

So I am lost in understanding how it is we lose our minds around here about student information being disseminated. It exists. It can be protected.

Let me talk real briefly about another myth that exists, that somehow tracking the student data will lead to a Federal rating system, the Federal rating system of educational programs of institutions.

Well, first, the Department of Education has tried a number of rating systems over there, all with mixed success, at best, and I am trying to be polite. It is late in the evening. Let's not be too blunt. But they failed miserably in doing so. They tried to rate institutions based on cohort default rates, and those are being repealed by many as being inaccurate.

They tried to rate institutions on something called gainful employment, but they only do gainful employment for career schools, because, hey, you know, no one goes to a university for gainful employment. I assure you, my guess is the Speaker did as well, you went to the university hoping for gainful employment. I doubt there is anyone in the room who didn't go to a college or university in hopes of gainful employment.

The reality is the Department of Education, as they have implemented this, has tried to create these Federal rating systems and failed miserably. So I tell you what, we did something unique. The College Transparency Act explicitly prohibits the creation of a single database by the Department of Education and expressly prohibits using that database for a Federal rating system.

I give up. I don't want the Department of Education telling us what a good education system is because look how well they have done so far. We will let consumers decide. We will give them information so they can decide. They can make a wise decision rather than thinking that Big Brother can make that decision for them.

If the government were doing so well with it, why is it that every Member in this room has heard from their employers the terrible shortage we have of people in current technical education, of workers? If they were doing such a great job of ratings and informing people what their opportunities were, why are we currently struggling with the workforce we have?

It is a disaster. Let's stop thinking we can fix it, and let's let consumers have the information they need to fix it.

The bill enables the NCES to aggregate student information from relevant agencies with the responsibility that they had to protect that data, which they have done for years.

So now they are doing—not create some massive Federal database in which everybody's name, Social Security number, is accessible so we can determine whether or not you are a successful student. It doesn't do that, not even close to that, never has. It pro-

vides information on an accurate basis by a program institution of what your likelihood of success is.

Last but not least, I talked a little bit about it, is keeping personal information private, the fears about privacy, and that somehow we can't achieve that under the College Transparency Act.

The College Transparency Act requires that data collection should be led by the National Center for Education Statistics. I apologize. I have been using the abbreviation NCES because it has been burned into my memory over the years. It is a statistical agency with strong protocols for securing data and protecting student privacy. It has an excellent track record for doing so.

They have consulted with the private sector, pretty good folks, about how to continue to work on student privacy in that data. NCES is already required by law to develop and enforce standards to protect individual level data. As added protection, the act requires, the College Transparency Act requires, an institute utilize the latest Federal data security standards developed by the National Institute of Standards and Technology. We require that they implement those on an ongoing basis and they maintain those.

I have to tell you, Mr. Speaker, that is not commonplace in the Federal Government at this point. We are going a step beyond what happens every day in many agencies.

Further, your personal information, Mr. SMUCKER's or anybody else's, will never be available to the Department of Education or to the public. Your employment status will never be available. What will be available is whether all of us who took a program in Michigan State University—come on up, you would love the school, some time—whether or not you graduated, you got a job, and whether you are gainfully employed and making money. Now, wouldn't that be a great idea for the money you put into a college education? All the aggregate information is available on the programs and institutions we are talking about here.

The data developed by the Treasury Department on income and employment, once it is transmitted to NCES, is literally blown up. The file no longer exists. You can't hack what isn't there.

So I would ask, at this point in time, rather than continue to extol the virtues of the College Transparency Act, I would ask all the Members to look at the act. We have a number of cosponsors at this point in time that I am very proud of. It is a bipartisan bill. I would ask them to look at the act, look at what it is achieving, and if they have questions, let's hear those questions, and let's make an effort to move this forward.

We are already well into the decisionmaking process for young people to go to a postsecondary education program next year. It is too late for them to get this information, but, you know

what, we can get it the following year. And the question I would ask is: How long are we going to wait while we are spending \$160 billion in direct student aid alone hoping to get an outcome when we can do better and the ability to do that is at our fingertips?

