So I have a proposal called the progressive consumption tax. ''Progressive,'' what do I mean by that? It means the taxes paid at the Federal level will be more reflective of a person's ability to pay than our current income tax code is. We make it progressive so it is fair, in that they pay according to their ability to pay a progressive consumption tax. That consumption tax rate will be the lowest among the industrial nations of the world.

I will give some examples. I will be the first to acknowledge we have to get these scored and these numbers can change as we go along, but we are looking at a consumption tax rate of about 10 percent. This would put us at the bottom of the consumption taxes among industrial nations. Individuals who earn under $25,000 and families up to $50,000 would pay no consumption taxes. They would get a credit for the consumption taxes they otherwise would pay.

Similar to the current income tax code where they do not pay income taxes, they would not pay consumption taxes. It would be immediately rebated to them. If they work, it would be rebated under the payroll tax payments. If they don't work, they would get a debit card to get instant rebates and use it as people use debit cards.

So we would make it progressive. We would then be able to start the income tax rates at $100,000, approximately, of taxable income, and 90 percent of Americans would pay no income taxes. It would start at 15 percent. There would be an additional bracket of 25 percent, starting at $40,000 of taxable income. So a progressive income tax, simplified, with only four deductions, not this complexity today as we figure out whether something is deductible and all the complications.

We would have four deductions for State and local—with respect to federalism—State and local taxes: for charitable deductions because our charities are critically important to carrying out the important work of our country, for real estate and the needs for the real estate to reflect—so we don't see destruction of the real estate market, and we also allow deductions for employer-provided health benefits and retirement benefits. It is simplified, it rewards simplicity, and allows for the progressiveness of fairness in our Tax Code that does not exist today.

The corporate tax rate would get down to 15 percent. That is what corporate America tells us we need to be competitive in the industrial world. This adds up.

Some say: Gee. Consumption taxes raise a lot of revenue. We put in our proposal an automatic adjustment of the rate to make sure it doesn't bring in more revenue than we say. So we are fair on the progressive side to make sure it is fair from the point of view of the ability of middle-class families to pay, and it is fair from the point of view of those who are concerned about government growing, in that it has a circuit break as to the rate based upon the revenue that you need.

What have we accomplished by this? We have accomplished a much simpler Tax Code that people can understand, a fairer Tax Code, one that rewards savings. Savings are not taxed. There is a greater ability to raise capital in the United States. It is border adjusted, which means the taxes come off our exported products so we can compete globally in a much easier way. This is what we accomplish.

So when people talk about fundamental reform, to me, this is what we need to do.

I am going to move this proposal as quickly as I can, but obviously it is going to take some discussion and debate. We are hopeful we will be able to answer anyone's questions on it. We are very optimistic, but in the meantime what do we do? We can't just stand by and allow Pfizer to take American jobs overseas because of corporate inversion. So I hope we will stand for what is right in our Tax Code, that we have the capacity to improve our current Tax Code to avoid the loss of jobs and shipping jobs overseas, as well as working to reform our Tax Code and provide the type of structure so the country that relies the least on government among the industrial nations has the lowest tax rate and has a fairer system for all Americans.

RECESS

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate stand in recess until 2:15 p.m.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 12:27 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. MURPHY).

HIRE MORE HEROES ACT OF 2014—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 1670 AND S. 1696

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, I have a unanimous consent request that I will make in a moment to kind of set the stage for what I am asking the Senate to consider. We will be asking that we schedule a vote on two pieces of legislation: the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act, S. 1670, which is my legislation; and S. 1696, the Women's Health Protection Act, by Senator BLUMENTHAL.

Very briefly, what I am trying to do is to have an opportunity for the body to talk about two pieces of legislation that relate to the abortion issue, the role of the Federal Government. Very quickly, my legislation would ban abortion at the 20-week period—the fifth month of pregnancy—based on the theory that the child can feel pain at that point in the pregnancy and that the standard of care for the medical community is that you cannot operate on an unborn fetus at the 20-week period without administering anesthesia, and the reason for that is because the child can feel pain.

There have been individuals born at the 20-week period who have survived. But the theory of the case is not based on the medical viability under Roe vs. Wade; it is a new theory that the State has a compelling interest in protecting an unborn child at this stage of pregnancy. The partial-birth abortion ban, which applies at 24 weeks, is backed up to 20 weeks.

Here is what medical journals tell parents to do at 20 weeks: An unborn child can hear and respond to sounds. Talk or sing. The unborn child enjoys hearing your voice.

It is a whole list of things about the unborn child in the 20-week period.

We are one of seven countries that allow abortions at this stage in the pregnancy, along with China, North Korea, Vietnam, Singapore, Canada, and the Netherlands.

So I would ask the body to consider having a debate on my legislation about whether we should limit elective abortions at the 20-week period and also a debate on Senator BLUMENTHAL's legislation that basically would allow the courts to set aside several State restrictions on abortion. We are going to present a series of actions at the State level. I think his legislation would allow the courts to have a literal construction in terms of being able to strike down these provisions. I disagree with my good friend. We are good friends, although we have a different view. The Senator from Connecticut made a statement when he introduced the bill that every Senator should be on the record when it comes to this legislation. I agree. I hope every Senator would be on the record when it comes to my legislation.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at a time to be determined by the majority leader, in consultation with the Republican leader, the Senate proceed to consideration of S. 1670, the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act, and S. 1696, the Women's Health Protection Act; that there be up to 8 hours of debate equally divided in the usual form, to run concurrently; that there be no amendments, points of order, or motions in order; that upon the use or yielding back of the time, the Senate proceed to vote on S. 1670; that following the disposition of S. 1670, the Senate proceed to vote on S. 1696; and that both bills be subject to a 60-vote affirmative threshold for passage.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Thank you, Mr. President.

Reserving my right to object, and I will object, I respect my friend and colleague from South Carolina. We are friends, and we agree on a lot of issues.

On this issue we fundamentally disagree.

I am here to remind the American people and my colleagues that this proposal to ban abortion after 20 weeks, in my view, is irresponsible and should not be before the Senate. But I am more than happy to cast a vote on it, along with the Women's Health Protection Act, and I hope they will be considered. This issue deserves to be before this body.

Neither of these proposals has yet been considered in committee. The minority leader of this body has recently spoken about the need for ''a vigorous committee process'' in handling bills. This bill should not be considered in this way.

This bill would prohibit the medical profession from performing an abortion when a fetus is older than 20 weeks and would do nothing, frankly, to help women protect their health and the health of their families as well as their right to have control over their health care needs. This bill leaves the vast majority of women who may need an abortion for health reasons after 20 weeks of pregnancy with no options, and it punishes doctors with up to 5 years in prison for providing a service that the doctor believes in his or her professional medical opinion is best for the woman and her family. Our constitutional right to privacy tells us unequivocally and emphatically that these choices should be between the doctor and her family or her advisers, including her clergy.

The proponents of this bill would have us believe the bill would reduce the number of abortions in this country. In fact, the statistic that matters in this debate shows there are a mere 1.5 percent of abortions that occur 20 weeks after conception, and the majority of these medical procedures occur due to a health issue that would put the fetus or mother or both at risk.

Take for example a young woman I am going to call Laura. She is a young mother from Connecticut. She became ill at 22 weeks into her first pregnancy with early onset of severe preeclampsia. Laura's blood pressure rose dangerously, her kidneys stopped, and she was at risk. Her pregnancy was wanted. She wanted a baby and she planned for it, but she needed to end it to protect her health. Her physician was able to provide her with a timely and safe abortion. Although Laura felt a future pregnancy would be too risky, she went on to adopt three children.

Facing such severe medical risk, women such as Laura need the safest care modern medicine can offer. With all due respect, Senator GRAHAM's bill ignores the health realities of women, the realities they face every day in Connecticut and around the country. Had this bill been law, a doctor would have had to wait for Laura to be facing death before protecting her with the abortion she needed.

The Women's Health Protection Act would put women's rights first. The Women's Health Protection Act seeks full and thorough consideration of these issues, and I seek it through the regular order. Let's have hearings, let's consider these measures in committee, and let's bring them to the floor in a way that they can be debated insightfully and thoughtfully, not this way. The Women's Health Protection Act protects a woman's health and her ability to make her own decisions and her constitutional rights.

I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

The Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. GRAHAM. We already have laws in this country banning elective abortions at the 24-week period. It is called the partial-birth abortion ban. It has been through the Supreme Court, it went through this body, it went through the House, and it got overwhelming support. That bill has exceptions for rape and incest and cases that involve the life of the mother; so would this. We are just backing it up 4 weeks, and the reason we are backing it up 4 weeks is because at 20 weeks people have been born and survived. I know twins who were born at 20 weeks.

But the theory of the case is that the government should have the right to protect an unborn child, and most of the abortions are so far along that the medical science requires anesthesia before you operate. The question is, If we are going to require a doctor to provide anesthesia to the baby before they operate to save its life, should we authorize abortions at that point?

The Washington Post poll showed just a few months ago that by 56 to 27 percent, people supported the 20-week pain-capable bill—60 percent women.

At the end of the day I hope we can have a debate on this issue. The reason I brought it up today is because this is the anniversary of the Dr. Gosnell case, which was one of the most horrendous cases in American jurisprudence, where a doctor received life sentences for three counts of murder. He was an abortion doctor aborting babies at the latest stage of pregnancy. If the babies survived the abortion, he would cut the spinal cord. Three women died as a result of the care given by him. It was a chamber of horrors. It was a year ago today.

