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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable CHRISTOPHER A. COONS, a Senator from the State of Delaware.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal God, give our lawmakers the wisdom to remember to be grateful for all the things You have already done.

Lord, You have sustained our Nation during seasons of war and peace. You have helped us find creative ways to strive for a more perfect Union. You have provided us with solutions to difficult problems just when we needed You most.

Eternal Spirit, let this day be a time when Senators feel gratitude for Your bountiful blessings and faithfulness. May they express this gratitude by striving to live one day at a time, focusing on Your mercy, love, and grace.

We pray in Your loving Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, April 28, 2021.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

appoint the Honorable CHRISTOPHER A. COONS, a Senator from the State of Delaware, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATRICK J. LEAHY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. COONS thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Democratic leader is recognized.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL UNDER CHAPTER 8 OF TITLE 5, UNITED STATES CODE, OF THE RULE SUBMITTED BY THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY RELATING TO "OIL AND NATURAL GAS SECTOR: EMISSION STANDARDS FOR NEW, RECONSTRUCTED, AND MODIFIED SOURCES REVIEW"

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to Calendar No. 48, S.J. Res. 14, the methane CRA.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the joint resolution, S.J. Res. 14.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 48, S.J. Res. 14, providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Environmental Protection Agency relating to "Oil and Natural Gas Sector: Emission Standards for New, Reconstructed, and Modified Sources Review."

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the provisions of title 5, U.S.C., chapter 802, there will now be up to 10 hours of debate, equally divided.

The majority leader.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, at the start of the year, the Senate Democrats pledged that one of our top priorities would be tackling climate change. I directed all of our incoming committee chairs to hold hearings and prepare legislation on the climate crisis. I promised that any infrastructure bill would be green and focused on creating the green jobs of the future. Both of these efforts, I am happy to report, are well under way.

And, today, as we approach the 100-day mark of this new Congress, the Senate will take the first major step in combating climate change on the Senate floor, by reinstating safeguards against methane emissions.

Specifically, today's vote will use the Congressional Review Act to reimpose commonsense regulations against methane leaks from the oil and gas industry, from production and processing to transmission and storage.

And let me note that this would be the first time that the Senate Democratic majority has used the Congressional Review Act. It is no mistake that we have chosen to use the law first on the subject of climate change.

Under this Democratic majority, the Senate will be a place where we take decisive, ambitious, and effective action against climate change. And this CRA, the reinstatement of the rule dealing with methane emissions, will be the most significant act that the

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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Senate has taken on climate change in more than a decade—and maybe several decades. This measure will help us address the climate crisis in a very serious way.

Methane doesn't get as much attention as CO₂, carbon dioxide, but it packs a bigger punch. Over 20 years, a ton of methane warms the atmosphere 86 times more than carbon dioxide. Thankfully, methane degrades faster in our atmosphere, and curbing methane emissions is relatively cheap.

So when it comes to global warming, tackling methane delivers a huge bang for your buck. Even a little bit of methane reduction goes a long way, and it moves far more quickly than carbon dioxide reduction. So as we move on this bill, which will have its effect on global warming within a year, it gives us some time, although we don't have much, to deal with the longer term and even more difficult issues of carbon dioxide.

That is why President Obama put the rules in place nearly 6 years ago. And at the time, amazingly enough, even the oil and gas industry welcomed them. Industry doesn't want leaks in their pipelines and production any more than we do.

But President Trump, inexplicably, did away with these safeguards last September. It seems he does these things out of pique, mindlessly opposing something just because his predecessor, Barack Obama, did it. It is very possible that the President didn't even understand what he was doing. But he so often acted out of anger and vindictiveness, not out of what was good for the country, that he ended up doing this.

I am greatly looking forward to righting that wrong today, hopefully, in a bipartisan fashion. We have at least one Republican Senator who has joined us, and I hope that many more will follow suit. If the leaders of the oil and gas industry are for this, how could our Republican friends not vote for it? I won't speculate on the reasons, but none of them are good.

I want to commend my colleagues who have been leaders on this issue: Senator HEINRICH, Senator KING, Senator MARKEY. President Biden has challenged the United States to cut its greenhouse gas emissions in half by 2030. The best way to achieve this ambitious goal is through bold action by this Congress, through legislation to reduce greenhouse pollution while creating millions of jobs and economic prosperity in the new clean energy economy.

This is the first and a large step in that direction. We have many more steps we must take, of course. The Senate begins the important work of dealing with the climate crisis today by passing these very, very significant, commonsense rules on methane.

AMERICAN FAMILIES PLAN

Mr. President, now on a different matter, this morning, President Biden unveiled landmark legislation designed

to give American families a better chance to succeed in the 21st century economy, combining investments in education, childcare, and workforce training.

The American Families Plan, as it is called, makes exactly the types of investment our country should have been making for a very long time. In many of these areas, the United States has lagged well behind other developed countries. Governments throughout Europe dedicate a significantly higher portion of their GDP to workforce retraining and offer more flexible family leave policies.

Some say these kinds of policies are not infrastructure, but they very much are. Childcare is a necessity in the 21st century, and a lack of access to childcare can be a throttle on future economic growth because it affects millions of American families.

As technology and automation replace jobs in certain sectors of the economy, workforce training is a must. Giving our children a head start earlier in life with pre-K education has benefits that span a child's entire life and so will affect our country positively for decades to come, economically, socially, and in renewing the American spirit, which is so important to our future.

These things are just as important. The kinds of policies that deal with human infrastructure are just as important as roads and bridges, which, of course, are, no doubt, important in their own right. This is not an either/or—human infrastructure or brick-and-mortar structure. We must say yes to both. We don't want to choose one versus the other. That is like choosing between children, both of whom we love.

In the modern world, we need both infrastructure that matches a 21st century economy and human infrastructure that allows our workers and families to succeed in it. So I applaud President Biden for putting this plan together. It is just the right approach.

I would add one final comment here. All of our Republican colleagues—every single one—regrettably, chose to oppose the American Rescue Plan, despite the fact that a majority of Republican voters approved of the legislation. There seems to be a huge dichotomy between Republicans in Washington and Republicans in the rest of the country who approve of many of the policies in President Biden's plans.

Republicans in the rest of the country approved of the checks and investing in vaccines, and they approve of investing in infrastructure. I suspect many of these policies in the American Families Plan will get high marks as well. Childcare is popular. Early pre-K is popular. Early school-hood training is popular. Free community college is popular. The list goes on.

Will our Republican colleagues start to listen to their constituents as well as the rest of the country, or are they still the party of Donald Trump, a

party that opposes the other side at all costs? That is no good for America; that is no good for bipartisanship; and it is not even good for the Republican Party's future.

FIRST 100 DAYS

Mr. President, now, tonight President Biden will address a joint session of Congress to mark the progress of our first 100 days and talk about where we, as a country, still need to go. I expect President Biden, unlike his predecessor, will lay out the facts and appeal to our better angels. That is what he has been doing over these past 100 days: restoring respect, truthfulness, and responsive government.