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

CLIMATE SOLUTIONS CAUCUS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LIPINSKI) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the topic of this Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Illinois?

There was no objection.

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as a member of the Climate Solutions Caucus to speak on the issue of climate change. The caucus is a bipartisan group of members committed to implementing economically viable options to reduce climate risk.

The caucus has a "Noah's Ark" membership rule. Members can only join in pairs, one from each party. Under the leadership of co-chairs Mr. CURBELO and Mr. DEUTCH, the caucus is helping to break the partisan gridlock on this issue and show that promoting climate solutions can be truly bipartisan.

The formation and rapid growth of the Climate Solutions Caucus represents a recognition of both the challenges and opportunities and has demonstrated that there is bipartisan will to take action.

In recognition of the fact that 60 Members of Congress have come together to fight climate change in a bipartisan fashion, I organized this time for my colleagues to join me on the floor to let the American people know what we, as their elected leaders, are doing to address climate change.

We know, from scientific evidence, that our climate is changing. The global average temperature has increased by about 1.4 degrees Fahrenheit over the last 100 years. Sea levels are rising, the ocean is becoming more acidic, precipitation patterns are changing, and heat waves are becoming more frequent and longer in duration.

Each of these changes produces a cascade of effects that impact our lives and livelihoods, including flooding, changes in crop yields, power shortages, declines in fisheries, and increases in cardiovascular disease.

Recent events in our own country, such as devastating hurricanes in the Southeast and wildfires in the West have brought this issue to the forefront of everyone's minds. Now climate

change can't be directly blamed for all these problems, but the evidence strongly suggests that it contributes to each of them, and there are things that we can do to limit its effects.

Climate change also has a significant impact on public health. A groundbreaking study published just this week in a medical journal, *The Lancet*, unequivocally showed that climate change is a serious public health threat. The study involved 24 institutions from around the world and included staggering statistics, such as the fact that air pollution caused 1.9 million premature deaths in Asia in 2015, and that the range of common disease-transmitting mosquitoes increased 9.5 percent since 1950.

We know that high temperatures exacerbate health problems and that burning fossil fuels creates pollution that causes cardiovascular disease. The National Academies estimate that air pollution causes around \$120 billion per year in health-related damages, including healthcare costs, missed days of work and school, and premature death.

We also know that changing climate has altered the range, in some cases accelerated the spread of vector-borne diseases like Zika and the West Nile virus. Responsibly transitioning to a clean energy economy will not only reduce the greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change, but it will also reduce air pollution and help all Americans breathe easier.

What I want to talk about for a few minutes, before I turn to some of my colleagues, is a very common misperception about the relationship between implementing climate solutions and growing jobs.

Some people think that this is a zero-sum game. That is, they think if you have more of one, you get less of the other. But that is simply not true.

Implementing climate solutions can grow jobs, especially new high-paying jobs. The U.S. needs to take advantage of these economic opportunities. Regardless of what we do here in the U.S., the rest of the world has committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and reaching the targets laid out in the Paris Agreement, as have many cities, States, and companies here at home.

To achieve that goal, significant technological development and innovation will be needed, as well as infrastructure, markets, and distribution channels to get that technology to the people and places that need it.

The national economies that produce this clean energy technology will benefit greatly. The U.S. still leads the world in technology and innovation. Countries around the world try to recreate the innovation ethos that exists in Silicon Valley and in other places across our Nation.

The United States also has the workers who are needed to build these innovations. So we have what it takes, and if we seize the opportunity to invest in clean and climate-resilient technologies, then our economy and the

American people will benefit as the world adapts to climate change and America grows good-paying jobs all across our Nation.

But if we let this opportunity pass us by, then profits and jobs will instead flow to foreign countries that develop the technologies the world needs, and American cities and States will be forced to buy foreign products as they upgrade to climate-resilient infrastructure.