I hope people will not forget what Dr. Gosnell did, and if we can prevent occurrences such as that, we should, and that is what this bill is designed to do—to make sure the unborn child at this stage of the pregnancy has a chance to continue on. There are only seven countries in the world that allow abortions at this stage, and I hope that when this debate is over, the United States will not be in the seven.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I respect the sincerity of my colleague from South Carolina. The fact of one instance of possible medical malpractice does not justify this kind of sweeping abrogation of women's reproductive rights or women's health care. The principle is the same whether it is 4 weeks back or 4 weeks forward. The principle is that a woman has constitutional rights to choose health care and has a constitutional right to privacy that would be negated by this measure. And we are siding with improving women's health care, enhancing and upgrading it, and giving women choices and protecting those choices, not cutting back by 4 weeks or in any way infringing on that fundamental right.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wisconsin.

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that following my remarks, Senator BOXER be permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection.

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. President, today the senior Senator from South Carolina and his Republican colleagues have proposed a measure which amounts, in my opinion, to an attack on the freedom of American women to make their own personal health care decisions. Instead of focusing on improving access to health care for women, these Senators are pursuing divisive policies that jeopardize women's health and put politicians and government between a woman and her doctor.

I object to this dangerous political game. Women's access to quality health care is not a political game for me and some of my colleagues who join me here today, nor is it a game for women and families across the country and in my home State of Wisconsin. Too many States have enacted record numbers of laws that restrict women's access to reproductive health services and the freedom to make their own health care decisions. These restrictions, such as the one we heard proposed earlier this afternoon, have real and serious consequences for American families.

I recently heard from a mother in Middleton, WI, who at 20 weeks of pregnancy was devastated to find out that her baby would not survive delivery. She had to undergo an emergency termination. A clinic in Milwaukee, WI, was the only place that would do the procedure, but because our Republican Governor was preparing to sign a law imposing some incredible requirements and burdens on providers, this particular clinic was preparing to close its doors and they wouldn't schedule her for an appointment. She and her husband were forced to find childcare for their two sons and travel to another State in order to get the medical care she needed.

The threat in Wisconsin and in States across the country is clear: When politicians play doctor, American families suffer. This is why my good friend from Connecticut Senator BLUMENTHAL and I have introduced a serious proposal—the Women's Health

Protection Act. It would put a stop to these attacks on women's freedom. Our bill creates Federal protections against restrictions such as the Republican proposal we were hearing about today, proposals that unduly limit access to reproductive health care, that do nothing to further women's health or safety, and that intrude upon personal decisionmaking. I look forward to working with my colleagues to advance this important legislation through the committee process and through regular order.

We know today's spectacle is not meant to produce a serious debate about protecting women's reproductive health; it is about the narrow Republican agenda to take our country backward and to roll back important health benefits for American families.

We have seen this with the numerous failed attempts by Republicans to repeal the Affordable Care Act that have empowered millions of women with more choices and stronger health care coverage. Today, women can finally rest assured that they will not be charged more for their coverage just because they are women, and someone's mother can get a lifesaving mammogram without the fear of high medical bills.

Over 50 times congressional Republicans have tried to roll back this economic security for millions of American families. Republicans, it seems, would gladly go back to the days where being a woman was considered a preexisting condition and insurance companies could drop your coverage because you get sick, get older or have a baby. But we are not going to go back to those days just as we are not going to create a future where politicians in Washington take away the freedom of women to make their own personal health care decisions.

I am committed to putting a stop to the relentless and ideological attacks on American families and will continue to fight to ensure that both men and women have the freedom to access the health care services they need. In the United States of America, health care should be a right guaranteed to all. That is why I and so many of us have fought and we will continue to fight as we move our country forward.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I ask to add 10 minutes to the 10 minutes I have already requested.

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

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I listened carefully to Senator LINDSEY GRAHAM, who put forward a very dangerous bill for women and their families in this country. I will explain in a moment why I think it is dangerous, but what was interesting is that I believe he said he brought it forward today because it is the anniversary that Dr. Gosnell was convicted and sent to prison. This is a rogue doctor who committed despicable and illegal acts and is now serving life in prison without the possibility of parole for what he did—abusing the trust of being a reproductive health care doctor. Dr. Gosnell is away, as he should be.

How does my friend from North Carolina commemorate this? By putting forward a bill that will drive more women to rogue doctors. If we make it illegal for a woman, regardless of her circumstance, she is going to find a way to save her health, her life, and her family.

Women deserve to have protections. The bill that my friend proposed simply says that after a certain number of weeks, an abortion will not be allowed no matter what a woman's health situation is, and that is very dangerous.

I ask—just rhetorically—how can a Senator say he is doing something right for women and their families when there is not a health exception? If a woman goes to the doctor and finds out she is facing cancer, kidney failure, blood clots or some other tragic complication, why should the government step into the middle of her family? Why should the government and U.S. Senators be allowed to step between the woman, her doctor, her God, and her family? It is a disgrace, especially from a party that is known for saying: Get Government off our backs.

This is horrible. There is no exception for rape or incest victims who are unable to report those heinous crimes. Let's say initially they were too frightened and then suddenly they get their courage. Well, too bad. Have your rapist's child. This is not a government that cares about families. This is a government that steps into our business at the most tragic moments of our lives.

The bill is so extreme that the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, which represents thousands of OB/GYNs, said these restrictions are ''dangerous to patients' safety and health.'' Who do you think stands up for the health of the women in this country? U.S. Senators or doctors who know the women, the family, and the circumstances of her health?

I have a letter from Christie, who lives in Central Virginia, and she said:

> My husband and I were confronted with two equally horrible options—carry the pregnancy to term and watch our baby girl suffocate to death upon birth, or terminate the pregnancy early and say good-bye to our much-wanted and much-loved baby girl.

Why should a Senator tell her what to do? It is a war on women. When you tell a woman in that type of circumstance what to do and take away her right to use her mind, her brain, and the love she has for her family, her husband, and her children to make that decision, it is a war on women.

Christie was pregnant with her second child when that happened. She wanted this baby, but it was not until a 20-week ultrasound that she found out her daughter would suffocate to death at birth. What U.S. Senator has a right to make her watch that baby child suffocate to death? I am sorry, but that is not life-affirming.

Then there is Judy from Wisconsin. She says:

> I know what it is like to live without a mother. My mother died when I was only 4 years old, and it changed my life forever.

Four months into her pregnancy, Judy developed a pregnancy-induced blood clot in her arm. The only guarantee she would not die and leave behind her 5-year-old son was for Judy to terminate the pregnancy. She and her husband made the very difficult decision to terminate that pregnancy.

What right does a U.S. Senator—who doesn't know her, doesn't know her husband, doesn't know her family history and how she lost her mother when she was young—have to step into that world at that moment and tell her what she has to do. Do we think so little of the women of this Nation?

We just had Mother's Day. We lauded our mothers. We are crying out for the girls who were taken by terrorists. If we all care, then why would we support legislation such as this?

Then there is Bridget's story. At the time, she was a 25-year-old mom looking forward to the birth of her third child. She initially had a normal ultrasound at 13 weeks. Her second ultrasound showed a major, complex fetal cardiac malformation, a fatal problem. Because tests could only confirm this fatal defect later in the pregnancy, she could not make a decision until after the 20 weeks.

What right does a U.S. Senator have to get in the middle of her most personal, most private, most difficult decisions? There is a place for government. It is to make life better for people. It is to say: We are with you. We have your back. We understand what you are going through. It is not to make life so difficult for people.

In Missouri, Julie and her husband were told relatively early in her pregnancy that the baby they were expecting had multiple abnormalities and would not survive outside the womb, but it took her 3 weeks to locate an abortion provider because they had shut down so many providers. They found out, under Missouri's restrictive laws, she would have to travel 2 hours to a facility on two separate occasions to comply with the State's 24-hour waiting period. When they were finally able to get the care they needed, her pregnancy was just over 20 weeks.

What right does any U.S. Senator have to step out there and tell the American people that we know better than their families know, that we know better than their doctors know, and that we know better than their clergy knows?

This bill targets doctors who risk their lives to help women who are at risk for paralysis, infertility, have cancer, and whose lives would be in danger if they continued the pregnancy. This bill would throw those doctors in prison for 5 years just for providing needed health care to their patients.

I don't know what kind of country people envision when we have the government policing the private health care decisions of women and their families. Why would we want to go back to the last century and open battles that have long been fought? Those battles were fought in 1973 when Roe v. Wade was the decision of the Supreme Court, and do you know what that court said? They balanced all the rights—the rights of the fetus with the rights of the mother—and they said early in the pregnancy, a woman has the right to choose. It is her decision, but as she goes along with the pregnancy, then later, yes, there will be restrictions, and that is fine as long as the health and the life of the mother are in the forefront.

This legislation that Senator GRAHAM wants to vote on—before it goes to any committee as Senator BLUMENTHAL was saying—it is not what is best for women and their families or our communities, it is about an extreme rightwing agenda that needs to stop. This is a moderate country. We work together. I don't get everything I want, you don't get everything you want, but we work it out.

To come and offer legislation that is extremely dangerous to women is, in my opinion—I don't know what to call it. It is out of sync with what we ought to be doing. As Senator BALDWIN said, we ought to be fighting, and she used that word ''fighting.'' We should be fighting for health care for women, fighting for the rights of our families, so they can have decent health care, and not putting rules in the books that are so onerous that a woman is desperate. I don't understand it.

I believe the Republican Party has moved so far to the right, it is unrecognizable to me. When I started out in politics—which was a long time ago—Republicans and Democrats worked together on the environment. Now we can't get a vote from them so we can ensure that the Clean Air Act is protecting our people. We can't get them to address climate change. We cannot get a vote from them. Maybe once in a blue moon we get a vote from one or two. George Herbert Walker Bush was the President who worked hard at Planned Parenthood, and that is where Republicans used to be. We would come together on protecting a woman's right to choose. There were more Republicans in Planned Parenthood than Republicans when I got started in politics. Now the Republicans want to run Planned Parenthood out. They want to shut down their clinics and stop all the good they are doing to prevent unwanted pregnancies.