Almost as important is what President Biden is not doing. President Biden is not constantly stoking division, outrage, and racial animus. He doesn't fan the flames of every single culture war. He doesn't seek to personally dominate every single news cycle. He doesn't insult, degrade, or constantly lie. And it matters.

Newspapers are littered with firsthand accounts of Americans who feel they can finally sleep at night without worrying about what new scandal, outrage, or unhinged tweet the next morning would bring. As one Republican operative put it recently, "Now there's a sense of relief. Imagine there's a car alarm that's been going off for a long time and suddenly it's quiet."

Politics is an important part of American life, but it is not meant to be all-consuming. It is not supposed to keep average citizens up at night. Politics is supposed to be where we come together to solve our differences amicably, not an arena of endless partisan warfare or a bottomless pit of chaos.

So as President Biden prepares to address the Nation tonight, it is worth noting that, as much as we have accomplished in the first 100 days, the contrast in style, tone, and effectiveness between President Biden and President Trump is important too.

As we seek to repair the wounds left by January 6, as we seek to restore faith in government and in our democracy, it is important—so important—to have political leaders who act with dignity, honor, and have fidelity to the truth.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from New Mexico.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, tonight President Biden will deliver his first address to a joint session of Congress. I will be there, and, like my fellow Kentuckians watching at home, I will be curious to hear how President Biden tries to square his rhetoric with the administration's actions over the past 100 days.

Back in January, many Americans hoped they could take the incoming President at his word. After a year spent beating back a historic pandemic

and grappling with civil unrest, President Biden pledged he would be “a President for all Americans,” with plans to “repair,” “restore,” and “heal.”

The American people elected a 50-50 Senate, a closely divided House, and a President who preached moderation. He promised that his whole soul was committed to uniting our people. Many hoped his administration would reflect that promise, but the first 100 days have left much to be desired.

Over a few short months, the Biden administration seems to have given up on selling actual unity in favor of catnip for their liberal base, covered with a hefty coat of false advertising.

That is how the so-called American Rescue Plan, a grab-bag spending bill that directed less than 10 percent to vaccines and pandemic healthcare, was marketed as a COVID-19 relief measure. In actuality, it sent sums of money to State governments whose revenues had already rebounded and declared war on the formerly bipartisan consensus that welfare spending should actually be linked to work.

Or take H.R. 1, the sweeping effort by Democrats to mount a partisan takeover of all 50 States’ voting laws, along with the Federal Election Commission for good measure. After a Republican won the White House in 2016, this was billed as a massive overhaul for a broken democracy. Now a nearly identical plan is, instead, being marketed as a modest dose of preventive maintenance. It is still the same takeover it has always been.

And now we have the American Jobs Plan, another multitrillion-dollar smorgasbord of liberal social engineering that would decimate entire industries and spend only a small fraction on roads and bridges. It is being sold as a serious effort to rebuild our Nation’s infrastructure. It is pretty brazen misdirection.

At both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue, Democrats have chosen to live in an alternate universe where both the campaign promises they made and the mandate the American people delivered were actually completely different than what happened right here on planet Earth.

Unfortunately, the real-life effects of this false advertising campaign have come thick and fast: pain and uncertainty at home and dwindling leverage and virtue-signaling abroad.

First came mixed messages on the status of the pandemic. Existing vaccine distribution efforts surpassed President Biden’s supposedly ambitious daily target on the day he was sworn in.

When their own top health officials accidentally let slip the hard science on school reopenings, the administration bowed to Big Labor and walked back their comments.

And the President continues to issue directives that are strangely out of step with the science, like his big announcement several weeks ago that, if

citizens behave themselves—behave themselves—he would actually permit them to enjoy small outdoor gatherings on July 4th that the CDC guidance already said would be safe right now.

Then there is the environmental policy. On day one, President Biden rushed to cancel a pipeline project that would have employed thousands of Americans and freeze permitting for more safe, reliable domestic energy. He also announced an urgent return to an Obama-era deal that has proven unable to curb the signatories’ carbon emissions and unnecessary for the United States to reduce our own.

Why would he do that? Because the far left demanded it. In fact, the most radical liberals in Congress have taken credit for the input of their Green New Deal manifesto over this President’s new agenda.

Meanwhile, Democrats have decidedly avoided taking ownership of the results of their own campaign rhetoric on immigration. Reckless mixed messaging has come home to roost in the form of a humanitarian and security crisis on our southern border. Soaring numbers of migrants are arriving, some wearing Biden campaign shirts, convinced, as one put it, that “Biden promised us that everything was going to change.” Among them are record numbers of unaccompanied children, cramped into overflow facilities, who have become the tragic face of this story. Yet through it all, the White House’s foremost concern seems to have been to avoid calling this what it is: a crisis.

And while broken immigration policy threatens security at our borders, a dangerously misguided foreign policy threatens our safety and standing overseas. Years of carefully assembled multilateral sanctions had created an economic straitjacket around Iran’s terrorist state. But in its haste to turn the clocks back to the Obama era, President Biden’s negotiators have offered to give up massive portions of this leverage just to get Iran back to a failed nuclear deal.

Further east, American forces have been ordered to make a hasty, total withdrawal from Afghanistan; to leave coalition partners and vulnerable Afghans high and dry, especially women and girls; to pave the way for Taliban rule; and to enable an al-Qaida resurgence that could again threaten our homeland.

And while national security experts are nearly unanimous in urging the administration to focus on competition with Russia and China, the White House has proposed to cut defense spending after inflation and put our Armed Forces on the back foot—ignoring the facts, passing the buck, and squandering leverage.

This is not what the American people bargained for, and they know it doesn’t have to be this way. Past Presidents and Congresses have found ways to work effectively to make lasting and

bipartisan progress on important issues. For example, when we have crafted smart policies to improve actual infrastructure, big bipartisan majorities have signed on.

Just last year, when we worked across the aisle on targeted rescue packages to help American families weather a once-in-a-century pandemic, not one—not one—of the five bills we passed last year earned fewer than 90 votes right here in the Senate. This year, the story has been different.

Behind President Biden’s familiar face, it is like the most radical Washington Democrats have been handed the keys, and they are trying to speed as far left as they can possibly go before American voters ask for the car back.

But it is not too late. This White House can shake off its daydreams of a sweeping socialist legacy that will never happen in the United States. They can recommit to solving our Nation’s actual problems, to fostering consensus instead of deepening our divide.

That is what the American people want and what they deserve, not an administration that chooses to govern like it owes everything—everything—to the radical left.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from New Mexico.

S.J. RES. 14

Mr. HEINRICH. Mr. President, I am proud to join with the majority leader and with my colleagues from Maine and Massachusetts to lead this effort to restore responsible methane emission standards at the EPA. We can take commonsense action right now to slow climate change and simultaneously reduce the incredible waste of a valuable energy resource.

Methane is the primary constituent in natural gas. It is an incredibly potent driver of the greenhouse effect. Over the short term, it is actually 86 times more powerful than CO₂ emissions. It is estimated that about a quarter of all the human-caused global warming that has occurred since the Industrial Revolution can be attributed to methane emissions.

