

## NAYS—5

Booker Harris Markey  
Gillibrand Hirono

## NOT VOTING—4

Jones Sanders  
Klobuchar Warren

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The yeas are 91, the nays are 5.

The motion is agreed to.

## EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Travis Greaves, of the District of Columbia, to be a Judge of the United States Tax Court for a term of fifteen years.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

## ABORTION

Mr. LANKFORD. Madam President, I rise to have a dialogue. Let me start it this way. My brother and I did not always agree on things. I know that may be shocking that two brothers did not get along on everything. Maybe in your house you got along on everything, but my brother and I, growing up, did not agree on everything.

In fact, growing up, I distinctly remember the day we reached epic levels, and we actually got masking tape out in our room and put a line down the floor that ran from one wall across to the other wall. We had an old-school stereo record player in our room. The line ran up the record player so that on one side he had the tuning knob and on the other side I had the volume knob. We would have to reach some sort of detente to listen to anything. If he turned it to a station I didn't like, I could turn the volume all the way down. We would have to work things out. The line even went through our closet, with his clothes and my clothes on it, and we had a clear line of separation that you could not cross that line. The rules were very clear in our room. For whatever reason, our mom put up with it for quite a while as we had our "Don't cross the line into my side" kind of moment.

It is interesting that today in the Senate there was in some ways kind of a line-drawing moment to not draw a line but to try to figure out where are our lines, where are our boundaries on an issue that Americans talk about all the time, in many ways, but always get nervous in that dialogue. It is the issue about when is a child a child.

We have this weird dialogue as a nation because we have a great passion for children. We spend a tremendous amount of money, personally, on our families and in our communities and in nonprofits and Federal taxpayer dollars to walk alongside children to do everything we can to protect the lives of those children.

We have some in this body who have proposed Federal taxpayer dollars for children in their very first days of life to have childcare that is available for

them, but literally 3 days before that, they have also proposed Federal tax dollars for abortion to take that life.

It begs the question: Where is your line on life? What is that moment? For me, I go with the science. It is conception. That is a dividing cell that has DNA that is different than the mom and different than the dad. That dividing cell is a uniquely different person. Every science textbook, every medical textbook that you look at would identify that DNA is different than any other DNA in the world. That is a different person. As those cells grow and divide and as that child grows and divides, whether they are 50 years old or whether they are only days old still in womb, the DNA is the same. All the building blocks are in that child from their earliest days.

Others will look at it and will ask the question—like the Supreme Court did in 1973, when they ruled on *Roe v. Wade* on the issue of viability. That is when the Supreme Court said, in 1973, that States can engage and try to make some laws dealing with abortion, which is based around this issue of viability. Viability, in 1973, is very different than it is now. We have many children who are born at 21, 22, 23, 24 weeks gestation who are prematurely delivered, spend months in a NICU facility, and thrive as adults. That viability question is different now than it was in 1973, but we also know more about the science now than we knew at that time as well.

We know that a child—some would say on the science side of it—as early as 12 weeks old of development, still in the womb, can feel and experience pain. Certainly, by 20 weeks, 21, 22 weeks, they have developed a brain and have developed a nervous system. The system of experiencing pain is all in place. If anything happens to that child, that child will experience the pain and the effects of that.

The New York Times had a really interesting article in October 2017, talking about a young man, Charley Royer. When he was just at 24 weeks development in the womb, the parents made a very difficult decision to have a surgery in utero. It is spina bifida. The child would be paralyzed. The New York Times writes about how they did this surgery—this very intricate surgery—that happened at Texas Children's Hospital at Baylor College of Medicine. They basically delivered the child, doing surgery on that child, reinserting the uterus and the child back into the mom's womb, and then stayed all the way through until full gestation and was delivered.

Charley is apparently doing very well. It was a remarkable surgery. During that surgery, they made sure they helped that child and gave him additional medications to protect him from pain because they were doing surgery on someone who felt the effects of the surgery at 24 weeks.

Today we had a vote in the Senate to ask Senators, if you don't agree with

me on this that the line should be conception, to consider that child a child at conception, would you consider that child a child when they can experience pain? They have a beating heart. They have a functioning nervous system. They have 10 fingers, 10 toes.

This is not a tissue we are talking about. This is what a child looks like in the womb at 20 to 22 weeks. That is a child. The question is, Is your line when that child has a beating heart, has a functioning nervous system, can experience pain? Is that your line?