□ 2000

That is why I will soon be introducing a bill called Challenges and Prizes for Climate Act. This bill will establish five or more prize challenges overseen by the Department of Energy to harness the ingenuity of the research community in the private sector to solve big, complex climate problems.

Challenges have been used in the past by a wide range of organizations, including the XPRIZE, who used the challenge to jump-start the commercial space transportation industry. This industry is now flourishing.

I was just recently at SpaceX in California and saw their impressive manufacturing facility they have there. The U.S. is now relying on SpaceX in order to bring supplies up to the International Space Station and their plans to soon be flying astronauts. This commercial space transportation industry began with those who reached to try to meet this challenge and get the XPRIZE.

The Federal Trade Commission also used the prize challenge to help bring a robocall blocking service to the market, something that we can all very much appreciate. That is why I am going this direction.

My bill will create challenges that fall under five themes: carbon capture and reuse, energy efficiency, energy storage, climate adaptation and resiliency, and data analytics for better climate predictions.

Using authority from the America COMPETES Act, the Department of Energy will convene working groups from across agencies, universities, non-profits and the private sector to help plan the challenges, and even to contribute to the prizes.

The goal of the challenge is not just to reward the winner of the best solution, but also to bring visibility to the range of innovations competing for the prize and to help society envision the future. This bill will help us see what our clean energy future will look like, and I urge all of my colleagues to support it.

Mr. Speaker, I want to begin hearing from the bipartisan group of climate leaders who have joined me here on the floor this evening.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. FITZPATRICK), my Republican colleague.

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, Mr. LIPINSKI, for his leadership on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, serving as good stewards of our environment is something

that each and every one of us are called to do no matter who we are or where we come from.

It is critical in order to preserve public health. The reality is climate change is real and humans are a contributing factor. Congress must take serious and reasonable steps to combat it.

As an Eagle Scout and a conservationist who grew up in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, I have always been captivated by the natural beauty of our open spaces and wild places. We have it all in Bucks County: preserved farmland, amazing parks, expansive forests, and historic rivers. I believe that with these natural treasures comes a special responsibility to care for and protect our natural resources at the local, State, and Federal level.

Climate change and the irresponsible management of our resources put a strain on the health of our communities and our children. Clean air and clean water are essential to the health, safety, and well-being of the next generation of Americans.

Mr. Speaker, protecting our Nation's open spaces unites us as Americans. That is why I joined 16 other House Republicans on House Resolution 195 to encourage American innovation to improve environmental policy and to protect, conserve, and be good stewards of our environment.

I introduced the Udall-Eisenhower Arctic Wilderness Act, H.R. 1889, with Congressman JARED HUFFMAN from California. This bill designates the 1.5 million-acre land of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge as a component of the National Wilderness Preservation System to protect it from damaging activities like oil and gas drilling.

I have voted to protect the methane rule for stream protections.

The Climate Solutions Caucus will continue to be the group that shows Washington how to forego the political gamesmanship and get to work on ways we can improve our environment, address the realities of climate change, and increase innovation with an eye towards sustainability.

Protecting our environment cannot be partisan, Mr. Speaker. We have to come together to get this done as Americans.

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. FITZPATRICK for his leadership and jumping in, in his firm term here in the House leadership, on coming to solutions on climate change.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. MCNERNEY), my colleague who I have been working with for a number of years here in the House, a very dedicated Member, especially when it comes to issues of science and climate change.

Mr. MCNERNEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. LIPINSKI for his leadership on this.

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk a little bit about climate. We know that climate is changing, and we have seen it.

In California, we had horrific wildfires that claimed 40 lives and destroyed thousands of structures. We have seen hurricanes more frequently, more devastating, and more powerful than ever before. So the effects are there. We see it happening.

Now, the thing that we are faced with is that there is a significant section of people that deny climate change. You can sort of see why they are denying it. I mean, if something is in your interest, you are going to be able to talk yourself into just about anything.