In the United States, the lion’s share of these human-caused methane emissions are from the production of oil and gas. That is due in part to outdated—oftentimes, even faulty—equipment and pipes that leak methane into the air, wellheads that leak methane.

Many oil and gas operators also engage in a practice known as flaring, where operators ignite and burn off excess gas, and, worse yet, venting, where uncombusted natural gas is simply released into the air.

Now, beyond the obvious consequences for climate change, these types of methane emissions waste incredibly valuable energy resources.

Fugitive methane also harms public health by polluting the air that we breathe. When methane leaks from oil and gas wells or pipelines or other infrastructure, harmful carcinogens—

carcinogens like benzene and other volatile organic compounds—also leak into the air alongside it. That means more children suffering from asthma attacks and more seniors having trouble breathing.

Methane pollution is real and present in many States, and it is a real problem in my State of New Mexico. We saw clear evidence of this over the Four Corners region in northwestern New Mexico—the San Juan Basin—and southwestern Colorado, when a giant cloud of methane, about the size of the State of Delaware, became so large by the mid-2000s that it could actually be seen by NASA satellite images.

This chart right here is a map from NASA of the western United States. You can see right here the cloud of methane over the Four Corners, which coincides exactly with the San Juan Basin, where much of our oil and gas has been produced over the course of the last several decades.

You can see from this map, from the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, how real and urgent the issue is. In recent years, researchers have detected increasing levels of dangerous methane pollution now over southeastern New Mexico, over the Permian Basin, where oil and gas operations have been booming for the last decade.

It is clear that this oil and gas producing region has joined the San Juan Basin as another major contributor to our methane emissions challenge.

Late last year, the EPA and the New Mexico Environment Department conducted helicopter flights over both the San Juan and Permian Basins. They used forward-looking infrared technology that can detect emissions from oil and gas operations that would normally be invisible to the naked eye.

I think if you could see methane, we would have solved many of these problems a long time ago.

For an example of what this technology can help us see at an individual oil and gas operation level, look at this side-by-side image from the group Earthworks. As you can see, this is what the human eye sees—simple oil and gas infrastructure, the number of tanks, some piping. But by using infrared imaging, you can see the enormous amount of methane simply being vented or leaking into the air. That entire plume is invisible to the naked eye, and, were it not so, I would, once again, suggest that we would have solved these problems a long time ago.

The overflights that were conducted by the New Mexico Environment Department found that methane leak rates over New Mexico's Permian Basin in 2020 had increased by 250 percent over 2019 levels. It is simply unacceptable.

Nationally, the Environmental Defense Fund has found that while oil and gas production has not yet rebounded from a crash brought on by the pandemic last year, methane emissions are already soaring back to prepandemic levels.

That is completely unacceptable when companies have the knowledge, have the technology, have the workforce to fix these leaks and stop the wasteful practices of venting and flaring.

When we set clear rules and emission standards, most oil and gas operators are onboard with updating their equipment and their practices to minimize methane leaks and to bring that natural gas that they produce to market. That is their business plan, not wasting methane.

We saw this bear out in practice in New Mexico over these past 2 years, as our State's oil conservation commission convened conservation and public health advocates and local oil and gas producers to establish State-level methane emissions rules.

New Mexico's new rules govern not just oil and gas production sites but also things like pipelines and storage sites that also oftentimes leak methane into the atmosphere.

And under our new State rules, oil and gas operators have the flexibility to choose the best technologies to meet the target of capturing 98 percent of their natural gas by 2026.

A spokesperson for the New Mexico Oil and Gas Association recently said that the group supports this goal and the newly finalized rules, which promote "safe, responsible production of oil and gas."

New Mexico has now joined other western States—States such as Colorado, North Dakota, and Wyoming—that have already adopted strong State-level methane emissions rules.

Until just recently, we also had strong Federal methane rules in place at the EPA. Now, unfortunately, these rules became one more target of the Trump administration's reckless rollbacks of protections of our clean air and clean water in this country. Late last year, President Trump dismantled an EPA rule that required oil and gas producers to monitor for methane leaks at their wells, at their compressor stations, and at their other operations.

This rule, or rollback of a rule, is simply a disaster for our climate and for public health. It was even rejected by much of the industry that it was purporting to help. Many leading American oil and gas producers and companies simply panned President Trump's rollback of these common-sense methane standards. As just one example, Gretchen Watkins, Shell's president in the United States, called the Trump administration's rollback "frustrating and disappointing," and pledged to voluntarily continue reducing their methane emissions.

Why would they do that? Because it is the right thing to do, because it makes business sense, because the rollback was, frankly, nonsensical.

So repairing leaks and installing new leak detection technologies will also create a number of good-paying jobs. It is really the epitome of a win-win situation.

Without clear Federal rules in place at the EPA, however, industry-led voluntary emissions reductions simply won't go far enough to curb the problem that we have. We need clear standards that create clear requirements for reducing waste and harmful pollution.

And it is not just me saying this. Since we announced this effort to use the Congressional Review Act, more and more leading companies in the oil and gas sector have come forward to say that they would welcome reinstating the EPA's methane emissions standards.

That includes the EQT Corporation, one of the Nation's leading natural gas producers, which operates in West Virginia and Ohio and Pennsylvania. In a statement, EQT's president and CEO, Toby Rice, called the reinstating of uniform Federal methane standards "sound federal policies" and committed to "producing our natural gas in accordance with high environmental and social standards."

The major oil company Total USA says:

We welcome direct federal regulation of methane emissions and support resolution via the Congressional Review Act.

Shell U.S. tweeted:

Sound policy surrounding natural gas is critical to its role in the energy transition. We need to restore the direct federal regulation of methane emissions—and we urge Congress to approve the methane resolution under the Congressional Review Act.

Not my words; Shell—one of the world's major producers of oil and gas.

These are the words of industry leaders who welcome us setting clear standards on methane emissions.

We are voting to reinstate the commonsense methane requirements for the oil and gas industry's production and processing segments and the methane and volatile organic compound requirements for oil and gas transmission and storage facilities.

With this vote, Congress will once again affirm that the Clean Air Act requires the EPA to take action to protect the air that Americans breathe from dangerous and harmful pollutants like methane, just like we did back in 2017 when the Senate came together on a bipartisan basis to uphold similar rules that govern oil and gas production on Federal Bureau of Land Management lands. In that vote, our former colleague Senator John McCain and our colleagues Senator SUSAN COLLINS and Senator LINDSEY GRAHAM joined with Senate Democrats in retaining the BLM's methane rule that promoted responsible development of natural gas resources on our public lands.

I would hope that all of us, and I mean all of us, sincerely—this is an effort that should receive the support of every single Senator in this body. I would hope that all of us can come together on a bipartisan basis once again to restore and strengthen responsible Federal methane standards for oil and gas operators. I am so pleased that

Senator COLLINS has already joined us as a cosponsor on this resolution.

Finally, I would like to point out that these rules are important not just to the health of oil and gas producing States like New Mexico or Wyoming or Colorado, because these rules will ensure the safety of not just oil and gas production sites but also of the gas pipelines and the storage sites that exist in every State in this country and in communities across this country.