We had that vote today. Unfortunately, this Senate body said no. The line is not at conception, and the line is not even when they look like this and can experience pain. That bill was voted down.

There are only four countries in the world that allow abortion on demand at any time—four countries left in the world that still abort children who look like this, who experience pain, who are in late term. It is the United States, North Korea, China, and Vietnam. That is all that is left in the world that looks at this and says that is just tissue; that is not really a baby.

This Senate voted again today to affirm that same club that we are in with China, North Korea, and Vietnam. That is not a club I want our Nation to be in. They are some of the worst human rights violators in the world, and they don't recognize the value and the dignity of life. We do, or at least I thought we did, but that is not where our line is, apparently.

Today we took another vote in the Senate, and it was a very clear line as well to say: OK. If your line is not at conception, and if it is not when the child can experience pain, and it is not a late-term abortion when the child is actually viable, maybe your line is actually when they are delivered, when they are fully out of the womb. We took a vote on a bill called the Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act. It is a very straightforward bill. It is not about abortion at all. It is about a child who is fully delivered.

In medical practice, there are times when there is a late-term abortion that in the procedure itself to actually conduct the abortion, instead of the child being aborted and killed in the womb, it is a spontaneous birth that actually occurs, and the child is actually fully delivered. The intent was to destroy the child in the womb, but that is not what happened. What happened, instead, in a small percentage of abortions, was that child was actually delivered. Now the question is, the child is no longer in the womb. The child is literally fully delivered and is crying on the table in front of you. What do you do? We asked the question of this body: Where is your line? Is your line at delivery? Even if the intent was originally abortion, that didn't occur, is your line at delivery? Unfortunately, this body voted no. We could not get 60 Senators of 100 to say even if a child is fully delivered outside of the womb,

crying on the table, that is a child. That is a frightening statement about where we are in our culture.

I have had all kinds of folks say: Well, this is not about infanticide. Infanticide is already illegal.

I said: Yes, that is true.

In 2002, there was unanimous support in this body, in the Senate, to pass a bill saying that if a child is delivered, that would be infanticide. The problem was, it left no consequences at all and allowed what still happens today where if a child is fully delivered, there are no consequences for allowing them to die on the table.

A couple of years ago, Kermit Gosnell was fully delivering children in his abortion clinic. He was fully delivering them, and then he would take scissors, flip the child over, and snip their spinal cord to kill them. He is in prison right now for carrying out that act because that was considered infanticide. But what is still legal is allowing the child to just lie there on the table until they slowly die.

Jill Stanek is a nurse who has practiced for years in Illinois. She gave testimony in a hearing not long ago and testified multiple times about what is going on in some of these abortion facilities and what happens when a child is fully delivered and they are still alive. In her experience, what she has watched before, she has noticed that children will live outside the womb. These are viable children lying on the table, or in her particular hospital, they literally took the child to a linen closet and closed the door and left him there. They would live somewhere between an hour and, some children, as long as 8 hours, just waiting to die. Ladies and gentlemen, in ancient times, it was called exposure when you would take a child and set them outside to die without medical care.

Our vote today was, if a child is fully delivered, should they get medical care, or should we just allow medical facilities to just back off and allow them to slowly die? And today this Senate could not get 60 votes to say we should at least give medical care to that child instead of allowing them to slowly die on the table on their own—a child literally crying, kicking their feet, but ignored. I would hope we are better than that as a country, but apparently the line has still not been discovered for the value of a child. I am one who believes that a child has great value, a child has great worth. Whether that child is a kindergartner or in the womb, that child has value. As a culture, we should stand for the value of every child.

I am amazed, absolutely amazed when I think about the fact that 100 years ago, my wife, my mom, and my daughters would not have been able to vote. I can't even process that 100 years ago, my wife, my mom, and my daughters would not have been allowed to vote in America. What were we thinking as Americans that we did that?

I am amazed that there was a time in America not that long ago where if you

were of Japanese descent, they rounded you up, put you in camps, and held you, as an American citizen, just because you were of Japanese descent. I can't even process the fact that we did that as Americans.

I cannot believe there was a time in America where we looked at African Americans and said: That is three-fifths of a man. I cannot even process that was in our law, that we declared a human being three-fifths of a person.

