

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

match for the Soviet war machine. But Lithuanians were armed with stronger weapons—faith, courage, and a burning desire to reclaim their independence. Because of the sacrifices of so many patriots, known and unknown, we can proudly and without fear proclaim here today on the 30th anniversary of these historic events: *Laisva Lietuva*. Free Lithuania. Now and always.

So let us use this historic anniversary to recommit to our continued support for our Baltic allies through economic and security cooperation and to reaffirm America's commitment to NATO and the enduring transatlantic alliance. Doing so will help ensure the next 30 years of the longstanding U.S.-Baltic friendship are equally strong and fruitful.

#### 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF ERIE HOUSE

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, Florence Hayden Towne dedicated her book, "Neighbor: Stories of Neighborhood House Work in a Great City," to the Erie Neighborhood House. She wrote, it "brought new hope and courage and a new way of life these whom we call 'neighbors.'" Throughout its 150-year history, the Erie House has consistently improved the lives of low-income, immigrant families in Chicago. Though the people, challenges, and times may have changed, the Erie House's mission has remained firm. Immigrant families have always found Erie House to be a place that empowers them and helps create a more engaged community. Today, we celebrate the great work of Erie House and congratulate its staff and supporters on the 150th anniversary.

Erie Neighborhood House began as Holland Presbyterian Church on the corner of North Noble Street and West Erie Street in 1870. The congregation offered several programs, including kindergarten and Sunday school, to the new families arriving from Dutch, Scandinavian, and German countries to the West Chicago neighborhood. The congregation moved to 1347 West Erie Street and changed its name to Erie Chapel in 1886. In 1893, Erie Kindergarten became one of the 20 flagship programs in Chicago's Free Kindergarten Association initiative and expanded youth programs to include choirs for children and adults and industrial classes.

As the neighborhood immigrant population changed to include Catholic countries like Poland and Italy, Erie Chapel renamed itself the Erie Chapel Institute and continued to serve the community and advance the settlement house tradition. In 1936, the staff rechristened the 1347 building with a new name, the Erie Neighborhood House.

Erie Neighborhood House continued to meet the challenges of the time. In 1942, with the Second World War raging, Erie House began providing daycare services since many men were

deployed overseas and many women had entered the workforce. In February 1945, Reverend Douglas Cedarleaf marched with members of Erie House to protest the treatment of the Strongs, a Black family that had recently moved into a White community and faced violence from their neighbors.

In 1957, volunteer physicians at Northwestern Memorial and Erie Neighborhood House founded the Erie Family Health Center to provide a variety of primary care, case management, and dental services to low-income, underinsured, and uninsured Chicagoans. Now, every year, nearly 38,000 patients receive high-quality healthcare at the center, regardless of their ability to pay.

With the crisis in housing growing in the late 1960s, Erie House founded the Bickerdike Redevelopment Corporation to create affordable housing opportunities for members of the community. Since its founding, Bickerdike has developed more than 2,000 affordable homes for families.

Today, the West Town and Little Village neighborhoods are primarily Latino, and Erie Neighborhood House is helping people with the tools they need to build a foundation for greater well-being. Erie House has hosted me several times and has been an important ally in working toward comprehensive immigration reform and supporting Dreamers, providing legal consultation and representing people in immigration and asylum cases.

The blueprint created 150 years ago has evolved, but that mission has remained constant. Today, Erie House helps 18,000 people all across the city of Chicago annually. Young people and adults attend mentoring programs and learn about career opportunities. Families experiencing violence can find counseling. Erie House remains an essential ally as we work toward a just, inclusive society where we accept our new neighbors and help them achieve their potential.

Congratulations to Erie Neighborhood House on 150 years of good work, giving people hope and courage.

(At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.)

#### ABORTION

• Mr. SANDERS. Madam President, today I would like to speak in opposition to two dangerous pieces of legislation that were considered in the Senate, both of which would severely undermine women's constitutional right to safe and legal abortions. One bill, S. 3275, the so-called Pain-Capable Unborn Protection Act, would create a national 20-week abortion ban, while the other, S. 311, the Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act, would attempt to scare providers who perform abortions out of business by subjecting them to penalties or even prison.

Let me be clear. These bills are not about protecting babies. These bills are

about telling women what they can and cannot do with their own bodies and making their own medical decisions for them. Today in the United States, we have some of the highest maternal mortality rates and infant mortality rates in the developed world. This crisis is only worsened by the racial and economic disparities many women face in our country, in addition to the reality that some 87 million Americans are either uninsured or underinsured. Instead of helping our Nation make progress toward eliminating these disparities, such as by guaranteeing affordable healthcare, including abortion, as a right, this legislation would bring us back to the dark ages when women in America did not have the right to control their own bodies. It is a simple reality that, if the Senate votes to deny women access to safe and legal abortion, many of them will suffer and perhaps even die. I urge my colleagues to oppose S. 3275 and S. 311. Thank you.●

#### BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, in 1619, Africans were first brought to Virginia, against their will, to be enslaved. From that moment on, White Americans systematically and violently denied the rights of citizenship to Black Americans. The adoption of the 15th Amendment, ratified in February 1870, was a historic effort to correct course. It recognized the right of all male citizens, including Black men, to vote. This amendment was the first time that we promised to protect the right of African Americans to full and equal participation in our democracy.

In the 150 years since then, we have tried to expand on that promise many times, like when women of all races and ethnicities finally won the right to vote in 1920. Yet our promise remains elusively unfulfilled. Today, in honor of Black History Month, I would like to take a moment to discuss the trajectory of that broken promise, as well as its impact on our character as a nation.

We began to break our promise shortly after we made it. During the Reconstruction and Jim Crow eras, White men and women across the country developed a number of techniques—some obvious and brutal, some subtle and pernicious—to keep African Americans away from the polls and out of government.

The broader goal of these tactics was to hamper the Black population's ability to recover from slavery by blocking their access to education and the economic means of building wealth.

I believe that it is important to acknowledge that Maryland partook in these pernicious behaviors right alongside other States. Maryland residents and government officials engaged in ballot tampering, imposed literacy and property restrictions, stoked racist fears to galvanize the White vote, and intimidated Black voters using outright violence.