These upstream segments of the oil and gas industry are in every single community you can imagine in all parts of the Nation. Just like we all know we need to remove poisonous lead from our drinking water pipes, we need to be sure that the natural gas lines that run into our homes and into our businesses are not leaking harmful methane pollution in the very spaces where we all breathe and live.

As we transition towards a 100-percent clean energy future, a future without pollution, we must do all that we can to mitigate the harmful pollution caused by our current use of fossil fuels, and that is exactly what these rules are designed to do.

As President Biden demonstrated just last week when he convened leaders from around the globe, Americans are ready for us to move past former President Trump's backward and reckless vision on climate. Restoring and strengthening methane standards at the EPA will be one of the most powerful steps we can all take here in this Senate today to confront the existential threat posed by greenhouse pollution and a warming planet, and it will make the air over all of our communities cleaner and healthier and easier to breathe.

For all of these reasons, I would encourage once again not just a few of my colleagues but all of our colleagues to join us in voting for this bipartisan resolution to restore some common-sense and some responsible Federal standards for the waste and leakage of methane.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LUJÁN). The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

The Republican whip.

BIDEN ADMINISTRATION

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, this evening President Biden will deliver his first address to Congress. I have been asked, I think as most Members have, by the media: What do you expect to hear? What do you want to hear?

Honestly, I am interested to hear the direction the President will set in his speech. The President's inaugural address leaned heavily into the theme of unity and bipartisanship, but unity and bipartisanship have not been a distin-

guishing feature of the Biden Presidency.

The President's first major bill, a COVID relief bill, broke the streak of bipartisanship on COVID legislation—a streak that goes back to March of last year. Since that time, when we were the majority, we passed five bills, all of them with big bipartisan majorities. Under President Biden, Democrats shoved through a totally partisan bill filled with non-COVID-related liberal priorities.

Republicans were more than ready to work with Democrats on additional coronavirus legislation. In fact, 10 Republicans developed a COVID proposal and then met with President Biden to discuss it. But Democrats and the President were having none of it. It was "their way or the highway" on COVID legislation. No bipartisanship. No compromise. It was, support the Democrats' bill and its wasteful spending on non-COVID-related priorities or be left out of the discussion. As I pointed out, only about 10 percent—10 percent—of that "COVID bill" was actually COVID related.

It was a deeply disappointing start to the Biden Presidency and a betrayal of the unity that President Biden had pledged himself to in his inauguration address.

Unfortunately, the Biden Presidency has mostly continued along in the same partisan fashion. The President promised to be a President for the whole people yet seems more focused on making sure that he is the President for the far left. You don't have to take my word for it. One of the leading voices of the far left in this Congress recently stated that President Biden had exceeded—not met; exceeded—progressives' expectations.

Between Democrats and the White House, the first 3 months of the Biden Presidency have been a long stream of policies and proposals that seem to have come right from the progressives' playbook—proposals for tax hikes and more tax hikes and still more tax hikes to pay for new government programs like the President's Green New Deal-esque Civilian Climate Corps; a sharp retreat from border security, with a huge crisis going on at the border as a result; a bill that would place unprecedented restrictions on the free exercise of religion in the name of equality; legislation to dramatically revise our electoral system to ensure Democrats' hold on power. The list goes on.

Once an ardent defender of America's core institutions, the President recently established a commission to explore the idea of court-packing—perhaps the most outrageously partisan and political proposal we have seen in this century.

From the way Democrats are behaving, you would think that the American people had elected overwhelming Democratic majorities and a President with a reputation as a strong leftist. Of course, that isn't close to being the case. We all know that. Democrats

have a razor-thin majority in the Senate and an almost equally thin majority in the House of Representatives, where they lost a substantial number of seats. As for the Presidency, while certainly a Democrat won the election, it is worth noting that the only candidate who could win the Democratic primary was a man historically regarded as a moderate. That is right. Even among primary Democratic voters, the Democrats' far-left liberal candidates did not fare so well.

If there was any mandate in the election, it was a mandate for moderation, for compromise. Yet the President and Democrats are behaving as if they had been delivered a mandate for a partisan revolution.

There has been one encouraging thing lately, and that is the fact that President Biden seems to actually be considering pursuing bipartisanship on an infrastructure package. He has had multiple meetings on infrastructure with Republican Members of Congress, and while I am still waiting to see just how committed the Democrats are to achieving a bipartisan result, I am encouraged that the President is at least talking to the Republican Members.

A bipartisan infrastructure proposal should be a slam dunk. Congress has a history of bipartisan collaboration on infrastructure legislation. In fact, our last major infrastructure bill, the FAST Act, received strong support from both Democrats and Republicans and was a remarkably successful bill.

As chairman of the Commerce Committee, I helped to spearhead a bipartisan reauthorization of the FAA, including of critical programs to improve airport infrastructure, and last Congress, the Environment and Public Works Committee developed major bipartisan infrastructure legislation.

There is no good reason that we shouldn't reach bipartisan agreement on another substantial infrastructure bill, but it will require a commitment from the Democrats and the President to real bipartisan work and a recognition that bipartisanship involves compromise and that no one side is going to get everything its Members want.

Bipartisanship is not the Democrats inviting the Republicans to support the Democrats' ideal bill. Bipartisanship is sitting down at the table, identifying what we agree on, and then working out a solution to our differences that involves both sides accepting compromises.

I hope that, tonight, the President will go beyond empty talk about bipartisanship and make an actual, concrete commitment to achieve bipartisan results, starting with infrastructure legislation. I hope, although I do not really expect, that he will move away from the policies and partisan priorities of the far left and toward a more moderate vision, more in keeping with the bringing together of Americans that he spoke of in his inaugural address.

Ultimately, what matters the most is not what the President will say tonight

but what he will do in the days and weeks to come. Will he finally deliver on that promise of unity that he spoke of in his inaugural address or will he continue to pursue the partisan path that progressives have laid out for him? For the sake of our country, I hope he chooses bipartisanship.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. OSSOFF). The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

S.J. RES. 14

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. President, I rise in opposition to the resolution of disapproval on the Trump EPA's methane policy rule.

This resolution we have in front of us today is nothing more than political posturing, I believe. Ironically, the Democrats are targeting natural gas for blame when methane emissions have actually fallen. According to EPA data, natural gas systems in the United States reduced their overall methane emissions by nearly 16 percent between 1990 and 2019. It is widely recognized that the shale gas boom led to significant greenhouse gas emissions reductions across our power sector.

Some climate change advocates, including those in Washington, want to ban oil and gas production and use, and they oppose the maintenance and expansion of our pipelines in this country. The CRA is part of that effort, I believe.

The CRA is part of a plan to double down on an industry that the Biden administration—obviously, from the day the President took office—does not support. Just yesterday, the Biden administration's Office of Management and Budget issued a Statement of Administration Policy on the resolution we are considering today. The statement does not hide the disdain that the administration has toward the oil and gas sector. The statement presents a laundry list of alleged harms to Americans from the oil and gas industry and none of the benefits. It doesn't mention that, as our natural gas production and use have gone up, our country's overall greenhouse gas emissions have gone down. It does not talk about the wage gap between natural gas sector jobs and so-called green jobs.