I call it a war on women. We heard people say: Well, maybe there is such a thing as legitimate rape. Have you ever heard of anything so outrageous? We can't even get anyone to move forward on equal pay for equal work around here.

I am sad to say that I think this bill is part of the war on women. Clearly, they are the ones who will suffer, along with their doctors. We don't put women in grave danger. We don't put up legislation without a health exception. We don't step in the middle of our families' most difficult decisions.

Americans want us to focus on making life better for our families. They don't want us to create new health risks. God knows we have enough health stressors just breathing the air out there, getting the flu and everything else. We don't need legislation that restricts a woman's rights when she needs to have us at her back, helping her, making her safe. Let's not go back to the last century.

If somebody has a bill such as this, I hope they will let it go through the whole committee process. We need these women who I quoted today to look Senators in the eye and say: Senator, please stay out of my life. These decisions are difficult enough, but I know I can handle them with my family, with my God, with my support system.

Roe v. Wade is the law of the land. In the early stages, a woman has a pretty much unfettered right. As we go along, there are more restrictions. But we never, ever turn our back on a woman's health or her life. That is what Roe says.

Frankly, I hope this bill and others like it will not see the light of day because it could only make life very difficult for many of our families.

I thank the Chair. It is an honor to work with the Presiding Officer on this issue.

I yield the floor and note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BALDWIN). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

The Senator from New Hampshire.

REMEMBERING OFFICER STEPHEN ARKELL

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Madam President, it is with great sadness that I rise today to honor the memory of Brentwood Police Officer Stephen Arkell.

Officer Arkell's life was tragically cut short yesterday while responding to the call of duty—the same call of duty he courageously answered countless times over the course of his career. A 15-year veteran of the Brentwood Police Department, Arkell served as a part-time officer as well as an animal control officer for the town of Brentwood where he was born and raised. As is the case with all of our first responders, his commitment to protecting our communities was unparalleled. That commitment was integral to keeping our families, our children, and our community safe every day. That same commitment, and Officer Arkell's sacrifice, is something New Hampshire will never forget.

Stephen Arkell's life and career epitomized the heroism of our first responders, and all of us, every day, will be forever grateful for that. Today my thoughts and prayers are with his family—his wife and his two teenage daughters, his loved ones, the Brentwood Police Department, and the entire Brentwood community, as well as New Hampshire's entire law enforcement community. I hope they can all take some solace in knowing that New Hampshire joins them in both mourning Officer Arkell's loss as well as celebrating his selfless sacrifice and his service on behalf of Brentwood and our beloved State.

Thank you, Madam President. I note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MANCHIN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

BEING IN THE MAJORITY

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, shortly after I arrived in the Senate, in 2002, Republicans—my political party—became the majority party, and I quickly learned a few important lessons. First of all, being in the majority is better than being in the minority. But part of the price of being in the majority is that sometimes you have to take some tough votes via the amendment process. In other words, when the Senate is operating the way it was originally intended—and which it always has until recently—any Senator has the right to seek recognition and offer an amendment on almost any topic on almost any bill. My colleagues told me at the time—they said: It has always been that way, and it is the way it always should be, if we are serious about protecting minority rights.

So why should I care, being a Member of the majority, about protecting minority rights in the Senate? Well, in the intervening years, my political party has gone from being in the majority in the Senate to being in the minority. That is one reason to care. The other reason to care is because every Senator was elected by their constituents in their State to represent their State, and when any Senator—whether they are in the majority or the minority—is shut out of the process, their constituents are shut out of the process. That is not what the Constitution contemplates when it says that each State has a right to send two Senators to Washington. If you can tell one of those or both of those Senators to sit down and be quiet, you cannot offer any amendments, you cannot get any votes on your amendments, you are effectively shutting out, in my case, the 26 million people I represent in the State of Texas.

So the message is this: If you do not want to take tough votes, you are in the wrong line of work—you are in the wrong line of work. The way the Senate should operate is that each of us is

accountable to our constituents, and when they disagree with us about a vote, then they have a right to tell us. That is called petitioning your government for the redress of grievances.

Accountability, which is the way this Congress is supposed to work, can only work when we have an open process, where the minority gets to participate in the process and the majority gets to participate in the process. And guess what. If you are in the majority on a given subject, you are going to win. But that is no justification for shutting down the minority and saying: Sit down; shut up; forget about the fact that you have an election certificate from your secretary of State saying you were duly and regularly chosen by the voters in your State to represent them in what used to be the world's greatest deliberative body.

Here is something else I learned when I came to the Senate—something that does not happen as much now—but what I learned is this place works best when individual bills are drafted by Senators and move through the committee process. That is because usually the committees that have jurisdiction over those pieces of legislation have some experience and some expertise in the subject matter, and sometimes the subject matter gets pretty complicated. And it is good for the Senate, it is good for the United States to have a committee look at the legislation. People will have a chance to offer amendments and have them voted up or down before they then come to the Senate floor. Then every Senator gets to participate whether they know very much about the topic. Hopefully, all of us get to be smart pretty quickly when a bill comes to the floor because that is our chance to have a say on behalf of our constituents, whether we are in the majority or whether we are in the minority. We do not have a right to win—the minority does not—but we do have a right to a voice and a vote and to participate in the legislative process, which is what has been denied under the current majority leader.

More than a decade after I came to the Senate, I hardly recognize it; it is so dramatically different. Indeed, in some ways it is diametrically opposite from what it was when I got here and, frankly, the way the Senate has operated for a couple hundred years since the founding of our country. Only in the last few years under the current majority leader has the Senate become completely dysfunctional, where the majority leader becomes, in essence, a dictator who says: No, Senator, your amendment cannot be considered, it cannot be voted on. In other words, it is not up to the Senator to offer an amendment to try to shape legislation on behalf of our constituents, to engage in robust debate; it is the majority leader who basically becomes the traffic cop who says who stops, who goes. Of course, that is one reason why the Senate has become so dysfunctional.

Under the current majority leader, an unprecedented number of bills have come directly to the floor from his conference room, from his office, and bypassed the committee process. In fact, many of my colleagues, including many of my Democratic colleagues, have been left wondering: Why in the world have committees in the Senate if we are not going to use them, if we are not going to use the committees for the experience and the expertise those Members serving on those committees have before it comes to the Senate floor.

In addition to bypassing the committee process in an unprecedented sort of way, once the Senate legislation comes to the Senate floor out of the majority leader's conference room—or wherever it is it comes from—Senators from both parties, representing hundreds of millions of American citizens, are routinely denied the opportunity to offer amendments and engage in meaningful debate. We just saw that yesterday as a direct result of the majority leader's denying anyone—the Presiding Officer, one of our Democratic colleagues, or anyone—an opportunity to offer amendments and to get votes on those amendments on an energy bill, which is the first time we have had an energy bill on the floor since 2007. The majority leader shuts down the process and says, in essence: Sit down; shut up; good luck.

During the 109th Congress, when Republicans controlled this Chamber, Democrats were allowed to offer—that is the minority party was allowed to offer—1,043 separate amendments—1,043 separate amendments during the 109th Congress. Do you know how many amendments Republicans have been able to offer since July of last year in the Senate? Nine—nine Republican amendments in 10 months.

Majority Leader REID has filled the amendment tree—that is the technical jargon; someone has called it basically that it is the gag rule of the majority leader, but it is technically blocking the amendment process—more than twice as much as majority leaders Bill Frist, Tom Daschle, Trent Lott, Bob Dole, George Mitchell, and Robert Byrd combined; that is one, two, three, four, five, six—six previous majority leaders did not do it as much as the current majority leader, Senator REID; that is, block out any amendments from the minority.

I know because we have talked about this so much before most Americans really are not focused on Senate procedure and they think: Well, maybe this is just one Senator who is a little sore at being frozen out of the process and losing on a particular piece of legislation. But, again, this is not about the prerogatives of an individual U.S. Senator; this is about the people's prerogative, the people's right to participate in the process. The very legitimacy of our form of government depends upon consent of the governed. How can the people the Presiding Officer represents and I represent consent when they have been shut out? Is this what the Founding Fathers had in mind when they created our great system of government—to shut our fellow citizens out of the process, to trample on minority rights? Hardly.

Before I conclude, I want to say a quick word about some of the majority leader's most recent comments when we have had a discussion about this problem.

When Americans ponder the root causes of Washington dysfunction and gridlock, I hope they remember the majority leader of the Senate, who leads this great institution and has referred to the minority party in the Senate as ''greased pigs.'' He has accused us of wanting to suppress voting rights. He has claimed we have tried to ''dump on'' women and minorities. He describes Senators representing their constituents with amendments as ''screwing around,'' and he demonizes private citizens exercising their rights under the Constitution of the United States as ''un-American.'' I have to confess, I find these comments insulting, I find these comments disrespectful, and I find them embarrassing.

How can we ever expect to reach compromise, which is the only way things happen here? Neither party can dictate on their own what the outcomes legislatively will be, so the only way we can do it is to try to find common ground and work together, without sacrificing our principles, of course. But how are we ever going to solve some of the most complex legislative challenges that confront us—such as tax reform?

We have a bill on the floor where we are being asked to extend 55 expiring temporary tax provisions. For how long? Well, through 2015. Is that a good way to do business? Well, no. What kind of uncertainty is there when we do not even know what the Tax Code is going to say for more than a year and a half?

Then there is entitlement reform. I mentioned this before. We have these pages here who are serving in the Senate. They are in high school. Someday the $17 trillion the Federal Government owes to our creditors is going to have to be paid back—someday. When that happens, I daresay interest rates are not going to be at zero, which is what they are now thanks to the Federal Reserve because the Federal Reserve is trying to juice the economy, doing the best it can to get the economy back on track, although we do not have a lot to show for it. The economy grew at 0.1 percent last quarter.

