

of this mission. It is heartbreaking for the families and for the unit. These brave young men and women are willing to sacrifice and have already sacrificed, and our prayers are with them during these holidays.

They are our Alaskans of the Week.

I plan on visiting them overseas during the holidays. My wife Julie will also be attending an event this weekend in Anchorage for the families of those who are deployed, showing our support and our respect for the men and women in this unit and their families, because, as many know, when a family is deployed, it is not just the young man and woman in the unit who sacrifice, it is the entire family.

To the families, we say thank you, from the bottom of our hearts, for your service and sacrifice. To the men and women who make up the 4-25, we also say thank you for all you are doing for us—for serving us, for keeping us safe, for protecting this country, when Americans are enjoying the holidays.

I look forward to seeing you in theater. Please be assured that all Members of this body—Senators, Democrats, Republicans—know your record of service and wish all of you Godspeed this holiday season. Thank you for being our Alaskans of the Week.

Army Strong. Arctic Tough. Sparta Lives.

COAST GUARD AUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I rise today to commend this body. My colleagues, every single Senator, voted in unanimous consent to move forward on the National Defense Authorization Act, which was signed into law just this week by President Trump. In particular, I want to thank the chairman of the Armed Services Committee, JOHN MCCAIN, who did so much to shepherd this important piece of legislation through this body and to the President's desk. I thank Senator MCCAIN for all his service and sacrifice to America for decades.

The NDAA, as we all know, is an important, critical piece of legislation, boosting our national security, rebuilding our military readiness, and protecting the men and women in uniform who serve our Nation. It has been a piece of legislation that for 56 consecutive years on a bipartisan basis has moved through the Senate and the House to be signed by the President. Many times you hear there is not a lot of bipartisanship that is going on in Washington. On issues like this, there is. This bill, which authorizes almost \$700 billion for our troops who need it, passed the Senate unanimously.

Not all the members of the military had their bill, which authorized spending and funding for what they are doing, moved through the Congress. Unfortunately, our men and women in the U.S. Coast Guard—our Nation's fifth branch of service—have been, once again, left behind. The NDAA covers

the Army, Air Force, Navy, and Marines.

The Coast Guard Authorization Act focuses on the heroic men and women in the Coast Guard. This year, we worked hard on that bill, S. 1129, the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2017. I sponsored this bill with Chairman JOHN THUNE, the chairman of the Commerce Committee; Ranking Member BILL NELSON; and Senator LISA MURKOWSKI. This bipartisan bill—and it is very bipartisan—will give the Coast Guard the resources it needs to protect our waterways and coastlines, block illegal traffickers and smugglers of drugs, and more efficiently procure future Coast Guard cutters, which our country, and my State, desperately need. It is a very, very important bill.

In constructing this legislation, we worked in a bipartisan manner for months. However, despite broad support from both Republicans and Democrats, it appears the Coast Guard Authorization Act—a critical bill for homeland security, for the safety of our mariners and fishermen, and for showing support to the thousands of men and women who serve in the Coast Guard—has become stuck.

As chairman of the committee responsible for the U.S. Coast Guard, I must speak up for the men and women of this important service and the critical services they provide. This bill should have been moving months ago. Not only does this bill contain critical needs and authorizations and funding authorizations for the Coast Guard, it also contains provisions of vital importance to our maritime and fishing communities. Included in this legislation is important language to permanently fix an issue that has been around for years—one that pertains to incidental discharges for those in our fishing fleets. It is also known as the Vessel Incidental Discharge Act, or VIDA, as part of the Coast Guard bill.

Currently, vessel owners and operators are forced to comply with a patchwork of burdensome Federal and State regulations for vessel ballast water and incidental discharges. This creates inefficiency, adds costs, and inhibits economic prosperity for my State and for the country, while not providing a uniform standard to protect the environment, which is also critical. This fix that is in the Coast Guard bill would provide the maritime industry, the fishing industry, with a consistent, uniform regulatory structure, restoring cost-effective commerce while also ensuring environmental protection of our Nation's ports, waterways, and fisheries. Notably, for a large number of my constituents, this provision—the VIDA provision in the Coast Guard bill—provides a permanent exemption on incidental vessel discharge for all fishing vessels and small commercial boats.

