate denial is the same. In the 3 years after I came to the Senate and before the toxic decision in Citizens United, big, beautiful, bipartisan Senate climate bills were common. I can think of four offhand—real ones—that would have really reduced emissions. Republican Presidential candidate John McCain ran in 2008 on a perfectly decent climate platform—no denial, no fraud. Please remember, it once was that way. Then Citizens United was decided in January of 2010, and since that day, there has not been a single serious bipartisan climate bill in the Senate—not one. The echocardiogram of bipartisan Senate climate action blipped and flatlined.

Now, for over 15 years, the combination of the fossil fuel industry's massive climate denial fraud operation and the fossil fuel industry's massive dark money political corruption operation was a deadly combination. It was lethal. Just as the fossil fuel industry intended, these crooked, semicovert operations protected its annual \$600 bil-

lion-plus freedom-to-pollute subsidy, and the pollution spewed and spewed and spewed.

The legendary political wheeler-dealer Mark Hanna said:

There are two things that are important in politics. The first is money, and I can't remember what the second one is.

Historian John Barry observed:

When you mix politics and science, you get politics. Up against that kind of money and politics, science never stood a chance against fossil fuel's lies.

Now we are in phase 4, the phase where an increasingly desperate fossil fuel operation switches from defense to offense—burying the evidence, running the climate denial fraud operation, and corrupting politics with dark money. All were essentially defense at all costs—at all costs. Protect that free-to-pollute \$600 billion-plus annual subsidy. Phase 4 is different. Phase 4 is fossil fuel on offense, using the power of government to crush fossil fuel's clean energy competition.

Phase 4 kicked off with Trump. Fossil fuel may be an evil industry in its politics, but it is not a stupid one. It knows it is losing. It sees the clean energy cost trends. It knows free, clean fuels like the Sun and wind must inevitably win. It knows that a commodity's price set by a foreign cartel will sooner or later blow up in its face. It knows that polluting for free—contrary to moral as well as economic and environmental principles—can only be protected for so long. It knows that last year, 95 percent of new power coming onto the grid in the United States was clean power—wind, solar, and battery storage.

Fossil fuel knows its days are numbered, so it has infiltrated the Trump administration and is running the U.S. Government for its own benefit from the inside. There is a kind of wasp, a wasp that injects its larvae into another bug, and its larvae then take over the command and control systems of that unfortunate bug from the inside. The larvae drive the bug around like you or I might drive a car around except that the larvae are eating it from the inside at the same time.

That is a good image to keep in mind about the corrupt Trump regime and who is driving it. Under Trump, the Government of the United States is being driven by those fossil fuel larvae to attack cheaper, cleaner, less subsidized energy competitors who are winning against polluting fossil fuel.

There was a time when Republicans used to say: Government shouldn't pick winners and losers. Like so many vanishing Republican principles, what a laugh that one now is.

Trump asked this industry for \$1 billion in campaign cash, and who knows what he got, but it was provably hundreds of millions.

The Republican Party is as dependent on fossil fuel dark money as a deep-sea diver is on his air hose. Pinch that flow just a little, and the diver will dance whatever jig he is told to dance

to get his airflow back. So Republicans dance the fossil fuel denial fraud jig. Just the highlights reel is enough to expose the rot.

Trump's energy Executive order denied that solar and wind energy were even energy, violating the very dictionary.

Republicans went to bat using the Congressional Review Act to defend the worst methane leakers—the ones that weren't even meeting their own industry standards. "Keep leaking, guys" was the message.

Senate Republicans even went nuclear in overruling our Parliamentarian to undo the auto emissions standards followed by much of the country—never mind the damage to the auto industry.

Trump illegally shut down nearly finished wind farms whose clean electrons would displace gas-generated electrons as soon as next year. Those clean electrons also save consumers tens of millions—less pollution, more savings. We can't have that, said Republicans. They have even undone the social cost of carbon rules, as if the pollution wasn't real, and are trying to undo the endangerment finding as if the pollution isn't a danger.