As POLITICO reported this week, "The median wage for solar workers is \$24.48 an hour compared with \$30.33 for those employed by the natural gas sector, which amounts to a roughly \$12,000 annual wage gap."

In yesterday's statement, the administration showed its cards for its next step. The passage of this resolution would lay the groundwork for a planned regulatory war on oil and gas.

According to the administration, today's resolution "clear[s] the pathway

for EPA to evaluate opportunities to promulgate even stronger standards under section 111 of the Clean Air Act to address dangerous methane and other pollution from both new and existing sources across the oil and gas sector."

That is right. They want to come forward with even stronger clean air regulations on the sector than the Obama administration did. But before even starting a rulemaking to ask for public comments, the Biden administration has made up its mind to regulate much more aggressively. I guess I am not really surprised. Now it is time; it is just waiting to identify the best opportunities to do so.

We shouldn't demonize an industry that is part of the lifeblood of our economy. We should celebrate the emission-reduction accomplishments and look for ways to further incentivize those. Let's focus on solutions that address our climate challenges without destroying the economic engines of growth, solutions that don't pick winners and losers.

The market is pushing industry to lower its methane emissions. And for those still flaring gas, one way to reduce flaring is to build out our pipeline infrastructure so they can get the gas—the very commodity they are trying to produce and sell—to the market.

So let's come up with solutions that actually help protect our planet and don't overregulate industry for political points, solutions like improving the environmental review and permitting processes so that we can complete these pipeline projects more efficiently and cleaner.

I urge my colleagues to vote against the resolution, and I urge my colleagues to focus on real, unifying solutions.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

WORKERS MEMORIAL DAY

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, today is Workers Memorial Day, when we remember all of the workers in our Nation who have been killed, who have been injured, or who became sick on the job. On this day, we reflect upon the losses these workers and their families have suffered, and we also—and I believe we must—recommit ourselves to ensuring that every worker in America is safe on the job.

On a day like today, I am remembering Pennsylvania workers—not only the workers of today and the challenges they face in the workplace and the challenges their families still face, especially in the grip of and, we hope, ultimately in the aftermath of a terrible pandemic, but we are also, of course, remembering those who came before them, generations of workers in a State like Pennsylvania, folks who built this country, made this country run, and helped us win World War II, not to mention other battles, economic and otherwise.

So we are remembering those stories. I am also remembering, of course, on a

day like today a lot of stories from my home area. I live in northeastern Pennsylvania. I live in Scranton, PA, which at one time was the anthracite coal capital of the world, that region was. Every family, every community seemed to have a story about one of their loved ones—sometimes a grandfather or a great grandfather or an uncle or a grandmother or some relative—and how they struggled in those days.

One story is not, unfortunately, atypical. This is a story about an 11-year-old boy working in the anthracite coal mines.

In those days, in order to pull the coal out of the coal mine, you had to fill a coal car with coal, but it had to be pulled out of the mines by a mule. I am talking about the early 1900s.

In this case, this 11-year-old boy—and, of course, it was permissible in those days to allow someone that young to work in a coal mine—this young kid reached down to get the straps that connected the mule to the coal car, and then, when he was bending down to pick up one of those leather straps, the rear hooves of the mule kicked him square in the face.

Here is the description of what happened after that mule kicked the 11-year-old, and I am reading from an account:

[The] kick hurled him over a loaded five-foot-high coal car and into the wall of the mine—the "face" of the mine, as the miners would say.

The 11-year-old had his nose smashed.

He had an open wound from his forehead across his eyebrow, down his nose, through his lip, and into his chin.

No ambulance was called. No paramedics came to save him. Work didn't even stop.

Then the account goes on to talk about how the mine boss had another young kid walk this 11-year-old out of the mine, taking the child home—a long, perilous journey home.

Once he finally made it home, [the 11 year old's] mother called a doctor and they laid him on the dining room table, where the doctor sewed the long gouge in his face back together. There were no benefits—no worker's compensation, no safety net in place to take care of the adult worker, much less an injured child.

That is, unfortunately, an account that was all too common in those days. Much has changed, fortunately, but, candidly, not enough.

We mark today the 50th anniversary of the Occupational Safety and Health Act going into effect. It just happens to be today. This is a landmark achievement in the fight to guarantee every worker a safe workplace. It was passed because of the tireless efforts of workers and unions that stood up for their fellow working men and women and demanded government action that led to the so-called OSHA Act. There remains, of course, much work to be done to protect our workers.

Let's turn to the pandemic and our workers.

The COVID-19 pandemic has made clearer than ever the need for action to

strengthen workplace protections, ensure workers can stand up and advocate for safe workplaces.

The virus has touched every workplace in the country, presenting a new threat to workers' health on the job unlike any we have seen in our lifetimes.

Throughout the pandemic, millions of workers have been at risk—at risk of contracting the virus as they did their work, having to worry every day when they headed home about their health and, of course, the health of their families.

The death toll from this virus, this pandemic, is staggering. More than 570,000 Americans are dead; more than 26,000 in Pennsylvania. These, of course, were mothers and fathers and grandmothers and grandfathers, sisters and brothers, neighbors and friends.

The disproportionate effect on people of color is also staggering—those who are widely represented in the essential workforces that have continued to go to work every day throughout the pandemic. This disproportionate impact on people of color has been especially disturbing and devastating.

The toll never should have been this high, and workers never should have had to face the risk they faced every day during the pandemic.

To honor all of these workers and their families, we must continue to take action to protect them on the job and ensure that workers are never left as vulnerable as they were in the pandemic.

Now, we have made some steps—taken some steps recently. The American Rescue Plan, passed by Congress and signed into law by President Biden, has already been critical to helping protect workers from COVID-19. The rescue plan provided billions to help get Americans the vaccines they need and to ensure that frontline workers receive the supplies and personal protective equipment they need to stay safe on the job. It also included \$100 million for OSHA to protect workers on the job. So we can celebrate that on this celebration of Workers Memorial Day. This \$100 million in funding is essential to help defeat the pandemic but also, in the process, to keep workers safe.

We must ensure that policies are in place to strengthen our workplace safety laws and also to strengthen enforcement.

We must ensure that the highest standards—the highest standards—which are informed by recent science, exist to protect workers from all threats to their health, whether it is exposure to COVID-19 in a grocery store or silica dust in a coal mine.

We must strengthen workers' ability, of course, to organize and bargain collectively by passing the PRO Act, the Protecting the Right to Organize Act. The PRO Act would ensure workers have a voice on the job and are able to advocate for safe working conditions.

We must ensure that OSHA, the Occupational Safety and Health Adminis-

tration, and its sister Agency, MSHA, the Mine Safety and Health Administration, have the authority, the resources, and the personnel they need to protect workers every day of every year.

Our Nation's workforce has done heroic work throughout this pandemic. One part of that workforce that has done both essential and heroic work over the past year is our Nation's home- and community-based services workforce, often not talked about in the debates here in Congress.