It is very important because previous legislation required even small fishing vessels to get a discharge permit from the EPA to simply hose down their

decks. These fishing vessels and small vessels are facing potential noncompliance if we fail to pass the Coast Guard bill soon. They should not be penalized for the refusal of some of my colleagues—very few of my colleagues—who are opponents of this important fix to allow for what we think is a bipartisan, negotiated solution to move forward.

The fix in this bill on VIDA is supported by all segments of the maritime industry, with U.S. and international vessel owners and operators, fishing vessels—both large and small—passenger vessels, charter boat operators, labor unions, the Navy League of the United States, marine terminals, and port authorities throughout the country, just to name a few, all in support.

There is broad bipartisan support and agreement by Democrats and Republicans that this bill—with the VIDA provision in the Coast Guard Authorization Act—should move forward. I was going to come here this evening and ask unanimous consent that we pass the bill now. Out of respect for some of my colleagues who are still working in good faith on this issue, I have decided to refrain from that, but we are losing patience.

There have been numerous suggested compromises to help get a few Senators to yes on this. We have accepted almost every single one of them. We are negotiating in good faith. We even held a big meeting this afternoon with many staff on another suggestion, which the EPA said was an unworkable idea.

I believe we are now down to one single issue on this important piece of legislation. Out of respect for my colleagues—one of whom I just got off the phone with, the Senator from Michigan, whom I have a very close working relationship on the committee that oversees the Coast Guard because he is my ranking member—we are going to try to work through the weekend and resolve this. I hope that the remaining Senators act in good faith. What we don't want to see, as we accept every single compromise put forward, is the goalpost continuously being moved.

The deadline is fast approaching for our fishermen and maritime fleet. We must get this done. The deadline has long past to show that we respect, care for, and want to do all we can to support the men and women in the Coast Guard the way we support the other military services, as we saw this week when President Trump passed a very bipartisan NDAA.

I call on all of my colleagues to work through the weekend so that we can get to yes on this very important bill—the Coast Guard bill—and so that we can support them the way we are supporting the other men and women in our military.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I first thank my friend from Alaska for

his enthusiasm for getting the Coast Guard legislation completed. As a fellow ocean State, albeit a somewhat smaller ocean State, we are strong supporters of our Coast Guard and appreciate very much their service on our waters.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I am here for my 189th “Time to Wake Up” speech to discuss the Republican tax bill. Who knew? Folks watching today’s debate from home are probably wondering what the tax bill has to do with climate change. That is a good question. They might also ask, as I do, why the tax bill includes massive giveaways to fossil fuel producers or what opening up precious wilderness to oil drilling has to do with tax reform.

The chairman of the Senate Finance Committee said: “We need a simpler tax code that puts more money back into the pockets of workers and families.” Republicans, he said, want to create “a fairer, more predictable system for taxpayers across the country.”

Their tax plan is none of those things. Its benefits are weighted heavily to big corporations, not workers and families. The corporate tax cuts are permanent, while the modest breaks for some workers disappear after a few years. What is fair or predictable about that?

The chairman also said:

I want a bipartisan process that renders a bipartisan result. . . . I think we need a vigorous and open debate in the Senate, which, in my view, should include a full process in committee and regular order on the Senate floor.

We got none of that. Republicans have rammed this bill through, using every procedural and parliamentary trick at their disposal, as a purely partisan measure, in the dead of night, producing amendments in handwritten chicken scratch in the margins of the bill at the last minute.

If we were to ask middle-class families their top priorities for fixing our tax system, I don’t think very many would say: You know, we really need to let oil companies pump crude in an Alaskan wildlife refuge. But that is what they do.

The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1960 to preserve “unique wildlife, wilderness, and recreational values.” It now encompasses almost 20 million acres, with around 8-million acres designated as wilderness. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service manages the refuge, which is roadless, trailless, and represents the best of wild Alaska in a world where wilderness is increasingly scarce and vanishing far too fast.

The Republican tax bill opens the refuge’s 1.5 million-acre coastal plain to the oil drillers. Opening the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil and gas development does little to provide energy security. The oil-producing potential of the area is estimated by the U.S.

Geological Survey to be, at a maximum, around 12 billion barrels total of recoverable oil. In 2016, the United States consumed 7.2 billion barrels of petroleum products just in that year. So all of the oil we get from the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, which will take decades, represents fewer than 2 years of current consumption, and that is according to the most optimistic estimate.