It is all a pack of lies and nonsense, but it has a purpose: Crush America's clean energy industry. It is a separate speech, what economic damage that does to America in international competition as the rest of the world moves to clean energy and we get left behind.

So where are we?

Thanks to fossil fuel's massive climate denial fraud and dark money political corruption, storm clouds loom ahead. Florida is our preview of coming attractions: an insurance market in grave distress, mortgage markets beginning to tremble, middle-class families finding it hard to sell homes. The chief economist of Freddie Mac some years ago predicted this cascade—from insurance, to mortgages, to property values, to what he then called a "coastal property values crash" that would hit the entire economy like the 2008 great recession.

Note that word "coastal." Well, it is not just coastal anymore. "Wildfire"

now matches "coastal" as an added threat that can trigger that economic cascade into collapse.

On top of that looms the long-predicted carbon bubble. What is the carbon bubble? That is when the fossil fuel industry collapses in a sudden and disorderly fashion because we were irresponsible about a gradual and reliable energy transition.

By the way, it is not coastal or wildfire or carbon bubble collapse. All three could happen, each collapse making the others faster and more deep and dangerous and painful.

Remember Hemingway's notorious line that you go broke gradually and then all at once? What could provoke this already gradual collapse to suddenly go all at once? Well, there are a lot of ways this could happen.

One is related to OPEC. Say a low-cost oil and gas producer like Saudi Arabia decides to sell fuel at cost rather than at the OPEC cartel price. When they see it is time to make the move for the exits and sell what they can while they still can—when they do that, the American fossil fuel industry rapidly collapses because our fossil fuel industry can no longer compete. It is only profitable at puffed-up OPEC cartel prices, not at the price that Saudi Arabia could bring to the market if it chose to. So instant crash.

Here is another scenario: Fannie and Freddie—the mortgage giants—stop accepting mortgages insured by Florida's flimsy, pop-up property insurance companies, over a dozen of which have already gone bust since Hurricane Irma in 2017. It is a huge taxpayer liability for Freddie and Fannie to assume all that risk without credible insurance. Local Florida banks won't hold those mortgages because the 30-year risk to a bank is not survivable. Florida becomes a region Chairman Powell predicted, where you can't get mortgages anymore. A massive asset repricing then follows. That triggers systemic economic damage, perhaps even cascading globally, as *The Economist* magazine warned.

The trusty sign that I have worked with all these years, through hundreds

of speeches, is "Time to Wake Up." I am not sure we can save ourselves any longer. We have blown so many chances. The remaining pathway to climate safety is steep and narrowing, and the climate chasm deepens by the day. The evil forces that put us in this danger are more powerful, desperate, and malevolent than ever. The massive economic shock so many foresee could come next week, next month, or next year. It may now be too late to prevent it. It may now be too late to wake up. I hope we can pull this off, but our chances have really slimmed.

So I am here because I, for damned sure, want people to know why we got to this dangerous precipice and who is to blame. Chalk it up to a massive, semicovert operation of industrial-scale disinformation and dark money influence run against our country from within by a polluting industry fighting to pollute for free and by the politicians who enabled them for money.

I yield the floor.

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#### ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M. TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. LUMMIS). Under the previous order, the Senate stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 8:17 p.m., adjourned until Wednesday, September 10, 2025, at 10 a.m.

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#### CONFIRMATIONS

Executive nominations confirmed by the Senate September 9, 2025:

##### THE JUDICIARY

MARIA A. LANAHAN, OF MISSOURI, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI.

##### DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

ROBERT LAW, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, TO BE UNDER SECRETARY FOR STRATEGY, POLICY, AND PLANS, DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY.

##### THE JUDICIARY

KYLE CHRISTOPHER DUDEK, OF FLORIDA, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE MIDDLE DISTRICT OF FLORIDA.