How are we going to fix our broken immigration system if the majority leader is going to routinely slander Members of this body and our constituents? How are we going to fix what is broken if the majority leader wants to trash talk folks on this side of the aisle and people he disagrees with. He even called them un-American. For what? For participating in the political process. Well, of course, he would like to

shut them up and make them sit down so he could do what he wants without any resistance or without anybody questioning his actions.

Recently in Austin President Obama and others gathered for a historic celebration. It was the 50th anniversary of the adoption of the Civil Rights Act. Do you know how many amendments were voted on by the Senate when the Civil Rights Act was passed? There were 117 amendments.

Do you think this Congress and this Senate today, under this majority leader, would have any opportunity to pass historic legislation to heal the wounds of our country that date back to the very founding of this Nation, given the fact that the minority is shut out of the process, no amendments are allowed, and no votes on those amendments? There is no way. What a tragedy—the 50th anniversary of the Civil Rights Act.

Then for more mundane matters, when the Panama Canal treaties were debated in this body, there were 75 rollcall votes. That was a very controversial issue at the time. But there are nine rollcall votes in this body coming from the Republican side since July, with no prospect of allowing any amendments on the current tax bill that is on the floor.

Just like the energy bill that we concluded yesterday, there is no prospect in sight for a better outcome and better behavior by the people who should know better. How can we expect to achieve comity in this Chamber when its most powerful Member has done so much to poison the atmosphere.

The Senate of 2014 is certainly not the Senate that our Founding Fathers envisioned, nor is it the Senate that my former colleague, Senator Chris Dodd, described in his 2010 farewell speech. Let me quote just a small portion. Senator Dodd reminded us that:

> The Senate was designed to be different, not simply for the sake of variety, but because the Framers believed the Senate could and should be the venue in which statesmen would lift America up to meet its unique challenges.

Unfortunately, the Senate will never be able to play that unique role in American government and American history until the majority leader shows greater respect for the constituents we represent and for this institution.

As I said, this debate is not about procedural niceties, it is not about the prerogatives of the Senator because they think they are so important. When Republicans offer amendments to pending legislation, we are trying to give our constituents the voice that they are guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States of America.

When the majority leader refuses to let us vote on amendments and refuses to let us have a real discussion about America's biggest challenges, he is effectively gagging millions of Americans who don't share his particular views. That is why the Senate has become so dysfunctional, because of the majority leader and his conduct.

I can only hope—indeed, I can only pray—that the majority leader will change his mind and act as the genuine leader the Senate deserves and less as an angry dictator.

I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. ISAKSON. I would ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. ISAKSON. At the outset, let me express my sympathy to the Senator from West Virginia on the tragedy that took place in his state. Our hearts and minds are with you and your citizens.

REMEMBERING CLISBY CLARKE

Mr. President, one of the sad occasions from time to time of a Senator is to rise to pay tribute to a friend and a citizen in one's State who passes away. It is now that occasion for me.

This past week a great hero of Georgia—both the University of Georgia and the State of Georgia—Clisby Clarke passed away in his sleep in Highlands, NC. He will be laid to rest in Atlanta, GA, on this coming Thursday at a ceremony beginning at 11 a.m. at Peachtree Road United Methodist Church.

Clisby was not just a citizen of my State, he was an extraordinary citizen of my State, a University of Georgia graduate who was the hit of the University of Georgia as one of the great songwriters on our campus. He wrote most of the fight songs that are played today for the University of Georgia football team and could tear up the piano by playing by ear like no one you have ever seen.

He was a talented pitchman who could make things sound good at the drop of a hat, which is why he went to work for McCann-Erickson, one of the great public relations firms in the history of our city. He led that firm to unparalleled heights, and for a while, when I ran my company, I hired Clisby Clarke to do all the public relations for our company.

He married Bunny. From our days at the University of Georgia I remember Bunny and Clisby at the SAE House many nights, Clisby sitting around playing the piano, entertaining us, my wife Dianne and I—who then wasn't my wife, but I was dating her—enjoying it, just enjoying our friendship and his great talent.

Clisby, when he retired from McCann-Erickson, didn't quit working; he volunteered his time for others. In fact, when he passed away this week late at night in his sleep, it was after having a successful planning session for a dinner that is going to be held June 1 in Atlanta, GA, where over 750 people are coming to a black-tie event which will raise over half a million dollars for veterans who have been injured with traumatic brain injury or PTSD.

Clisby never stopped working for those less fortunate or those who needed help. His commitment to that project is unparalleled in our city's history. When we all go to that dinner on this coming June 1, on that evening, and celebrate the victory from raising money for those with TBI and PTSD, we will also dedicate that evening to Clisby Clarke, a great Georgian and a great American who from the day he was born until the day he passed away was always paying tribute and doing his loving work for those who were less fortunate and in need.

To his wife Bunny, to his family, and to his many friends, to all of us who were together fraternity brothers at the SAE House at the University of Georgia in Athens, we pay our tribute to Clisby Clarke, a great American. May God bless his soul.

I yield back the time, Mr. President. I note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. AYOTTE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the quorum call be rescinded.

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

REMEMBERING OFFICER STEPHEN ARKELL

Ms. AYOTTE. Mr. President, it is with a heavy heart that I rise today to honor the life and legacy of Officer Stephen Arkell, a member of the Brentwood Police Department who was tragically killed last night in the line of duty.

Citizens across New Hampshire are mourning the loss of Officer Arkell, whose bravery and courage represented the very best of our State's law enforcement community. Our hearts go out to his grieving family, friends, and fellow officers, as well as the people of the town of Brentwood, where he served so well. We are holding them close to our hearts and keeping them all in our thoughts and prayers during this very difficult time for not only the Brentwood community but for the entire State of New Hampshire.

Officer Arkell was an unsung hero. He went about his extraordinary work in a quiet, humble way, going above and beyond the call of duty to serve and protect the people of Brentwood and New Hampshire. During his 15-year career as a police officer, he touched countless lives through his selfless service to the people of Brentwood—proudly carrying on a noble profession.

First and foremost, Officer Arkell was devoted to his family. Our hearts are broken for his wife Heather and their two teenaged daughters. They are forced to cope with an unimaginable loss that no family should ever have to endure. We share in their sadness. We will be there to comfort them as they mourn—the entire State of New Hampshire—and we will always stand by their side.

We are grateful to them for the sacrifice they have made for us to be safe and for everything they have done and for what they have endured. There is no way we can repay them for the sacrifice they have made for the State of New Hampshire to be safe. They lost a great dad.

I especially want to recognize Officer Arkell for the selfless time he took to be a great coach. He coached lacrosse, teaching a new generation about teamwork and competition. He was exactly the kind of role model that any parent would want for their son or daughter.

Officer Arkell was also someone whose friendship could be counted on. He has been described as a friend who would ''give you the shirt off his back''—a man who was ''kind'' and ''ethical'' and ''very caring.'' He was well liked and well respected in the community that he served.

Sadly, this is not the first tragedy we have seen in Rockingham County. Just last year we added Greenland Police Chief Mike Maloney's name to the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial here in Washington, DC. Our State continues to grieve for Chief Maloney.

Unfortunately, Chief Maloney's death and the death last night of Officer Arkell remind us of the dangerous work our police officers do every single day on our behalf. When they go out at night, on weekends and holidays—and we are all safe at home with our families—they don't know whether that next stop or next response they have to make will be their last.

We are grateful for the service of all of the police officers in New Hampshire and across this country who go out every day and serve our Nation and keep us safe. Officer Arkell certainly represented the very best of our law enforcement community, and we are so sad today as we mourn his loss.

As we mourn the loss of Officer Arkell, I am reminded of a quote that can be found at the Law Enforcement Officers Memorial in Washington. The quote really sums it up: ''It is not how these officers died that made them heroes, it is how they lived.'' That is certainly true of Officer Stephen Arkell. He was a special man who gave generously to his family, his friends, and his community. It is a tragedy that he was taken from us far too soon. This is a tragedy no family should have to endure.

As we mourn his loss, we will pledge to forever honor his memory, his sacrifice, and the work he did every single day on behalf of the people of Brentwood and New Hampshire to keep us safe. We are grateful for his sacrifice. We can never repay the loss his family has endured nor can we ever repay the sacrifices that are our police officers make every single day on our behalf to keep this country safe.

I thank the Presiding Officer and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

SQUARELY FOCUSED

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, one would think, now more than ever, our colleagues on the other side of the aisle would recognize the American people really want us focused squarely on jobs and the economy. It is what every poll says. It is what the vast majority of all of our constituents say, and it is absolutely what is needed at a time when families, especially working women, continue to struggle to make ends meet. But instead of working with us across the aisle to give every American a fair shot, it seems as though Republicans are focused on something else entirely: Politics.

Today, the senior Senator from South Carolina came to the floor and attempted to pass a bill that not only undermines women's access to their doctors but restricts their rights to access reproductive health services. I am not sure what our colleagues think has changed since they last introduced this bill in November, but just as it was back then, this extreme, unconstitutional abortion ban is an absolute nonstarter. It is not going anywhere in the Senate and, as they know, it is a cheap political ploy. I would like to think that over the last 41 years, since the historic decision of Roe v. Wade, we have moved on from debating this issue. I would like to think that after four decades, many of those who want to make women's health care decisions for them have come to grips with the fact that Roe v. Wade is settled law. After all, many of the signs of progress are all around us.

In this Congress there is a record 20 women serving in this body. In 2012 women's power and voice at the ballot box was heard pretty loudly and clearly. In fact, when Republican candidates for office thought that rape was a political talking point, that idea and their candidacies were swiftly rejected, thanks in large part to the voices of women.

So sometimes it is tempting to think that times indeed have changed and that maybe, just maybe, politicians have finally realized that getting between a woman and her doctor is not their job, that it is possible rightwing legislators have a newfound respect for women. But the truth is that the drumbeat of politically-driven, extreme, and unconstitutional laws continues to get louder.