These workers are the backbone of our caregiving infrastructure, and we know that as part of the rescue plan, President Biden—I am sorry—as part of the American Jobs Plan the President has proposed and we have not yet passed, but we are working on it, President Biden has called for a \$400 billion investment to be directed to invest in seniors and people with disabilities and to support this vital and undervalued workforce.

This great American idea to develop the best caregiving workforce in the world—not one of the best, not second or third, the best workforce in the world—to care for and to provide support and services to people with disabilities and seniors—this great American idea is an idea that is focused on that workforce, which is a workforce primarily of women of color making only \$12 an hour.

We can't say that we have the best caregiving workforce in the world if we are not going to invest in that workforce and lift them up. The American people want this to happen. This is overwhelmingly popular. More than 70 percent of the American people want us to make this investment in home- and community-based services, thereby lifting up that workforce so that we can provide better care for people with disabilities and seniors so they can not only survive but also thrive.

Making this investment is a vital part of raising standards and working conditions for this essential workforce and for all workers.

Let me conclude with this, the story of the 11-year-old boy kicked in the face in the anthracite coal mines of northeastern Pennsylvania. That 11-year-old was my grandfather. His name was Alphonsus Liguori Casey, and he, like a lot of young kids, started in the coal mines at that age, at the age of 11, between—worked in the mines between 1905 and 1910. Of course, when he worked in the mines, there were no protections—virtually none, even for a child. Thank goodness we have made a lot of progress since then, but we still have a long way to go to make sure that all workers in all workforces are protected in their workplace.

We also have to make sure we are making the appropriate investments in them to call ourselves the greatest country in the world. We can't say we are the greatest country in the world if we are paying people \$11 or \$12 an hour to do the important work they have to

do every day and want to do. It is a high calling to care for people with disabilities and seniors.

So just like that 11-year-old boy and so many like him in those days, we have to make sure that today's workforce is the subject of our protection, is the subject of our attention, and is the subject of our investment. Let's lift them up so that we have the best workforce in the world and the safest workplaces, not only on Workers Memorial Day but every day.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

S.J. RES. 14

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I am here to speak on the upcoming methane Congressional Review Act matter and speak in support of overturning the Trump misrule regarding the problem of methane emissions.

Let's just start by setting the stage that about one-quarter of the global warming that we have experienced has been due to methane and about one-third of that is due to the activities of the oil and gas industry. So this is a very significant part of our climate problem—I should say our climate and oceans problem—and we don't actually know how bad it is.

The Environmental Defense Fund has recently estimated that methane emissions from oil and natural gas operations could be as much as 60 percent higher than previous estimates. So it is a significant part of the problem.

One of the reasons we don't know how bad the problem is, is because of the way the oil and gas industry has behaved about reporting its methane problem. Now, just to understand, what the natural gas industry would like to tell you is that natural gas is a far cleaner fuel, far safer from a climate perspective, than coal or than oil—bunker oil or whatever else you want to burn. And it is true that once natural gas has been burned at the burner tip, it is less harmful. But what the natural gas industry wants you to forget is everything between the well and the burner tip because through that enormous web of piping occurs so much leakage that satellites flying overhead can pick up the pools of methane floating in our atmosphere from the leakage. The natural gas industry doesn't want to talk about that.

One of the things that they did is they got the Trump administration to, early on, withdraw EPA's request that in the previous administration the industries more or less agreed to that would have required oil and gas companies to report on their methane emissions. When the fossil fuel apparatchiks occupied in the Trump

administration the offices at EPA, Energy, and Interior, and other places important to the industry, they did what the industry wanted, and the very first thing, March 2, 2017, was to withdraw the request that would have had oil and gas companies report how bad their methane leakage actually was.

It didn't take long to follow that up on March 28, with an Executive order from Trump directing EPA to suspend or rescind existing methane regulations for the oil and gas industry.

But that wasn't enough for the oil and gas industry. On April 19, they got EPA to postpone implementation of a rule that would have required them to equip new wells with equipment to prevent methane leaks. You wouldn't think that would be asking too much, particularly from an industry that wants to tell everybody that it is better for the climate and the environment than the rest of the fossil fuel industry. But no, they asked EPA to undo that requirement so they could more readily leak methane from new wells.

Even that wasn't enough. In May of 2017, they got the Department of the Interior to suspend a rule that would have required oil and gas companies to curb the flaring of methane from their oil and gas wells on public lands.

And then again, September 11, 2018, they got EPA to propose a rule to weaken the methane leak detection and repair requirements for their new wells—weaken the detection and repair requirements for methane leakage from their own wells.

Then they proposed a second rule to eliminate EPA's regulatory authority over methane emissions from oil and gas facilities. That is getting a little bit out there because methane is a greenhouse gas regulable as a pollutant by the EPA, and it also has a whole lot of unfortunate characteristics for people who have to breathe it in entirely apart from the climate harm and damage it does. But that is what the oil and gas industry wanted the EPA to do, to eliminate its regulatory authority over methane emissions.

Then, more recently, on August 13, 2020, they got EPA to promulgate a rule to eliminate that rule—to eliminate that regulatory authority over methane emissions from oil and gas facilities.

This is dirty conduct by an industry, to take advantage of its ability to plant industry operatives in positions of public responsibility in order to leak more methane, put less equipment in place to protect against methane leakage, and reduce its requirements even to report on the methane leakage that is going on. That is not responsible corporate conduct. These rules are a disgrace. The CRA should pass, and we should get on to taking on this problem of methane.

I will close by pointing out that I have a bill that would do quite a lot to solve this problem. One of the problems in this whole enterprise of pollution is

that, when it is free to pollute, people will pollute. If corporations view themselves as having only an obligation to their shareholders and only an obligation to their shareholders that is denominated in dollars, why would they ever spend any money at all to protect against pollution, unless they were required to or unless it had a cost?

We know it actually has a cost. People suffer from pollution; that is a cost. Our oceans are acidifying because of carbon dioxide pollution; that is a cost. People lose their homes in wildfires that didn't used to happen; that is a cost. My State has to plan to lose its current map to sea level rise and to lose precious shorefront land; that is a cost. These are real costs. The industry just doesn't want to pay them. They want a free ride on everybody else's suffering, and one way to solve that is to put a price on the pollution.

And, by the way, this is not a liberal, Democratic environmental agenda. This is economics 101. Milton Friedman, for Pete's sake, said that if you want to have an economic system that works, you have to put what he called "negative externalities," the bad things that happen that hurt other people. You have to put the cost of that into the product. Otherwise, you don't have a market system. You have a subsidy system. You are picking winners and losers.

As much as my colleagues on the other side like to say that they don't like subsidies and they don't want to see government picking winners and losers, when it is the fossil fuel industry that gets subsidized, when it is the fossil fuel industry that is the winner, they can't line up fast enough to subsidize and pick winners and losers.