I am so grateful that we no longer round up people because they are of Japanese descent, that we allow women to vote, and that we consider all people equal. I am so grateful that time has passed. I long for the day, which I believe is coming, that we as a nation look back and say: What were we thinking that we allowed children to live or die based on our convenience? And if a child was inconvenient, we just killed them or we set them on the table and allowed them to slowly die from exposure because they were inconvenient in the moment. There will be a day when we will look back on this season in American history and we will say: What were we thinking that we considered some children more valuable than others, that we considered some lives worth living and some to just be thrown away?

What is your line? When is a life worth protecting? When does life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness actually apply to you in America? I wish it was conception or at least when they can experience pain or at least when they are fully born, but this body has not yet found the moment when we can agree that life is valuable. I long for the day that we do.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

#### ELECTION SECURITY

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam President, I rise today to once again call upon the Senate to take immediate and urgent action to prevent Russia or any other foreign power from interfering in our 2020 elections. Since the last time I came to the Senate floor to talk about this issue, it has become only more urgent. The clock is ticking, and each day that goes by without the Senate taking action, this body becomes more complicit in the hijacking of our democracy by Vladimir Putin or other foreign powers that try to interfere in our elections.

Just in the last week, we have seen significant new developments. We know that the intelligence community briefed the House Intelligence Committee about ongoing Russian interference in our current elections.

We also know that upon learning about that briefing, upon hearing that

the intelligence community was doing its job in keeping Congress informed about election interference, President Trump erupted upon hearing the news. He did not want the House of Representatives to know what the Russians were up to.

We know that soon after that briefing, President Trump unceremoniously fired his Acting Director of National Security, Joseph Maguire, who is a military veteran and a career public servant of great integrity. All of that, we know. And we know that President Trump replaced Mr. Maguire with an Acting Director who has no prior experience in the intelligence community and whose only qualification appears to be to tell President Trump what President Trump wants to hear when it comes to intelligence information or other matters.

None of us should be surprised to learn that the Russians are interfering again in our elections. They did it in 2016. That was the unanimous verdict of all our U.S. intelligence agencies. In fact, that was the verdict by the head of agencies who had been appointed by President Trump. That was also the bipartisan finding of the Senate Intelligence Committee. They found that there was some level of Russian interference in the 2016 elections in every State in the country, all 50 States. It was also the well-documented conclusion in the Muller report that brought a number of indictments against Russian operatives of the GRU.

Just last November, the leaders of the intelligence agencies—again, leaders appointed by the current President—all warned the Congress and the American people that the Russians and other foreign powers would seek to interfere in our elections in 2020. Those agencies included the heads of the NSA, the CRA, the FBI, the DNI, and others. Last November, all of them warned us about expected Russian interference in our elections. So it really should be no surprise that we learned last week of a briefing in the House where the intelligence community said: We told you so.

We have determined that the Russians are interfering right now in the ongoing 2020 elections. That shouldn't be surprising. What is surprising and what is shocking is that the Congress has done virtually nothing to prevent it. Think about that. We were warned in 2016. We have been warned repeatedly since then that the Russians are going to interfere in our 2020 elections. We now have a briefing about ongoing interference and still nothing. What does the President do in response to that information? He fires the head of the intelligence community. He fires him because he doesn't want him to tell Congress what the Russians are doing.

Just last month, in February, the Senate Intelligence Committee issued another report. It was another bipartisan report. What they did was they went back to look at what happened in

the 2016 elections—specifically in the lead-up to the 2016 elections—and asked themselves the question: Why, when we learned that there was some Russian interference, did we not notify and alert the country?

Their findings were interesting. They found that there were various political reasons. People had concerns about making that information public. In fact, the Republican leader, the majority leader here, was one of those who said: No, we should not inform the American people about that interference.

The Senate Intelligence Committee drew lessons from that, saying: We shouldn't be caught once again unprepared. That is what they said in the report just last month, and now we are sitting here today with the intelligence community telling us the Russians are interfering right now as we speak, and we are doing nothing about it. Our democracy is under attack, and we are just pretending things are going on as normal. You would think we would all agree that when our democracy is under attack, we should unify immediately and take every action necessary to prevent that.

What could and should we do?

We should harden our election systems. We should make sure that voting systems around the country are harder to hack. We should make sure that voter registration information is harder to hack, and we have dedicated some additional resources to that. We haven't done enough, but we have taken some small steps in that direction, as we should.