In 2013 our Nation saw yet another record-breaking year of State legislatures passing restrictive legislation barring women's access to abortion services. In fact, in the past 3 years, more of these restrictions have been enacted across this country than in the previous 10 years combined. And anti-choice lawmakers here in our Nation's capital have filed 50 legislative attacks on reproductive rights in this Congress alone.

By the way, these haven't just been attacks on a woman's right to choose, they have been an all-out assault on everything from shaming pregnant women to drafting politically-driven legislation intended to create geographical roadblocks for low-income and racial minorities wishing to access safe reproductive services.

Not surprisingly, these States that have enacted some of the most extreme and archaic restrictions are also the same States that fail to achieve even mediocre standards when it comes to critical issues such as education and the economy. But despite these shortcomings, some Members of this body refuse to work with us to address those critical issues and instead want to distract the American public with these purely political bills until the small pocket of their extreme audience is satisfied.

In fact, according to the Senator from South Carolina, debating a woman's access to her own doctor is a ''debate worthy of a great democracy.'' The fact is it is a debate we have already had. This is a directed attack on Roe v. Wade, and it is attack on what is already settled law.

I wish to remind my colleagues today that real women's lives and the most difficult health care decisions they could ever possibly make are at stake.

Let me share with my colleagues the story of Judy Nicastro. She is from my home State of Washington. She bravely shared her story publicly in the New York Times. I have told her story before, but it bears repeating now because we are under attack again. In an op-ed she wrote, just days before the House passed a bill that was virtually identical to the one that was introduced today, Judy talked about being faced with every pregnant woman's worst nightmare.

In describing the news that one of the twins she was carrying was facing a condition where only one lung chamber had formed and that it was only 20 percent complete, Judy captured the anguish countless other women in similar positions have faced. ''My world stopped,'' she wrote.

> I loved being pregnant with twins and trying to figure out which one was where in my uterus. Sometimes it felt like a party in there, with eight limbs moving. The thought of losing one child was unbearable.

She went on to say:

> The MRI at Seattle Children's Hospital confirmed our worst fears: The organs were pushed up into our boy's chest and not developing properly. We were in the 22nd week.

Under the bill proposed today, the decision Judy ultimately made, through very painful conversations with her family and with consultation with her

doctors, would be illegal. The decision to make sure, as she put it, that ''our son was not born only to suffer'' would be taken from her and given to politicians.

I am here today to provide a simple reality check. We are not going back. We are not going back on settled law such as Roe v. Wade or the Affordable Care Act. We are not going to take away a woman's ability to make her own decisions about her own health care and her own body.

Just as with the many attempts before this bill, there are those who would like the American public to believe that all of these efforts are anything but an attack on women's health care. They try to say it is a debate about freedom, except, of course, the freedom for women to access care.

It is no different than when we were told attacks on abortion rights are not an infringement on a woman's right to choose; they are about religion or States rights. Or when we are told that restricting emergency contraception isn't about limiting women's ability to make their own family planning decisions, but it is somehow about protecting pharmacists. Or as demonstrated last month when a Republican State lawmaker in Missouri introduced legislation to triple the State's mandatory waiting period for abortion services, claiming it would give women more time to do their ''research.''

Not that we should be surprised, he went on then to compare this deeply personal and difficult choice to that of purchasing an automobile saying: ''In making a decision to buy a car, I put research in there to find out what to do.''

The truth is this is an attempt to limit a woman's ability to access care. This is about women. Instead of playing a game of political football with women and their health, Republicans should instead consider joining with us in working on what women truly want.

Women today want to have a fair shot at success. First and foremost, that means not rolling back the clock or eroding the gains we have made. We took a very good step forward with the Affordable Care Act, which now prevents insurance companies from charging women more than men for coverage, ensuring preventive services such as mammograms and contraception coverage is covered and increasing access to comprehensive health coverage, thanks to the Medicaid expansion and the exchanges. There is no doubt we need to make sure women have access in this country to opportunities such as getting equal pay for equal work or giving the millions of women earning the minimum wage a raise, which would go a long way towards that effort. We need to update our Tax Code so that mothers who are returning to the workforce do not face a marriage penalty.

There is much more we could be doing to address the issues of concerned women. Those are the issues we ought to be focused on—how to move our country forward, not backward.

So if it wasn't clear the last time the senior Senator from South Carolina made this attempt, it ought to be clear now. Senators such as myself are not going anywhere. Advocates and doctors who treat those women every day and know their health must be protected are not going anywhere. And women who continue to believe their health care decisions are theirs and theirs alone are not going to go anywhere. By the way, the Constitution is not going to go anywhere. Therefore, this extreme bill that was offered today is not going anywhere.

Thank you, Mr. President. I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MANCHIN. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. FRANKEN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from West Virginia.

BOONE COUNTY MINE TRAGEDY

Mr. MANCHIN. Mr. President, on Monday night a tragic mining incident occurred in my home State of West Virginia where the lives of two dedicated and courageous miners were lost at the Brody No. 1 mine in Boone County.

My greatest and deepest thoughts and prayers are with the loved ones of the miners impacted by this tragedy. Gayle and I join them and all West Virginians in mourning the loss of these heroic men. We grieve for the entire community as they bear this most heartbreaking and sorrowful hardship.

Our hearts especially go out to the families of the following miners: Eric Legg of Twilight and Gary Hensley of Chapmanville.

These men will be remembered forever as heroes to their community, their State, and their Nation for their unparalleled courage and unsurpassable sacrifice. They will live on forever in our hearts.

As families and friends struggle to deal with the tragedy that took place, we are reminded as a country that we must consistently search for ways to improve safety conditions because our miners' safety is of the utmost importance and remains our No. 1 priority. We say in West Virginia: If it can't be mined safely, don't mine it.

Our coal miners are some of the hardest working people in America, and the loss of even one miner's life is one life too many. We need to continue to improve mine safety efforts so that our miners' lives are never in jeopardy. We owe this to the families of the victims and to all of our loyal mining families across our country. It is our responsibility to be absolutely and totally committed to the safety of every worker, which means that every worker should be able to get up in the morning and expect to come home safely to their loved ones at night. This is their right, not a privilege.

My staff and I will do everything humanly possible to assist the families through this difficult time. Again, we extend our deepest sympathy and most profound condolences to the families and loved ones, and we pray for their peace and comfort.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

SMARTER SENTENCING ACT

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, there are new reports that the majority leader is considering bringing to the floor the so-called Smarter Sentencing Act, and to bring it to finality.

I rise again today to express my strong opposition to this bill and to argue against taking up the Senate's time to consider it. I will list several reasons.

This country has experienced a tremendous drop in crime over the past 30 years. We have achieved hard-won gains in reducing victimization. More effective police tactics played a very significant role.

Congress assisted with funds for law enforcement and mandatory sentencing guidelines to make dangerous offenders serve longer sentences. But after the Supreme Court applied novel constitutional theory, those mandatory guidelines were made advisory only. Federal judges then used their discretion to sentence defendants more leniently than the guidelines had called for.

Today, the only tool Congress has to make sure Federal judges do not abuse their discretion in sentencing too leniently is mandatory minimum sentences. So bringing this bill would cut a wide range of mandatory minimum sentences by half or more. Those sentences include people convicted of manufacture, sale, possession with intent to distribute, and importation of a wide range of drugs, including heroin, cocaine, PCP, LSD, ecstasy, and methamphetamines.

When supporters of this bill discuss how it increases discretion for judges and keeps current maximum sentences, what they really mean is that judges will gain discretion only to be more lenient. The bill does not increase discretion for judges to be more punitive.

When supporters of this bill say that the bill only applies to nonviolent offenders, don't be misled into thinking it applies to people in Federal prison for simple possession of marijuana. It doesn't. The offenses covered in this bill are violent.

Importing cocaine is violent. The whole operation turns on violence.

Dealing heroin also involves violence or threats of violence, and the offense for which the offender is sentenced may have even been violent. The defendant's codefendant might have used a gun.

While the bill does not apply to a drug crime for which the defendant used violence, it does apply to criminals where the defendant has a history of committing violent crimes. Supporters have failed to recognize that it would apply to drug dealers with a history of violent crimes.

Supporters of the bill also raise the argument of prison overcrowding. But prison populations in this country are decreasing and have been in fact decreasing for several years. States have been able to reduce prison construction and sentencing as crime has thus fallen.

Charles Lane wrote in the Washington Post that one reason States could do this is the reduction in the fear of crime that has accompanied falling crime rates.

The rate of increase in Federal prison populations has fallen a great deal. In recent years, the number of new Federal prisoners receiving prison sentences has declined. New policies the Department has adopted with respect to clemency and its unwillingness to charge defendants for the crimes they have committed will only further reduce overcrowding and prison expenses.

It is also important to recognize that drug offenders are an increasingly small proportion of the new offenders who are being sentenced to Federal prison as Federal law enforcement shifts more resources away from drugs and toward immigration and weapons offenses.

The reduction in prison populations is not really so much about the cost saving as cost shifting from prison budgets to victim suffering. This is happening as the number of State and Federal prisoners has dropped.

In 2012, the last year for which statistics are available, the FBI's Uniform Crime Report recorded an increase in the number of violent crimes for the first time in many years. Now, it is only 1 year and the increase was less than 1 percent, but it represents a dramatic change in the past downward trend of crime, and it bears a vigilant watch, not support for a reckless, wholesale, and arbitrary reduction in mandatory minimum sentences.

The bill represents a particularly misguided effort in light of current conditions concerning drug use. We are in the midst of a heroin epidemic right now. Deaths from heroin overdoses in Pennsylvania are way up. The Governor of Vermont devoted the entirety of his State of the State address this year to the heroin problem.