The big benefit of denying climate change is that we can continue to use fossil fuels. If you are a company that uses fossil fuels or produces fossil fuels, yeah, this is what you want. But there are costs of denial, and the costs of denial are clear.

We are seeing weather. We just talked about that. We are seeing health effects. We have seen that both in terms of elevated temperatures, causing people to have heat problems. We are seeing disease vectors moving to the temperate zones from the Equator. We are also going to see significant infrastructure costs, like we see in Puerto Rico now. These are real costs that we are going to pay for the denial of climate change.

Now, what are the benefits of climate change?

Well, there are significant benefits, from my point of view.

First of all, we have been spending American taxpayer dollars to develop technology to fight climate change, or to reduce carbon emissions.

I will tell you a little story about my own career. I was working at a company called U.S. Wind Power. With some amount of taxpayer dollars, we developed the leading technology for wind energy. Of course, what happened was that the funding stopped, tax credits ended, and that technology that we developed with taxpayer dollars went to Europe. They built thousands of windmills in Germany, and they made a lot of money based on that technology that we developed and paid for right in the United States of America.

We also know that renewable energy production creates more jobs than fossil fuel production for the same amount of energy. We are talking about a potential to create millions of jobs in this country. Not only that, but renewable energy has a stable price market feature. Unlike fossil fuels, which have highs and lows over a 10-year cycle, fossil fuels are going to be nice and stable, will be predictable. And businesses love predictability. So I think this is also another very good argument.

Lastly, if we reduce fossil fuels and go to clean energy, we are going to have cleaner air and cleaner water, a healthier environment, and we can reach sustainability. I think the benefits are pretty clear.

So where are we now?

Well, there are still significant resources out there determined to muddy

the waters and confuse people about climate change. I have three publications here I want to illustrate. One is called "Clexit for a Brighter Future." Now, the point of this is that we need to exit the Paris and United States climate treaties because fossil fuels are what we need to power the future.

Another one is called "The Mad, Mad, Mad World of Climatism." This one, if you look it up, is biased, and it seems to be paid for by oil interests.

The last one I want to show is a respected magazine that is called National Geographic. And the cover page shows "The War on Science."

So I think we have a pretty good case to make for moving forward with action on climate change.

There will be significant costs if we don't. Renewable energy is more than cost competitive these days. As I mentioned, I worked in the wind energy business. We see wind and solar being more cost competitive—more than cost competitive, really—with coal and oil for energy production.

So we have the technology, we have the means, and we have the desire to do this, yet we are still hung up here in Washington in terms of following through with government support that is needed with the right sort of policies that will encourage us to reduce fossil fuel reduction.

Now, one of the great bright spots we see—as Mr. LIPINSKI, my friend from Illinois, pointed out—is that there is a bipartisan Climate Solutions Caucus that has been formed over the last two terms. In order to join, you have to have a Member of the other party. If I am a Democrat, I have a Member of the Republican Party join.

What we are doing in that caucus is creating legislation that will help reduce carbon emissions in an economic and prosperous way. I think good things have a potential to happen. I encourage the caucus to continue, and I hope it continues to grow.

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. MCNERNEY for all the work that he does on this issue and many other issues here in the House.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to go back to the other side of the aisle. I yield to the gentleman from New York (Mr. FASO).

Mr. FASO. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman LIPINSKI, my friend from Illinois, for holding this Special Order this evening, to highlight the important work being done by the Climate Solutions Caucus, to develop economically viable solutions to address climate change.

Mr. Speaker, changing weather patterns and extreme weather events threaten nearly every aspect of New York State's economy, including our agricultural and outdoor recreational sectors. The recreational economy alone generates \$42 billion in consumer spending each year, while supporting over 300,000 Empire State jobs. As we work to address climate change in a bipartisan manner, we must employ a va-

riety of techniques that both mitigate impacts and support economic growth.