This is a situation in which the best defense is a good offense, and as long as Vladimir Putin and the Russians don't pay any price at all for interfering in our elections, it should be no surprise that they are going to keep on doing it. It is cost-free to them. In fact, they are gaining major benefits, and we see them around the country. They are succeeding in helping to divide Americans against one another. They are succeeding in undermining public confidence in the democratic system. That is exactly what Vladimir Putin wants to do here in the United States and among our allies in Europe and elsewhere around the world.

What should we do about it?

After we learned of what happened in 2016, Senator RUBIO and I introduced a bipartisan bill. It is called the DETER Act. In addition to Senator RUBIO and me, we have Republican and Democratic cosponsors.

What does the bill do?

It is pretty straightforward. It says to Vladimir Putin and other foreign powers: If we catch you interfering in a future election, you will pay a price. That price will be immediate, and it will be severe. So, if you are thinking about what benefits you might gain from interfering in an American election, you will know there will also be a big price to pay.

That is the legislation that Senator RUBIO and I introduced back in 2017. It

has not gotten a vote here in the U.S. Senate. It has not gotten it. It didn't have a vote in the last Congress, so we reintroduced it in this Congress.

Now, last fall, when we were taking up the National Defense Authorization Act, the NDAA, the Senate agreed that part of our national defense meant defending our democracy and part of our defending our democracy meant defending the integrity of our elections. So we unanimously, by a voice vote here in the Senate, said that the Defense authorization bill should include a provision like the DETER Act, that it should include a provision that says to the Russians and other foreign powers: If we catch you interfering in an election, there will be a severe price to pay.

When I talk about a severe price, I mean sanctions on their economies, sanctions on their major banks, sanctions on the energy sectors—real economic pain, not imposing sanctions on a few oligarchs, but real pain. That is what the Senate said we should do as part of the NDAA, the National Defense Authorization Act.

Guess what happened?

When the conferees—when the negotiators—went behind closed doors, the White House essentially told the Senate conferees: Huh-uh, we don't want you adopting these important protections—protections to defend the integrity of our democracy.

So, despite that unanimous Senate vote, it just disappeared in the middle of the night from the negotiations over the Defense authorization bill.

What do we do?

The clock is ticking, and it is time for the Senate to do now what it said it wanted to do when we unanimously passed that motion to instruct the conferees to pass something like the DETER Act as part of the Defense bill, and we are, right now, engaged in ongoing discussions with the chairman of the Senate Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Committee to try to finally get this bill—this bipartisan bill—out of the U.S. Senate. I hope we make progress because what appears to be the situation is that the White House is essentially putting up a massive roadblock to progress on this matter.

It is not our job in the U.S. Senate to simply do the bidding of this President or of any other President. It is the duty of this Senate to protect our democracy against what we know is an ongoing attack on the integrity of our elections.

That is why I am here on the floor right now, because we just got the news last week that everything we had been warned about in terms of expected Russian interference in our 2020 elections is coming true. So we have a missile aimed at the integrity of our elections, and the Senate is doing nothing about it. It is unbelievable and grossly negligent to know, in realtime, that our elections are being undermined and to take no action.

I just want to say to my colleagues that, if we don't move forward on the bipartisan DETER Act in the coming days and make progress in the coming days, I will be back here on the Senate floor next week, and I will ask for unanimous consent to bring it up. If Senators want to come down here in the light of day and say no—no to bipartisan legislation that protects our democracy—they can do that, but we are going to keep at this, and with every day that goes by, we learn more about what is happening now.

I close with what I said before: We should not be surprised that Vladimir Putin is interfering in our elections. He did it in 2016, and we have been told ever since then that he will do it again. What is surprising and shocking and grossly negligent is that this body has not taken action to date to protect our democratic process. We are going to keep fighting until we get that done.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Would the Senator accept a question?

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Yes, I would be delighted to entertain a question.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Madam President, just for the reference of everyone, I believe the majority leader is going to come in for his closing script. When he does, that will end whatever little colloquy we will have had here, and I will then do my "Time to Wake Up" speech.

In the time that it takes the majority leader to get here, I am interested in hearing the Senator from Maryland say that the White House—our White House—the President of the United States—is a massive roadblock to protecting the integrity of our upcoming election from foreign interference. How does that make sense? Why would it be an American President who doesn't want to defend the integrity of an American election from foreign interference?