The budget resolution required that this venture raise \$1 billion over 10 years. Republicans need that \$1 billion to fund the big tax cuts they are giving out to the wealthy and to big corporations. When the numbers were finally crunched, though, drilling in that Arctic coastal plain couldn’t produce those numbers. Did this reality dissuade my Republican colleagues? No. Instead, they have proposed to make up the difference by selling off 7 million barrels from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve—the United States’ emergency supply of crude oil, which actually does help guarantee our energy security. They want to sell reserve oil to fund those cuts for the wealthy and the big corporations.

An auction last week of oil and gas leases in another part of Northern Alaska bodes ill for Republican hopes about drilling in the wilderness preserve. On 900 tracts of land offered up to oil and gas companies, the Bureau of Land Management fielded just seven bids—900 tracts of land, 7 bids.

Why is that?

For one thing, low prices for crude oil make the prospect of exploring undeveloped Alaskan wilderness less appealing. In general, current industry appetite for high-risk “frontier” exploration is very low, observed an energy analysis at Raymond James & Associates. The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge “would suffer from much the same thing.”

A second problem is that oil companies are likely overstating their achievable existing reserves already. They will have to leave a lot in the ground of what they are now claiming as reserves. Buying more when you cannot sell what you already have is not a great strategy. Low-cost renewables and excess supply will further drive oil prices down and down if the laws of supply and demand hold true.

This may be one reason the World Bank just announced in this new story, dated 2 days ago, that it will end its financial support for oil and gas exploration within the next 2 years. It is in response to the growing threat that is posed by climate change. That is where they are going. We are going the wrong way.

The sad irony of Arctic drilling is that the American Arctic will feel the effects of burning fossil fuels most severely. The U.S. Global Change Research Program’s “Climate Science Special Report,” authored by scientists and experts from top universities and across the Federal Government, found that while all regions of the United

States will see significant warming by the end of the century, Alaska is expected to take the hardest hit—potentially over 12 degrees Fahrenheit warmer by 2100, which is under the high-emission scenario shown down here at the bottom right.

The northern edge of Alaska, including the historic whale-hunting village of Utqiagvik—and please forgive me, the people of Utqiagvik, for mangling the village’s pronunciation—could see temperature increases of 18 degrees Fahrenheit. This village, which is only about 300 miles west of the area in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge targeted for oil and gas development, is already seeing its coastlines overrun by rising seas, its permafrost melting beneath its buildings, and its beaches washing out to sea in strong winter storms as the protective shoreline sea ice forms later and later each year.

Here is another news flash from Utqiagvik: 320 miles north of the Arctic Circle, a weather station in America’s northernmost city of Utqiagvik has been collecting temperature data since the 1920s. Just recently, the average temperature went so off the chart at the weather station there that the instrumentation shut down the recording because the algorithm that monitored this figured that something must have gone wrong with the instrumentation because the numbers were so out of whack.

The numbers were not out of whack. It was actually very real climate change that changed the environment and sent that signal that blew through the algorithm that the scientists had set up.

But, in this building, in this room, the warnings from our best scientists about the consequences of our carbon emissions just don’t count. The hyped economics about oil drilling don’t count here. The weird budgetary jujitsu required to shoehorn this environmental hit into a tax bill doesn’t matter here. What matters here is that the oil companies want to drill in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, and so Republicans are making it happen.

Republicans claim to be cleaning up the Tax Code, but their so-called tax reform leaves in place most of the oil and tax giveaways that have benefited that industry for decades. The Big Oil giants, like BP, Shell, ExxonMobil, Chevron, and ConocoPhillips, have enjoyed nearly \$1 trillion in profits over the past 10 years. Yes, let’s rush to their assistance. Never mind the beleaguered American families, many of whom will see taxes go up from this bill. Let’s rush to the defense of those companies with \$1 trillion in profits over the past 10 years. They continue to benefit from multibillion-dollar tax subsidies.

I am proud to have repeatedly cosponsored Senator MENENDEZ’s bill that would close the loopholes for the Big Oil giants, saving \$22 billion for taxpayers and debt holders over the next decade. The Republican bill not