I am currently working with my Agriculture Committee colleagues on conservation legislation for the next farm bill that will provide important data points on conservation programs and outcomes, allowing legislators and regulators to most efficiently use taxpayer dollars to achieve real conservation results for our farms. These incentive programs support farming practices that, among other benefits, like increasing yield, lowering the amount of fertilizers that are employed, pull carbon from the air and sequester it in the soil.

In addition to sequestering carbon in the soil. We can also work to reduce emissions through greater efficiency in the transportation sector. Indeed, the transportation sector is one area where CO₂ emissions have risen in the last 20 years, unlike, for instance, the electric generation sector.

One easy fix would be to modernize the air traffic control system to fly planes on more direct satellite guided routes because direct routes save fuel. When Canada switched to a modern air traffic control system, the national fleet was able to reduce emissions in that nation by millions of tons per year.

These commonsense changes are great steps forward in combating climate change, but our work is far from over. We must address the real impacts of man-made climate change and emphasize the need to develop and create jobs with a goal of protecting our environment. It is critical that we work together to develop smart solutions that will conserve our natural resources and protect our communities and infrastructure for future generations.

Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to be a member of the Climate Solutions Caucus, and I look forward to working with my colleagues. I, particularly, want to applaud our distinguished friend from Illinois, Mr. LIPINSKI, for organizing this Special Order tonight on a bipartisan basis so that we can address this issue and allow the folks at home and all around the United States to better understand the work that is being done here in Congress on a bipartisan basis to address climate change.

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. FASO for his work, understanding that we are only going to make progress on this through bipartisan action. I am very happy to join working with him on the Climate Solutions Caucus to bring that action forward.

Mr. Speaker, my next speaker is a woman who I work with on the Science, Space, and Technology Committee, who has done some fantastic work on that committee, especially when it comes to the issue of climate change and dealing with climate change.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Oregon (Ms. BONAMICI).

□ 2015

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. LIPINSKI for yielding and also for

organizing this Special Order for the Climate Solutions Caucus. I also want to thank the founders of the Climate Solutions Caucus, Congressman TED DEUTCH from Florida and Congressman CARLOS CURBELO also from Florida, where they can see at their doorstep what issues like sea level rise mean to their communities.

Mr. Speaker, I am really pleased to join with my colleagues from the bipartisan Climate Solutions Caucus this evening to highlight the importance of taking action on climate change, something that matters so much to my constituents at home in Oregon, but also to the country and to the planet.

This is an important issue that really is a moral imperative. This is about preserving our natural resources for our children, our grandchildren, and for generations to come. Addressing climate change is also vital to our Nation's economy, as we have had some discussion about that this evening, and also to national security, but, really, the health of the planet.

Now, the district I am honored to represent out in Oregon is breathtakingly beautiful, and it is really full of potential. The majestic Columbia River is the northern boundary of the district, and the rugged Pacific Ocean is on the western boundary. It has a thriving outdoor recreation economy. As my colleague from New York mentioned, that is an important sector that cares a lot about the changing climate.

I also have in my district the heart of Oregon wine country. People in my district fish. They fish in our rivers, our lakes, and our ocean. They hike in our forests. They ski in our back country and on our mountains. We rely on those natural resources in our backyard to support a significant part of our economy, but we are very vulnerable to the effects of climate change.

My constituents are already experiencing challenges: Our wine and agricultural industries are concerned about drought as global temperatures continue to rise. Coastal communities are worried about the vitality of the commercial fishing and shellfish industries as high levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere change ocean chemistry.

I was really thrilled that we had an Oregonian from Oregon State University come to the Climate Solutions Caucus and talk about adapting to ocean acidification.

Our region has faced higher spring and summer temperatures and earlier snowmelt, and, as a result, a snowboard shop in my district is now selling more skateboards and fewer snowboards.