Marijuana decriminalization is leading to the greater availability of marijuana at a lower price. This is causing Mexican growers who formerly produced marijuana to grow opium for heroin importation into this country instead of marijuana.

The Obama administration says it is concerned about the heroin epidemic, but it supports a bill that cuts penalties for heroin importation and dealing.

The administration says it wants to fight sexual assaults on campuses—and I think that is the right thing to do and I applaud them for doing that. But they are also supporting this bill, which cuts in half the mandatory minimum sentence for dealing in ecstasy, the ''date rape'' drug.

The administration's support for this bill, then, makes no sense, and at least some administration officials understand that.

We had the privilege of having the Director of the Drug Enforcement Agency before our committee a little while ago. Michelle Leonhart said:

> Having been in law enforcement as an agent for 33 years, [and] a Baltimore City police officer before that, I can tell you that for me and for the agents that work for DEA, mandatory minimums have been very important to our investigations. . . . We depend on those as a way to ensure that the right sentences are going to the . . . level of violator we are going after.

Current mandatory minimum sentences play a vital role in reducing crime. They do more than keep serious offenders in jail so that they cannot prey upon innocent citizens. They also induce lower-level drug offenders to avoid receiving mandatory minimum sentences by implicating higher-ups in the drug trade.

As FBI Director Comey recently stated:

> I know from my experience . . . that the mandatory minimums are an important tool in developing cooperators.

Recently, a bipartisan group of former Justice Department officials wrote to Leaders REID and MCCONNELL. Their letter expressed strong opposition to cutting mandatory minimums for drug trafficking by half or more. They warned:

> We are deeply concerned about the impact of sentencing reductions of this magnitude on public safety.
>
> We believe the American people will be ill-served by the significant reduction of sentences for federal drug trafficking crimes that involve the sale and distribution of dangerous drugs like heroin, methamphetamines, and PCP.
>
> We are aware of little public support for lowering the minimum required sentences for these extremely dangerous and sometimes lethal drugs.

We are all going to be supporting National Police Week. Officers from all over the country have traveled to Washington to make their concerns known. We salute them for the work that they do and the dangers they face. If we really respect these law enforcement people and want to support them, then we ought to listen to what they have to say.

The National Narcotics Officers' Association has written:

> As the men and women in law enforcement who confront considerable risks daily to stand between poisoned sellers and their victims, we cannot find a single good reason to weaken federal consequences for the worst offenders who are directly responsible for an egregious amount of political despair, community decay, family destruction, and the expenditure of vast amounts of taxpayer dollars to clean up the messes they create.

The Federal Law Enforcement Officers' Association has also come out against the bill. They have stated:

> It is with great concern that FLEOA views any action or attempt . . . that would alter or eliminate the current federal sentencing policy regarding mandatory minimum sentence sentencing.
>
> The mandatory minimum sentencing standard currently in place is essential to public safety and that of our membership.

Many of us will rightfully praise our law enforcement officers as they are in town for National Police Week. But what we really ought to do is listen to them. They are telling us that taking up this bill would be a slap in the face of all our brave police officers who protect us from harm every day. They deserve better than that.

Citizens who are finally less likely to become crime victims deserve it. The respect that is due those on the front line against wrongdoers demands that the Senate neither take up nor pass the mislabeled so-called Smarter Sentencing Act.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

(Disturbance in the Visitors' Galleries.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Sergeant at Arms will restore order in the gallery.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded and I be allowed to speak as if in morning business.

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

(The remarks of Mr. CHAMBLISS pertaining to the introduction of S. 2330 are printed in today's RECORD under ''Statements on Senate Bills and Joint Resolutions.'')

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Thank you, Mr. President. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

TIME TO WAKE UP

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I am here for the 67th time to urge my colleagues to wake up to the growing threat of climate change, and today I am joined by my friend and colleague Senator NELSON of Florida, who is a true leader in this fight.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that we be able to engage in a colloquy for the next 25 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Florida is about 1,000 miles from Rhode Island, and it is slightly larger than my home State, but Florida and Rhode Island have a great deal in common, such as a beautiful coastline, an economy and a way

of life that is tied to the sea, and as a result risk from the ocean in a changing climate.

On my recent trip down the southeast coast, I spent 2 days in Florida and heard firsthand about the unprecedented changes taking place there. Like the folks I met in North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia, Floridians are worried about the coastal communities they love. They are getting serious about protecting their homes and their livelihoods, and they want their representatives in Congress to get serious.

Senator NELSON hears them. He recently took the Senate commerce committee to the Miami Beach townhall to examine the dangers posed by rising seas. Here is what the Miami Herald said about his effort:

> South Florida owes Senator Nelson its thanks for shining a bright light on this issue. Everyone from local residents to elected officials should follow his lead, turning awareness of this major environmental issue into action. It is critical to saving our region.

Senator NELSON and I also held a press conference at Jacksonville's Friendship Fountain with Representative CORRINE BROWN to highlight these serious implications of climate change. So I am grateful for Senator NELSON's bringing his passion and expertise to the floor today.

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, I thank my dear personal friend the Senator from Rhode Island for his kind comments, but I especially thank him for his passion and his leadership on this issue. There are parts of America where it is time to wake up, and especially one part of that is the State of Florida.

Because of the nature of our State being a peninsula that sticks down into water surrounding it on most sides, you would not be surprised that we have by far the longest coastline of any State, save for Alaska.

When it comes to beaches, the State of Florida by far has more beaches than any other State, but because we have so much exposure to the oceans—the Atlantic on the east and the Gulf of Mexico on the west—we are particularly subject to climate change and the fact that the Earth is heating up.

Why is the Earth heating up? Well, there is the effect known as the greenhouse effect. If you put certain gasses into the atmosphere that are a result of manmade efforts—when we burn things such as oil and coal and we don't scrub out a lot of the stuff, it goes into the atmosphere. Well, one of the things that goes into the atmosphere is carbon dioxide. What carbon dioxide does is go into the upper atmosphere and it forms this greenhouse effect by creating an invisible shield, and when the Sun's rays come and strike the Earth at daylight, those rays then reflect off the Earth's surface. Under normal circumstances, those rays bounce back out and radiate back into space but not if you have a lot of gasses up at the very beginning of space, at the top of the atmosphere, such as carbon dioxide.

When the Earth's surface radiates the Sun's heat, it goes back up as if it wants to go out into space, and it is trapped. What happens is the entire atmosphere of the Earth then contains that heat, and slowly over time it builds up the temperature.

When you look at a globe, what do you mostly see? You don't see land; you see water. So what happens is that most of that heating of the Earth's atmosphere is absorbed into the temperature of the ocean. Because of the rise of the ocean temperature and the temperature of the air, what starts to happen? What is happening up toward the northern climes as well as the southern climes? Have you heard the report that came out a couple of days ago about how big chunks of Antarctica are now falling off? Have you heard about how all of the glaciers on top of Greenland, which used to be nothing but one big glacier, are now falling off into the sea, thus causing the sea rise?

I will flip it back to the Senator from Rhode Island with this comment: In the hearing we had of the commerce subcommittee in Miami Beach—why did I choose Miami Beach? Because it is ground zero. At high tide they are already having flooding in the streets of Miami Beach. At a seasonally high tide that they expect coming up in October of this year, they expect constant flooding. As a result, we had the mayor of Miami Beach tell us about the effort of them trying to redo the infrastructure to get rid of the water when the high tides come in.

We also had a scientist at NASA testify. He is a fellow who is a four-time space flier. He left the astronaut office, and now he is back at the Goddard Space Flight Center in Maryland. He is a scientist. What he testified to us was not a forecast, not a projection; he testified as to the measurements of sea level rise over the last 50 years. And for Florida, the sea level rise, as measured by NASA—these are indisputable measurements—is 5 to 8 inches. In another 20 to 30 years, he projects that the sea level rise will be a foot, 12 inches more, and by the end of the decade, it will rise 2 to 3 feet.

I hasten to add that 75 percent of Florida's population of 20 million people lives on the coast. Can you imagine what a 2- to 3-foot sea level rise on Florida would be? It would inundate unbelievable amounts of the urban community of our State of Florida. So the question is, Are we going to do something about it?

I will flip it back to the Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. On my trip through Senator NELSON's State, the Army Corps of Engineers officials in Jacksonville gave me some pretty dire warnings about what the sea level rise portends for Florida, both the punch from storms that will bring the higher seas ashore and the steady encroachment of saltwater.

This is a scene from western Boynton Beach after Tropical Storm Isaac in 2012. I don't know if you can see it on the screen, but this sign says ''no wake zone.'' The family put up a ''no wake zone'' sign in their front yard because the cars going by would cause wakes and more damage.

The Corps also showed me what 2 feet of sea level rise would do to the Everglades National Park. I went down to the Everglades later on during my visit. This is what it would look like. You can see the green in the Everglades here and all the development up here. Basically, if you add 60 centimeters of sea level rise, or 2 feet, and that is all ocean again, that is a pretty serious change.

The Southeast Florida Regional Compact, which is a bipartisan coalition of four South Florida counties, predicts that the water around southeast Florida could surge up to 2 feet in less than 50 years.

So that is a preview of the coming attractions ''Everglades Under Water.''

What was interesting was that the local officials, both Republicans and Democrats, were working together. The division that exists in this body doesn't exist down there. Mayor Silva Murphy of Monroe County is a Republican and former Mayor Kristin Jacobs of Broward County is a Democrat. They both know that flooding and access to drinking water are not partisan issues in the way that it divides us here.

Here are a couple more examples from my visit. This is Castillo San Marcos, which Senator NELSON will recognize as being in St. Augustine. It is a famous and very beautiful ancient fort. It sits along the water there. If you add 3 feet of sea level rise, it turns from being part of the coast to being its own tiny little peninsula surrounded by flooding. It is the oldest masonry fort in the United States.