So we are going to have to work pretty hard to solve this problem because we have some real hazards in front of us. What my bill would do is to measure the thing that they didn't want to do—measure methane emissions from oil and gas production. As I said, new developments in satellite technology means that we don't have to depend on them any longer. We can actually do a lot of this measuring. We can check their measuring. We can, to use Reagan's phrase, "trust but verify" what they are reporting with a whole lot of other data that we can pull together.

So get the data. How much are they leaking? Figure it out basin by basin because that is where it really happens. It happens in these pools that emerge from the basins from all of the leakage. And then put a price on it.

It is not hard to do. There is a social cost of carbon that President Obama proposed. President Biden has put it back in at the previous level, while they get to work on figuring out what updates there should be to it. We have a social cost of carbon. You can quantify the methane harm and compare it to the carbon harm. You can make an equivalency between those two and you can determine what the social cost of methane leakage should be. It is really not all that complicated.

We would start it in 2023, so that the industry, which has been so reprehensible in its leakage, in its influence over EPA, and in its influence in the Trump administration—we are actually giving them a chance to clean up their act and do what they should have done all along. So it would begin in 2023, and it would cost them \$1,800 per ton of leaked methane.

You leak it; you pay for it. It is not that complicated. When I was growing up, we had a pretty simple rule in my family: You spill it; you clean it up. I don't know why that is suddenly not an appropriate rule when the company and the industry gets big enough and has enough political power and dark money to be pulling strings around here. That ought to be the rule. You spill it; you clean it up. You leak the methane; you pay for it.

So I hope that we can get that methane factor passed into law, as well, because we know perfectly well that this is not an industry that is going to pursue the public interest if it is not required to. We saw that in the Trump administration. We saw it on March 2, 2017. We saw it on March 28, 2017. We saw it on April 19, 2017. We saw it on May 10, 2017. We saw it on September 11, 2018, on August 28, 2019, and on August 13, 2020. Over and over and over again, they hurt the public by using their clout over the regulatory Agency of this country to their own benefit.

You can't count on them to take care of this on their own. They just won't. They have proven that. That is not a contested fact any longer. We gave them the chance to clean up their act without this kind of requirement, and they totally failed. In fact, they spent all their energy trying to degrade the regulatory authority that kept them trying to clean up methane.

Let's solve this problem. Methane is a real problem. There is a lot of it changing our climate. The climate situation has become an emergency. Methane is easily preventable from leaking. And, by the way, here is the added bonus: It gives a lot of people jobs. There is a lot of work that we can do to reclaim the damage that the fossil fuel industry has caused. Cleaning up the wells, cleaning up the mines, cleaning up the piping—those are all real jobs.

So let's get after it. Let's start with the CRA. Let's go on to a proper methane fee to put the leaking out of business and on from there.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

S.J. RES. 14

MR. KING. Mr. President, later today we will have one of the most consequential votes we have had in this

body in years, perhaps the most consequential vote in terms of our climate and the risk that climate change imposes on all of us here in America and across the world. It is a pretty straightforward vote, although it is an interesting procedural problem.

The vote is a Congressional Review Act vote to repeal the repeal of the regulation on the release of methane from oil and gas, both drilling and transportation. A repeal of a repeal is the legislative equivalent of a double negative, and, of course, we all know a double negative produces a positive, and that is exactly what will happen in this case.

Some years ago, regulations were imposed upon the oil and gas industry to control the escape of methane from drilling operations. This isn't about natural gas or oil; this is about fugitive gases that escape into the atmosphere as part of the drilling process or the transportation process.

The problem is that methane is the nuclear weapon of climate change. Methane is 80 times as dangerous as CO₂ in the atmosphere, in terms of capturing heat and contributing to climate change—80 times; not 80 percent more, not 8 times more, 80 times more.

Now, the good news is methane only persists in the atmosphere for about 20 years; CO₂, unfortunately, over 100 years. So because of its short residence time and its high potency, removing it now will have immediate and substantial effects on the overall amount of greenhouse gas that is in our atmosphere.

There is nothing we can do in the short run to deal with climate change that is more significant than the vote that will take place on this floor in a few hours. This is probably, as I said at the beginning, one of the most important votes that we will have in this Chamber in order to forestall and slow the climate catastrophe that everyone acknowledges is headed toward us—whether it is wildfires, whether it is changes in ocean temperature that affect sea life, whether it is hurricanes, whether it is pure temperature.

Let me talk a bit about climate change as a national security issue. I serve on the Armed Services and Intelligence Committees. It is a national security issue for a number of reasons. One is sort of dollars and cents. It affects our military facilities around the world that are going to be affected by rising sea levels. We are going to have to spend billions of dollars in order to shore up those facilities. So that is just kind of nuts and bolts, dollars and cents.

But the part that really worries me is migration. We all know about the migrants from Syria, from the Syrian civil war. I don't know the exact number—maybe 4 or 5 million. But those migrants upset the political system of all of Europe and created a major political crisis.

The estimate for climate migrants because of the inhospitality of the cli-

mate in the band around the central part of the Earth is in the hundreds of millions—between 100 and 200 million climate migrants who are escaping a place that they can't live in anymore because of drought, because of famine, because of a lack of drinking water, or just because of high temperatures.

Humans aren't evolved to live in places that are at 130 degrees of heat. So people are going to be on the move. Think of the disruption caused by the immigration or the migration from Syria and multiply that by 10, 20, 30, 40 times. That is what we are talking about, and that kind of pressure and famine and drought and all of those things throughout history are what have caused wars.

It is a threat multiplier. It is a threat creator. It is, in fact, a national security issue. This isn't about just being concerned about whether we will have more warm days in April. This is a national security issue, and it is of worldwide import.

Now, why is this vote today important if it is a worldwide issue? I have had people say to me: Angus, why are we going through all this? Why are we going to cost ourselves any money when it is just as big a problem coming from China or India?

We can shut down all of our businesses in Maine, and we are still not going to be able to solve this problem, nor could we if we did it in the United States. Molecules of methane or CO₂ don't care about borders. They go around the world, and they are causing this problem to happen around the world.

But, yes, this vote today is important because it is a signal to the rest of the world that we are serious about this problem. A negative vote today is a signal to the rest of the world that we don't care, and the rest of the world is going to be paying attention.

This is a global problem. It is going to take solutions from every country and particularly from the larger emitting countries, like the United States, like China, like India. But we have to show that we are willing to do it here, if we are going to ask other people to make these kinds of steps in their country. And that is why I think this vote has international implications as well as national.

Now, what about the cost? Are we imposing some enormous cost, or are we talking about new technology? No, this is a relatively cheap way to get a major improvement in the emission of greenhouse gases.

We are not talking about carbon capture, which is very important, but we are a ways away from cost-effective carbon capture technology, and the costs are still very high. This is of relatively low cost.

Regulating methane emissions from oil and gas production is the right thing to do for our climate and the air quality of communities across the country.

I couldn't have said it better myself, but I am reading someone else's words.

It's widely acknowledged that methane is a highly potent greenhouse gas with a global warming potential 80 times greater than CO₂. Beyond the long-term impacts related to climate change, methane emissions also have implications for local air quality. We owe it to the communities where we live and work to reduce these emissions.