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. I thank the Senator from Rhode Island for the question.

All I can say is we have seen a pattern from this President. We saw this President, President Trump, in Helsinki a few years ago, standing next to Vladimir Putin, and our President was the one who threw our intelligence community under the bus. He said he trusted Vladimir Putin when Putin told him, Don't worry, President Trump. We didn't interfere in your elections.

President Trump said: OK. I think President Putin may be right about our intelligence community.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. He did say it very strongly.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. He did, and we have seen that pattern over and over again.

We just learned of this briefing that took place in the House of Representatives this week. The response from President Trump was not, Oh, my goodness. Let's pass this legislation. It was to fire the guy who was in charge of the intelligence community.

So what do you think?

It is a mystery to all of us as to why the President is taking this action other than the fact that, of course, he did call on Russia in the last election and welcomed its support. We all saw him on national television when he did that.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Yes.

In fact, even the Mueller report showed that there was considerable Russian activity and support in the election that made Donald Trump our President. They couldn't prove an ongoing conspiracy between the Trump campaign and the Russian election interference effort, but they confirmed that there was a Russian election interference effort. If I recall correctly, they confirmed that the Trump campaign was witting of it, just not conspiring with it, just not directly engaged with it.

So I don't know. Perhaps it is just the hope that, perhaps, he will get elected again with foreign interference and that he doesn't want to close off that option, but it is a little bit odd for the President of the United States not to take the protecting of the security of the American election more seriously.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. I am glad Senator WHITEHOUSE made that distinction with respect to the Mueller report.

It is true that they did not find a criminal conspiracy, meaning they did not find some agreement between the Trump campaign and the Russians to interfere, but they found plenty of evidence of the Trump campaign's welcoming the intervention from the Russians.

Of course, we have more recently seen President Trump spreading the conspiracy theories that were launched by Vladimir Putin that it was not the Russians who interfered in the 2016 elections: Oh, my God. It was the Ukrainians who interfered in the 2016 elections.

There is this famous videotape now of Vladimir Putin's saying: Thank God, they are not blaming the Russians anymore. They are blaming the Ukrainians.

Translation: Thank God our propaganda is working, and even the President of the United States and some Members of the House of Representatives are parroting our conspiracy theory, the ones that we cooked up.

It is really alarming that a foreign government—someone like Vladimir Putin—is so successful in spreading its misinformation within our system.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. I appreciate the concern of the Senator from Maryland on this, and I wish him success with his legislation.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. I thank the Senator for his questions.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

#### CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Madam President, I come to again raise an alarm about the massive carbon pollution

that we are dumping into our natural world and to tell the stories of two ocean creatures that are suffering from that pollution. Now, we may mock or ignore these creatures—these lesser creatures so far down the food chain from us—but we are fools to ignore the message of what is happening to them.

Matthew 25:41 admonishes, “as you did it to one of the least of these . . . you did it to me.” So we ought not mock and ignore these lesser species because they also have a lesson for us, a warning. If we keep up what we are doing to them, it will soon enough be we who suffer. As Pope Francis warned: Slap Mother Nature, and she will slap you back.

Let's start, before we get to the two species, with an overview.

First, it is not just these two species. Science writer Elizabeth Kolbert has warned that we have entered a sixth great extinction—the first and only great extinction in humans' time on the planet—and that this great extinction is driven by manmade pollution and climate change. Scientists from around the globe have just issued one of the most comprehensive reports ever on Earth's biodiversity, and the head of that panel, Sir Robert Watson, summarized its findings this way.

I quote him here:

The overwhelming evidence . . . presents an ominous picture. The health of ecosystems on which we and all other species depend is deteriorating more rapidly than ever. We are eroding the very foundations of our economies, livelihoods, food security, health and quality of life worldwide.

The legendary David Attenborough warns that we face what he calls “irreversible damage to the natural world and the collapse of our societies.”

He says: “It may sound frightening, but the scientific evidence is that if we have not taken dramatic action within the next decade, we could face irreversible damage to the natural world and the collapse of our societies.”

In all of this, we need to remember our oceans. Oceans are warming and acidifying and literally suffocating ocean species as oxygen dead zones expand. Earth's oceans warm at the rate of multiple Hiroshima explosions' worth of heat per second—per second. They acidify at the fastest rate in at least 50 million years. They are also fouled with our plastic garbage and polluted by runoff from farming and stormwater. Our oceans' warnings are loud and clear and measurable. They are chronicled by fishermen and sailors and measured with thermometers, tide gauges, and simple pH tests that measure acidification.