This is what Fort Matanzas would look like. This is a little fort built by Spanish colonists in 1742. It is right here on this inlet. If you add 3 feet of sea level rise, suddenly it is in the water. It has nothing to stand on. As it is, they have built a wall to protect it from the sea level rise that has already happened, and from time to time the high tides lap over that wall.

The Senator said there is the potential for an enormous amount of harm here that could happen to people. One of the scientists I met in Florida said that if we don't do something about this, ''people are going to get hurt and it's going to cost a lot of money.'' That is true.

One topic I would like to discuss is how the seawater will affect the freshwater supply of Florida. Senator NELSON is an expert on the geology of Florida and why it is different from my rocky New England coast.

I will yield back to Senator NELSON so he can discuss the limestone bedrock problem.

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, one would naturally ask the question,

could we solve this problem in the United States the way the Dutch have solved a lot of the coastal areas of the Netherlands by building dikes? A lot of their land is actually below sea level.

You can't do that in a place such as Florida because the substrate underneath the surface soil is a porous limestone, much like Swiss cheese. So that if you try to put up a dike, it is not going to hold any water back because the pressure of the water as it rises is merely going to go underneath the dike into the porous limestone, which is the source under the surface of a lot of Florida's drinking water because that water in that honeycomb limestone is fresh.

What happens as a result of the sea level rise? More water and higher water will create more pressure. The pressure then starts to push underneath the surface as well as over the surface of the land, and that causes the intrusion of saltwater into the fresh drinking water.

Because Florida is so low—believe it or not, our highest point is right near the Alabama-Florida line, which is actually 356 feet high. But when you get into portions of South Florida, it is very low. Obviously, sea level rise is going to cover a lot of land, but another consequence is that a lot of flood control is now regulated by gravity. You go from a higher position of flood and you flow by gravity through canals to a lower position of the sea level. When the sea level rises, the water during floods—hurricane, rainstorm, whatever—can't flow. The only way to correct that is to install very expensive pumping equipment.

Finally, in this segment of the exchange with the Senator from Rhode Island, I ask what is another consequence of the temperature of the ocean's rising? Remember the greenhouse effect? Most of that heat is absorbed in the oceans.

What is the fuel for a hurricane in the Northern Hemisphere? What is the fuel for it? It is the temperature of the water. Hurricanes in the Northern Hemisphere go counterclockwise. Hurricanes in the Southern Hemisphere go clockwise. What happens to the intensity of the hurricane? It goes up as the waters get hotter. That is why usually, as the hurricanes are forming into these massive storms over the South Atlantic and the Caribbean, they start going north. They start to dissipate because the waters are cooler. It doesn't provide the fuel for the ferocity of the hurricane. Likewise, higher water temperatures, more frequency of hurricanes.

In our State, we live on a peninsula that sticks down into the middle of ''Hurricane Highway.'' It is a way of life. We understand that, and we have handled it pretty well, especially after the disaster of 1992, the monster hurricane, Hurricane Andrew. Our building codes are up and so forth, but we can't withstand a lot of Hurricane Andrews. Part of that hurricane was considered to be a category 5—something in excess of 160 mile-per-hour winds. We know what 160 mile-an-hour tornadoes do within a small, confined, tight-knit cyclone-type activity. Imagine what those wind speeds do in a massive hurricane covering hundreds of miles.

We start to see then the effects. The insurance industry cannot withstand insuring structures that are going to sustain that kind of damage. What is going to happen to the cost of insurance? It is going to go through the roof. What is going to happen to the cost of flood insurance? In the Senate, we agonized over the Federal Flood Insurance Program—what is going to happen to the actual structures and the people who not only are subject to being flooded because of the rise of sea level but of having their whole dwellings and city torn up, as Hurricane Andrew did to downtown Homestead, a relatively small population of Florida and it absolutely tore it up. That is what we are facing unless we do something about climate change.

The first thing we have to do is we have to stop this denial that this is not real. The scientists are telling us it is real. The NASA astronaut scientists say it is measurements. They have flooding in Miami Beach. The local governments have banded together in southeastern Florida to try to get ahead of it.

Why can't we get some of the Senators here, who because it is not politically correct in their politics, to recognize what the truth is so we can start planning for this—not as a protection but to plan for the protection of planet Earth, and see if we can stop some of the causes of the climate change. Then, once we do it in the Nation that stands as the role model to the rest of the countries, we are going to have to get them to do it too; otherwise, we are going to see what has just happened over the last couple of days: Large chunks of Antarctica are beyond saving, and the consequences are grave.

I appreciate the leadership of my friend from Rhode Island and Senator BOXER of California. They have been the ones who have been at the point of the spear. I thank them very much.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, it is a pleasure to be here with the Senator from Florida, and his leadership is truly remarkable.

Here is another example on this picture from my tour. This is Broward County. People say it is not real. Ask the owner of this house with the for sale sign. Good luck selling that house with the ocean running through it. That was in 2010.

Another Broward County photograph. Commissioner Kristin Jacobs, who was the mayor at that time, gave me these pictures. Again, this is tide. Look at the sky. It is a beautiful day. This isn't rain. This is the tide flooding in, showing what it does to the cars. It is a mess.

As Senator NELSON described, because Florida is this limestone, kind of hard sponge, what keeps the saltwater out is the pressure of the freshwater holding it at bay. There is no wall. There is no structure that keeps the water, salt, and fresh balance. It is a hydraulic system. They have built a very complex system of canals, where they have raised the water so they have pressure, so they can push it back. As the sea level comes up, they are losing that fight. So here is a line through Broward County of how far the saltwater has already intruded into the water supply. If we drilled wells on this side of the red line, the water is no good, and all of these wells, the little green spots, all of these water areas are in the way because this line is moving.

As one Army Corps engineer in Jacksonville said, Florida is in a box, because as the sea level rises, the way we keep the freshwater available to people is by raising the fresh water, and that keeps what the engineers call the hydraulic head that pushes the sea water back and allows us to maintain freshwater for drinking water purposes, for agriculture, for Florida oranges and grapefruits and all the things we count on. If what we are worried about is flooding, we could only raise the freshwater so far, because if we raise it enough, we have freshwater flooding. There is no way out of that conundrum. There is no way out of that conundrum in Florida. He said, whether it happens in 100 years or whether it happens after the next bad hurricane, that is what is going to happen. That is a terrible predicament. It is not going to get better by pretending it is not real. It is not going to get better by denying it.

If we go offshore, we get to the problem of acidification, which happens from the carbon. This is not a theory. People say climate change is a theory. No. The acidification of the ocean from the type of carbon dioxide is something we can do in a lab. It is a scientific fact. It is a law of chemistry. So it happens, and it is starting to hit the reefs and the fisheries as the ocean warms and turns more acid.

Mayor Murphy is the mayor of Monroe County. I met her in Key Largo, which is one of the famous world destinations. I said: What is the acidification of the warm air? What does that do to your reefs?

She said: Well, the reefs are still beautiful unless you had been out to see them 10, 15 years ago. The reefs are still beautiful unless you had been out to see them 10 or 15 years ago. People see the change.

I met with the Snook and Gamefish Foundation in Florida and the marine industry folks, and they are concerned about what is happening there. In fact, the problem goes all the way up the coast. When I came down from North Carolina and South Carolina, the fishermen there told me they are starting to catch snook off the Carolinas. It is one thing when we are catching grouper and tarpon up in Rhode Island, but what they are seeing on the South Atlantic coast is the same thing that a

Rhode Islander fisherman said to me about the fishing off our coast. He said: It is getting weird out there. We are catching fish our fathers never saw in their nets in their lives. So when a snook comes up on the line off the Carolinas, that is a sign that something is dramatically changing, and these reefs are changing as well.

Last story: Mike Shirley works at the Guana Tolomato Matanzas National Estuarine Research Reserve on the south side of St. Augustine. He moved up there from South Florida. He moved there 7 years ago. When he got there, he said there was one thing noticeable: There were no mangroves. South Florida is covered in mangroves, but there weren't any here. Now, 7 years later, the place is covered in mangroves. All that habitat migrating northward as the oceans and the water warms and it is changing things.

He said one other thing. He said: Do you know what we ought to look out for? There is going to be another migration north. It is going to be the people leaving flooded South Florida who can't get freshwater, whose homes are flooded, who can't deal with their car going hubcap deep in saltwater every high tide. They are going to be moving up. It is not just the people from the cold North coming to Florida now, it is people coming from the flooding South who are going to be coming North again.

I will say one last thing. The mayors were terrific. Sylvia Murphy, the mayor of Monroe County, is putting climate and energy policy at the very forefront of her 20-year growth plan for the county. Mayor Philip Levine of Miami Beach is hard at work. He says:

> Sea-level rise is our reality in Miami Beach. We are past the point of debating the existence of climate change. We are now focusing on adapting to current and future threats.

Mayor Levine is pushing a $400 million plan to try to make the city's drainage system more resilient in the face of rising tides.

From Mayor Joe Riley in Charleston to Mayor Edna Jackson in Savannah, to Mayor Alvin Brown in Jacksonville, to the mayors in South Florida I mentioned, council members, mayors from Pinecrest, South Miami, Surfside, Miami Shores, Cutler Bay, Palmetto Bay, the Seminole Tribe, the local officials, they are all serious about tackling climate change. It is real. They see it in their neighborhoods. They see it in their districts. They see it in their towns. They are away from this poisonous place where the polluters control what people are allowed to think and see and do something about.

We have to start listening to the American people. We have to start listening to the mayors who inhabit real life and not the political fantasy in this Senate. We have to start dealing with this.

Lee Thomas worked for President Ronald Reagan. He was a member of the Reagan Cabinet. He ran the Environmental Protection Agency for Ronald Reagan. Last week he wrote an op-ed—and I know the Senator from Florida saw it—in the Tampa Bay Times urging Florida's leaders to wake up to the changes taking place in the Sunshine State. Here is what he said: ''Whether Democrat or Republican, Florida residents cannot afford to ignore the evidence of climate change.'' That is a Reagan official saying those words.