Who said that? ANGUS KING didn't say that. Shell Oil said that. Many, if not most, of the major producers of oil and gas in this country are supporting this vote today. This is not a vote where fossil fuel is on one side and the environmental community is on the other. No, this is a broad coalition of people worried about health, of people worried about the environment, of people worried about climate change, and also people in the industry who are worried about the effects of this on their industry if we don't take care of this.

And here is very interesting data. We all know that different technologies have different impacts on the environment, and these bars are the emission levels per unit of energy produced of various alternatives: air pumps, wood pellets, natural gas, propane, heating oil, coal. These are all in use in the United States.

We have substantially lowered our emission of greenhouse gases because of the conversion from coal and oil to natural gas, and that hasn't been caused by regulation or by the dead hand of government. That is because of the market, because of the enormous production of natural gas in this country.

Now, here is the problem—and I have always thought of natural gas as a transition fuel. Sixty percent of our electricity in New England comes from natural gas, and, indeed, our CO₂ is down because of that. But here is the problem. See this little black line here? That is the actual emission from natural gas if you count methane.

So the environmental, the climate advantage of natural gas disappears if you count the methane that is released in the production of natural gas. But it is controllable. It is not inevitable. It is not something that is impossible.

There are now technologies to survey pipelines to detect leaks and to prevent them. It is really pretty straightforward. If you have a pipeline that is leaking and is putting methane in the atmosphere that is 80 times as bad as CO₂, let's fix it. And that is all we are talking about today.

We are talking about restoring commonsense regulations on the release of dangerous climate-change-inducing gases, principally, methane. Some of the other things that are released are also dangerous for people living in the area of the well or the pipeline leak.

I am not opposed to the use. I mean, right now, as I say, natural gas is the preferred alternative—and you can see why—except for the methane problem. So let's eliminate that. Let's make the chart look like this. Then, natural gas works. But we have to deal with methane.

This is the low-hanging fruit of climate action. This is an opportunity for this country to make a statement internationally, to make a statement to our people, and to do something about the most serious environmental problem we face.

Every day that goes by, it gets more expensive to deal with. Every day that goes by, it is going to be more difficult for our people, the impacts are going to be more catastrophic, and the impacts are going to be more difficult in terms of what we have to spend to deal with it.

So let's spend relatively little now to eliminate one of the most serious risks. It is not minor. It is a very significant part of the climate issue, and it is one that we can do at a relatively low price, with not a heavy hand of regulation but commonsense regulation. And we can do something important for the American people and, indeed, for the people of the entire world.

This is an important vote this afternoon. I hope it is a resounding vote. It should be. It should be a resounding vote to say to the world and to say to the people of this country: We are on your side. We understand there is a problem heading for us, and we are going to act to deal with it.

This is our responsibility. It is why we are here, and we have the capability to do this starting today.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I think I will get done before, but, in case, I ask unanimous consent to be able to finish my statement before the vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

NOMINATION OF SAMANTHA POWER

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I rise today to express my support for the nomination of Ambassador Samantha Power to be our next Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development.

Ambassador Power's qualifications for this position are beyond dispute. Her lifelong commitment to protecting human rights and preventing global atrocities, combined with the foreign policy experience she gained during the Obama administration, make her impeccably qualified for this role.

I want to highlight, in particular, her leadership on the international effort to end genocide. Our struggle against these horrific crimes is ongoing and unrelenting. Like Ambassador Power, I was proud to see the Biden administration formally recognize the Armenian genocide, a recognition by the U.S. Government that was long overdue.

Ambassador Power's intellect, energy, and focus will be an enormous asset to USAID in the Administration's efforts to end poverty around the world, help victims of conflict, improve food security, and build the kind of resilience that ultimately benefits the

security and prosperity of the American people.

This work is not easy, but it is exactly the sort of work that President Biden described in his inaugural address when he spoke of the United States as "a strong and trusted partner for peace, progress, and security."

It is also the work we must do to confront the immense crises we face around the world. Many of the conflicts Ambassador Power contended with during her time at the United Nations continue today. New conflicts, as we know, are brewing in Ethiopia, Haiti, and Burma, and creating hundreds of thousands of innocent victims and refugees.

Climate change is increasing food insecurity, intensifying natural resource scarcity, and beginning to drive mass migration.

And, of course, the COVID-19 pandemic is an ever-evolving threat, and its proliferation around the world will continue to endanger our public health here at home. As long as there is a COVID-19 virus anywhere, it can be everywhere. We cannot hermetically seal off our Nation. That is why this particular role of USAID is going to be increasingly important.

As we reengage with our partners in the world to meet these challenges, Ambassador Power will play a critical role. I am confident her experience, tenacity, and drive to build a better, more prosperous, peaceful world are exactly what USAID and our country need at this moment.

I urge all of my colleagues to support Ambassador Power's successful confirmation.

With that, I yield the floor.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close the debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 61, Samantha Power, of Massachusetts, to be Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development.

Charles E. Schumer, Mazie Hirono, Ron Wyden, Jack Reed, Benjamin L. Cardin, Patrick J. Leahy, Michael F. Bennet, Tim Kaine, Christopher Murphy, Richard J. Durbin, Christopher A. Coons, Cory A. Booker, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Martin Heinrich, Chris Van Hollen, Sherrod Brown, Edward J. Markey, Bernard Sanders.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it sense of the Senate that Samantha Power, of Massachusetts, to be Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Washington (Ms. CANTWELL) is necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER), the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. PAUL), the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS), and the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SHELBY).

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HICKENLOOPER). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 67, nays 28, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 173 Leg.]

YEAS—67

Baldwin	Heinrich	Reed
Bennet	Hickenlooper	Risch
Blumenthal	Hirono	Romney
Blunt	Johnson	Rosen
Booker	Kaine	Sanders
Brown	Kelly	Sasse
Burr	King	Schatz
Capito	Klobuchar	Schumer
Cardin	Leahy	Shaheen
Carper	Lujan	Sinema
Casey	Manchin	Smith
Collins	Markey	Stabenow
Coons	McConnell	Tester
Cornyn	Menendez	Van Hollen
Cortez Masto	Merkley	Warner
Crapo	Moran	Warnock
Duckworth	Murkowski	Warren
Durbin	Murphy	Whitehouse
Feinstein	Murray	Wicker
Fischer	Ossoff	Wyden
Gillibrand	Padilla	Young
Graham	Peters	
Hassan	Portman	

NAYS—28

Barrasso	Hagerty	Rubio
Blackburn	Hawley	Scott (FL)
Boozman	Hoeven	Scott (SC)
Braun	Hyde-Smith	Sullivan
Cassidy	Inhofe	Thune
Cotton	Kennedy	Tillis
Cruz	Lankford	Toomey
Daines	Lee	Tuberville
Ernst	Lummis	
Grassley	Marshall	

NOT VOTING—5

Cantwell	Paul	Shelby
Cramer	Rounds	

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 67, the nays are 28.

The motion is agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Cloture having been invoked, the Senate will proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Samantha Power, of Massachusetts, to be Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the