Climate change is not a partisan issue. Nationwide, fishers, farmers, small-business owners, and our servicemen and -women are changing the way they do their jobs because of climate change, regardless of political affiliation.

The economic, health, and environmental consequences of climate change

are well known, and our understanding about how to address climate change continues to improve.

People in the United States and around the world are facing threats from rising sea levels, from ocean acidification, from more frequent and severe weather events from record droughts and flooding and rising global temperatures. We can no longer sit back and debate whether we should take action. The time is now. It is critical that we support scientific research about the climate and that we build on, rather than break down, decades' worth of progress on this issue.

Now, one important area of research is the connection between extreme weather events and climate change. Although it is not possible to say that climate change causes one particular extreme weather event, it is critical that we know more about climate change and how it increases the frequency and the severity of these events. Learning more about this correlation can help families, communities, and businesses make informed choices and adopt climate strategies.

Now, this year has seen poignant example after example with so many devastating extreme weather events. We need to do everything we can to make sure our communities are prepared to keep families safe.

We have had wildfires in the Western United States for a long time, but since the mid-1980s, they have been increasing in frequency and in duration, threatening lives, threatening public health and property. It has been unusually hot and very dry in the Northwest.

Fires and severe smoke create dangerous conditions for all populations. In Portland, Oregon, on Labor Day, the sky was gray, full of smoke from wildfire. This is especially problematic for pregnant women, for seniors, for children, for anyone with chronic health conditions like asthma. Residents and communities miles away from the wildfires saw ash falling on their homes, their cars, and throughout their neighborhoods.

This year's hurricanes have devastated communities, of course, across Texas, across the Southeast, and in the U.S. islands. About 70 percent of our fellow citizens in Puerto Rico are still without power.

These storms are increasing in frequency and severity, and lives are being lost every year.

Mr. Speaker, it is so important that we take action, and that is why I am so pleased to be here today to help highlight the importance of this issue.

As Representative LIPINSKI noted and others have, Mr. MCNERNEY and others, we can take action to address climate change and grow the economy. It is not an excuse to say this will be bad for the economy, because we can grow those renewable energy industries. There is so much potential in wind power, wave energy, solar energy. Those are good, high-paying, family-wage jobs. We can grow those economies and address climate change at the same time.

Mr. Speaker, addressing climate change is going to save lives; it is going to save property. I am so pleased to be part of this bipartisan group that is working together in equal number of Democrats and Republicans to call attention to this important issue, and I will continue to work with the caucus to emphasize the importance of congressional action.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues on the bipartisan Climate Solutions Caucus for their dedication to this effort. I know it is quite a relief to my constituents back home in Oregon to know that there are bipartisan Members who are committed to addressing this critical issue.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues for their dedication to this effort. I look forward to the progress that we will make together on behalf of our constituents, our communities, our country, and our planet.

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I thank Ms. BONAMICI for speaking tonight.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman who really deserves a tremendous amount of credit for all of us being here tonight. He is the co-chair of the Climate Solutions Caucus, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DEUTCH).

Mr. DEUTCH. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend, Mr. LIPINSKI, for yielding and for his thoughtful and passionate leadership in combating climate change, and thanks to the strong bipartisan cross section of Members who have come to the floor tonight to talk about the importance of tackling climate change.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call on my colleagues, all of them, to join the bipartisan Climate Solutions Caucus. I started this caucus with my fellow Floridian, Congressman CARLOS CURBELO, to start a new dialogue around climate and Congress because we are already facing difficult challenges. We can't ignore it. We can't bury it in political fights. We need to have an open discussion not only for our future, but for the impact of climate change that we are facing today.

It is no coincidence that this project started with two Members from south Florida. A 2015 study projected that some south Florida cities could be underwater within this century. The study's author said some cities appear already to be lost.

Climate change is already here for Floridians. The effects have hit Florida first.

Scientists have warned of warming average global temperatures and the changing climate for decades. Dr. Andrew Clarke of the British Antarctic Survey has spent 40 years at the bottom of the planet watching it disappear. Dr. Clarke said: "You can see the entire environment changing in front of your eyes."