Come on, Republican mayors, Reagan officials. At some point we have to wake up. This is real.

Just last year, Thomas joined all the other former Republican EPA heads—four of them—and they wrote this:

> The costs of inaction are undeniable. The lines of scientific evidence grow only stronger and more numerous, and the window of time remaining to act is growing smaller: delay could mean that warming becomes locked in. A market-based approach, like a carbon tax, would be the best path to reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Bob Samuelson just said the same thing in his editorial over the weekend.

I will say that the citizens of Florida and the people of the United States are very fortunate to have a Senator such as BILL NELSON, who is aware of this problem, who is fighting hard to solve it, who is listening to his mayors, Republican and Democratic alike, who are telling him what is happening in their home State, and who was willing to bring the Commerce Committee of the U.S. Senate down to a Miami Beach townhall to make sure everybody understands what is going on. He helped bring that message back to Washington and it was a terrific thing.

So we will continue working together to get this body to wake up out of its polluter-induced slumber and face the realities that people all across this country are seeing in their daily lives. It is indeed time to wake up.

I yield the floor for any final comments the Senator from Florida may wish to make.

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, the Senator from Rhode Island has stated in one of the more eloquent fashions details about my State of Florida because he was so passionate about the subject and so unselfish that he wanted to start in other States—North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia—and several places on the east coast of Florida. It is extraordinary.

I will leave you with this thought: Every time I hear a Senator such as Senator WHITEHOUSE speak about this subject, and every time I look at a picture of the planet as he has on the poster that says ''Time To Wake Up,'' my mind's eye goes back 28 years ago to the window of our spacecraft on the 24th flight of the space shuttle 203 nautical miles above the Earth, circumnavigating the Earth at 17,500 miles an hour, with a complete revolution of the Earth in 90 minutes.

You look back at our planet—which is so beautiful, so colorful, so alive, so creative—and yet when you look at the rim of the Earth, as it falls off into the deep blackness of space, there is a thin, little blue band, and upon closer examination out the window, you can actually see the thin film of what sustains all of our life, the atmosphere.

Then, with the naked eye, you can see points on the Earth where we are messing it up. You can see the color contrast of the destruction of the trees in the Amazon, upriver in the Amazon. You can see the result of cutting down all the trees on an island nation such as Madagascar, which fortunately has started planting trees in the last quarter century. Therefore, the result of that tree cutting, in this hemisphere as well, in the island nation of Haiti, is that when the rains come, there are no trees to hold the topsoil and it all flows down the rivers and out the mouths of the rivers and you can see it from space in the discoloration of the water. That is for miles and miles out into the brilliant blues of the ocean.

If we do not do what people like Senators BOXER and WHITEHOUSE are saying and wake up to the reality of climate change and try to get ahead of it by changing policies that will stop the greenhouse effect or at least slow it down, then what we are going to have for future space fliers is that they are going to look back at the planet and the coastline of those States Senator WHITEHOUSE visited—all being in the Southeastern United States—that coastline is not going to look the same. It is not going to be as distinct a coastline, with a white beach along it that outlines it from the blue waters of the Atlantic. It is going to be much different and to the great detriment of the people who live there and call that home.

I yield the floor.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding rule XXII, tomorrow, Wednesday, May 14, 2014, at 11:15 a.m., the Senate proceed to vote on cloture on Calendar No. 664, Logan; Calendar No. 665, Tuchi; Calendar No. 666, Humetewa; then proceed to consideration and vote on confirmation of Calendar No. 650, Williams, and Calendar No. 539, Moreno; further, that if cloture is invoked on Calendar Nos. 664, 665 or 666, the time until 5:15 p.m. be equally divided between the two leaders or their designees and at 5:15 p.m. the Senate proceed to vote on confirmation of the nominations in the order listed; further, that there be 2 minutes for debate prior to each vote, equally divided in the usual form; that any rollcall votes

following the first in each series be 10 minutes in length; further, that if confirmed, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order to the nominations; that any statements related to the nominations be printed in the RECORD; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action and the Senate then resume legislative session and proceed to vote on the motion to proceed to H.R. 3474.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators allowed to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

150TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE VILLAGE OF RAMSEY

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, 150 years ago—on May 4, 1864, to be exact—the Village of Ramsey, IL, was incorporated. The village was named after an early settler named William Ramsey, who built his home on what is now known as Ramsey Creek.

Ramsey was just getting started when Abraham Lincoln was traveling from his home in Springfield to Vandalia, which was then the State Capital where Lincoln was a member of the Illinois House of Representatives. The Illinois Central Railroad, completed on January 1, 1855, made Ramsey a local trading and shipping point for nearby townships.

To put the anniversary of Ramsey's incorporation in perspective, think about what the Midwest was like in 1864. The Civil War was coming to an end and a new America was being born. It was long before planes and cars—and trains were not yet common.

By 1878, the people of Ramsey could support six dry goods and grocery stores, a drug store, a hardware store, two saloons, a boot shop, a hotel, and a harness factory. It was the second largest town in Fayette County. Ramsey even had its own newspaper in the 1880s, The Ramsey Democrat. Another publication, the Ramsey News-Journal, started in 1911. It was purchased in 1912 by Julius Mueller and remained with that family for 100 years.

The first women to vote in Illinois cast their vote in Ramsey. Mrs. Athilla Stoddard was the first female in the State to vote publicly. She was 83 years old when she voted in Ramsey on July 10, 1891.

Ramsey is small—just over 1,000 people live there today—but it has its share of famous residents. Glen Hobbie, who played for both the Chicago Cubs and the St. Louis Cardinals, called Ramsey home for a time. H.L. Hunt, an oil tycoon who inspired the TV series Dallas, was from Ramsey; and so was Tex Williams, a country music singer, songwriter and actor.

One day each year, when the Lions Club hosts its annual auction, the population grows from 1,000 people to 5,000 people.

The Village of Ramsey was in my district when I was a Member of the House of Representatives. I have been to the town many times and have enjoyed its famous chicken dinners. I camped out at Ramsey Lake State Park with my kids many years before going off to Congress. Today I extend congratulations to Mayor Claude Willis, the citizens of Ramsey, and the 4,000 people who spend a day in Ramsey each year as the village celebrates its 150th anniversary.

ENERGY SAVINGS

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I rise in support of the Energy Savings and Industrial Competitiveness Act, S. 2262. I am pleased to be a cosponsor of this legislation, which would build on previous energy efficiency legislation and proposes cost-effective mechanisms to support the adoption of off-the-shelf efficiency technologies for buildings, manufacturers, and the Federal Government.

As honorary vice-chair of the Alliance to Save Energy, I have been a long-time proponent of efforts to improve energy efficiency. Encouraging the adoption of energy efficiency measures is one of the easiest yet most effective mechanisms for reducing energy consumption, lessening pollution, and ultimately saving families, businesses, and the Federal Government money.

Legislation to improve the Nation's energy policy is long overdue. I would like to congratulate the bill sponsors, Senators SHAHEEN and PORTMAN, for crafting this bipartisan, commonsense bill and for their tireless efforts in working with the leadership of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee to bring this bill to the Senate floor once again. This has not been an easy feat. After an earlier version of the bill was left unfinished last year, the bill sponsors did not give up and have continued to work diligently to build additional support by incorporating several previously filed amendments. While I share the general frustration expressed by some that Congress should be considering a more comprehensive energy policy, we must not use this as a reason to impede passage of this energy efficiency bill.

The provisions in S. 2262 will kickstart the use of energy efficiency technologies that are commercially available now and can be deployed by residential, commercial, and industrial energy users. The bill will also improve the energy efficiency of the Federal Government, which is the largest energy consumer in the country. Given today's challenging fiscal environment, it is notable that all authorizations included in S. 2262 are fully offset.

I am pleased to have co-authored two provisions that are incorporated into the base bill. First, I joined my colleague, the Senator from Colorado, Mr. UDALL, in authoring a provision that would provide a streamlined, coordinating structure for schools to help them better navigate existing Federal energy efficiency programs and financing options. This would be particularly helpful for rural schools in States such as Maine and would help these institutions save money in the face of rising energy costs. Decisions about how best to meet the energy needs of their schools, however, would still appropriately be made by the States, school boards, and local officials.

The second provision that I am pleased to have authored with my colleague from Rhode Island, Senator WHITEHOUSE, would authorize a pay-for-success pilot program allowing the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, HUD, to enter into agreements with private investors for energy and water efficiency improvements to project-based rental assistance and housing for the elderly and disabled. This budget-neutral approach would leverage private investment to finance energy efficiency retrofits for certain HUD-assisted properties and help cut utility costs for the Federal Government.

I would have liked an open amendment process. One amendment I am pleased to have worked on with my colleagues from Delaware, Senator COONS, and Rhode Island, Senator REED, would reauthorize and extend the core Weatherization Assistance Program and State Energy Program activities at the Department of Energy through 2018, develop a competitive grant program for non-profits to carry out weatherization projects, and require minimum professional standards for weatherization contractors and workers. I am a long-time supporter of weatherization, which plays an important role in permanently reducing home energy costs for low-income families and seniors in all States, lessening our dependence on foreign oil, and training a skilled workforce. Weatherizing homes and reducing energy costs are particularly important for a State like Maine, which has the oldest housing stock in the Nation and a high dependence on home heating oil. Our amendment, had we been allowed to offer it, would have further increased the energy savings from this bill.

Nevertheless, the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy has released new analysis demonstrating that S. 2262 would save consumers and businesses and the government with a cumulative net savings of nearly $100 billion by 2030, support thousands of new jobs by cutting government and industrial energy waste and assisting homeowners in financing energy efficiency improvements, and reduce emissions significantly.