It is this acidification that takes me to these two species. The oceans are absorbing around 30 percent of our excess carbon dioxide emissions, and they do that in a chemical interaction that takes up the CO<sub>2</sub> but acidifies the seawater. Don't pretend there is any dispute about this. Acidification is a chemical phenomenon. You can demonstrate it in a middle school science

lab. You can demonstrate it with your breath, an aquarium bubbler, a glass of water, and a pH strip. In fact, I have done so right at this desk.

Here is the first species pictured—the tiny pteropod. It is an oceanic snail about the size of a small pea. It is known as the sea butterfly because it has adapted two butterflylike wings that can propel it around in the ocean.

Acidifying waters make it harder for pteropods and a lot of other shelled creatures to grow their shells and develop from juveniles to adults. Researchers in the Pacific Northwest have reported what they called “severe shell damage” on more than half of the pteropods they collected from Central California to the Canadian border.

These images show the pteropod's shell when the creature's underwater environment becomes more acidic—not good for pteropods. Maintaining their shells against that acidity requires energy—energy that would otherwise go into growth or reproduction. So acidification makes it harder for species, such as the pteropods and other shell creatures at the base of the oceanic food chain, to survive.

Who cares? Who cares about the lowly, humble pteropod? Who cares about some stupid ocean snail? Well, for one, salmon do. Half the diet of some salmon species in the Pacific is pteropods. Salmon fisheries support coastal jobs and economies across our Pacific Northwest. Offshore fishing in the United States is a multibillion dollar industry connected to hundreds of thousands of livelihoods. If you care about our fisheries industry, you should care about the humble pteropod. An entire food chain stands on its tiny back, and we are in that food chain.

Move up the food chain a little, and you find another creature facing peril from acidification—the Dungeness crab. You see this crustacean on ice in your local fish market. It is an important commercial catch along our west coast. In 2014, the last year the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission did a comprehensive report, the Dungeness catch was worth \$170 million. It is Oregon's most valuable fishery, and it is important also for Washington State and for California, where annual landings run between \$40 and \$95 million. Up north, in 2017, Alaska's commercial landings of Dungeness crabs totaled more than 2.1 million pounds.

Last month, marine scientists reported that acidified oceans are dissolving the delicate shells of Dungeness crab larvae. The acidic environment is not just damaging the shells but also damaging the larvae's mechanoreceptors, the hairlike sensory organs that crabs use to hear and feel and make their way around the sea. The damage to the crabs is bad news, but worse is that we are seeing it now. Scientists thought hardy Dungeness crabs wouldn't be affected by acidification for decades. Richard Feely, senior NOAA scientist and coauthor of the study, reports that these “dissolution

impacts to the crab larvae . . . were not expected to occur until much later in this century.”

The sentinel implications for the entire ecosystem are grave. If the Dungeness are feeling the effects of ocean acidification now, what other creatures are feeling those effects too? Another lead author of this study said: “If the crabs are affected already, we really need to make sure we start to pay much more attention to various components of the food chain before it is too late.”

These concerns about the Dungeness crab and its happening too soon echo what scientists actually said of early findings about the pteropod. Oceanographer William Peterson, who is the co-author of an early study on the pteropod, said: “We did not expect to see pteropods being affected to this extent in our coastal region for several decades.”

So we are way ahead of schedule in terms of what scientists have predicted for ocean acidification outcomes for these foundational creatures in our ocean ecosystem. Together, the pteropod and the Dungeness crab send a common message, one echoed by a Rhode Island fishing boat captain who told me: “Sheldon, things are getting weird out there.”

And they are getting weird faster than expected. The rapid ocean acidification that we are measuring now and that we are causing now with further carbon pollution is nearly unprecedented in the geological record. Scientists look back to try to find historical analogs for what is happening. The closest historical analogs scientists can find for what they are seeing now in the oceans go back before human-kind. There is no analog in human time. You have to go back before humans existed, back into the prehistoric record, back to the prehistoric great extinctions, back when marine species were wiped out and ocean ecosystems took millions of years to recover. That is the historical analog that best matches our current direction.

In his encyclical “*Laudato Si*,” Pope Francis, who is a trained scientist himself, reflected on what he called “the mysterious network of relations between things” in life. In that mysterious network of relations between things, the pteropod and the crab larva give their lives to transmit food energy from the microscopic plants they eat, which would be of no use to us, up to the fish that consume the pteropod and larva—fish, which we, in turn, consume—all in that great mysterious network of relations between things.

What is happening to these two species is more than just an event. It is a signal. It is a signal of a looming global ecological catastrophe. Lesser species, species that we may mock or ignore, can sometimes be sentinels for humans, like the legendary canaries taken down into coal mines. When the sentinels start to die, it is wise to pay attention.

What happens when, in our arrogance and pride, we refuse to heed the warnings from creatures so humble as the pteropods or crab larvae? Well, remember why Jesus was so angry with the Pharisees. What was their sin? Their arrogance and their pride blinded them to the truth. The Senate, this supposedly greatest deliberative body, has blinded itself to the devastation fossil fuels are unleashing on our Earth’s mysterious network. We careen recklessly into the next great extinction.

Pope Francis says:

Because of us, thousands of species will no longer give glory to God by their very existence, nor convey their message to us. We have no such right.

Indeed, we have no such right.

So I come here today to challenge us to see the damage we have done—the damage we are doing now, today, to this mysterious network of life, this mysterious God-given network of life that supports us. I challenge us also to turn away from dark forces of corruption and greed—specifically, the fossil fuel industry forces that have deliberately, on purpose, crippled our ability in Congress to stop their pollution.

I close by challenging us to heed the message of the humble creatures sharing this planet with us—the least of us, who share God’s creation. They suffer at our hands, and in their suffering they send us a message, a warning, that we would do well to hear.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

## LEGISLATIVE SESSION

### MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session for a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

### LITHUANIAN INDEPENDENCE

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, when one looks at a largely unified and democratic Europe, today it is easy to forget just how different it was in Eastern Europe not that long ago. For half a century, millions lived under the tyranny and repression of the Soviet Union.

But in the late 1980s, things began to change, particularly in the Baltic nations of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. Who can forget when 2 million people joined hands across these three

nations to form the 420-mile Baltic Chain of Freedom in August 1989? And not long after in February of the following year, Lithuania held its first free elections since World War II, voting for the country’s first postwar non-Communist government. Immediately thereafter, the new Parliament voted to make Lithuania the first occupied Soviet republic to declare independence. Lithuania’s bold move was followed later that year by Latvia and Estonia. These brave efforts culminated a year later in February 1991, when the Lithuania people overwhelmingly voted for independence—a historic move recognized by the US and Soviet Union that same year.

My first visit to Lithuania was nearly 40 years ago, but my ties reach back even further. One hundred years ago, my grandmother left her village of Jubarkas with her three small children to join my grandfather in America. In her arms, she carried a 2-year-old toddler—my mother, Ona Kutkaite.

Hidden in my grandmother’s baggage was a small Catholic prayer book, printed in Vilnius in 1863, the last year before printing in Lithuanian was outlawed by the czars. That prayer book—the last, cherished relic of my family’s life in their beautiful and ancient home—escaped the czars and was kept safe with our family in America during the brutal Soviet occupation. When I had the honor of addressing the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania on the 20th anniversary of independence, I was proud to bring that prayer book home to a free Lithuania. Those brave Lithuanians 30 years ago—including my friend Vytautas Landsbergis, who served as Lithuanian’s first post-independence head of state—led the country to a prosperous and democratic future.

Lithuania today is a vital member of the European Union, NATO, and the community of democracies. It held the presidency of the European Union earlier this decade and is a leading voice on the continent for standing up to Russia, defending Ukraine, and upholding key democratic values. And as it faces renewed threats from Russia, I have been a strong supporter of strengthening NATO operations and defenses in the Baltic nations. A few years ago, I visited the Lithuanian town of Rukla, where U.S. and German forces were rotating through as part of the European Reassurance Initiative aimed at keeping the Baltic safe.

As the cochair of the Senate Baltic Caucus, I will be introducing a resolution in the weeks ahead reaffirming this security cooperation and recognizing Lithuania’s great achievements around its 30th anniversary of independence.

In February 1990, when I came to Lithuania as part of an American delegation to observe the historic elections, my friends took me inside the Seimas to show me the arsenal of the Lithuanian freedom fighters. In the corner stood a handful of old rifles—no