We now have climate change right before our eyes in south Florida. We see the rate of sea level rise outpace the global rate tenfold. We see the high-water mark jump 1 inch every

year. Just this week, we see the tides flooding our neighborhoods.

The limestone that serves as the foundation of our State is porous. Saltwater pushes up through the limestone from below the surface.

Lower bridge heights will block boats from reaching open waters. With 165 miles of canals, Fort Lauderdale faces significant threats of rising seas. Who in south Florida hasn't driven around their neighborhood and noticed more puddles, more water accumulating on the sidewalks and streets?

While many Americans might be able to ignore climate change, ignore the science, based on their own personal experience and your own personal experience at home, we can't. Looking out our windows, we see what is already there.

By the year 2100, almost 300 U.S. cities would lose at least half of their homes, and 36 American cities could be completely destroyed. One in eight Florida homes could be underwater. Those Florida homes represent half of the total expected loss in housing value caused by climate change over the next 84 years. These aren't risks of a distant future. These are the burdens we are placing on our children and on our grandchildren.

In response, and through the work of the South Florida Climate Compact, Miami Beach has initiated a sea level rise plan to lift roads, build up seawalls, and install pumps to clear water in the streets. Fort Lauderdale is fixing roads and drains and sending vacuum trucks into the streets to prevent saltwater damage, upgrading building codes and flood elevation requirements, and requiring higher seawalls.

In Florida, you can't put climate change out of sight or out of mind, but it is not just hitting Florida and it is not just the sea level rise or increasing temperatures.

The National Climate Assessment has documented regional climate impacts hitting every area of the United States:

In the Northeast and Midwest, dramatic increases in heavy precipitation events overwhelm drains and levies, causing flooding and accelerating erosion;

In the Great Plains and Southwest, drought and wildfires strain demands for scarce water resources;

In Alaska, receding sea ice and melting glaciers are damaging infrastructure;

On the coasts, increases in carbon dioxide and warming seas lead to coral bleaching and ocean acidification that is taking its toll on fisheries and the ecosystems.

The diverse and interconnected impacts that we already see throughout our country explain why we already have 60 Members who belong to this new dialogue, the Climate Solutions Caucus, 30 Democrats and 30 Republicans committed to changing the conversation and pushing solutions that will create more resilient communities.

We are committed to understanding the impacts of climate change, the impact on our national security; to investing in clean, innovative energy protection; to protecting our public health; and to overcoming the political obstacles that hold up public policy solutions.

It is time for Congress to come together and admit the challenges that our constituents are already facing at home. It is time to build consensus.

Through the bipartisan Climate Solutions Caucus, we have brought together Members from regions in every part of the country who are experiencing their own climate change challenges. I invite every Member of the House of Representatives to join us. Lift up the voices of your constituents, your farmers, your city officials, your developers, doctors, scientists, and, most importantly, the families whom you represent.

If you are watching at home, call your Member of Congress and urge them to join the Climate Solutions Caucus and help us start the difficult work of building truly bipartisan consensus that will help us tackle climate change together and help us create resilient American communities of the future.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my friend, Mr. LIPINSKI, again for organizing tonight's discussion.

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. DEUTCH for his leadership of the Climate Solutions Caucus.

Mr. Speaker, may I inquire how much time I have remaining.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BUDD). The gentleman from Illinois has 25 minutes remaining.

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, with that, I yield to my colleague, the gentleman from New York (Mr. SUOZZI).

Mr. SUOZZI. Mr. Speaker, I applaud my colleague, Mr. LIPINSKI, for pulling this effort together this evening.

Mr. Speaker, climate change is real, and I applaud my colleagues on the Climate Solutions Caucus for working together in a bipartisan effort to try and find common ground and to seek to work together to pass legislation to address this very real threat.

I believe the greatest opportunity we have here is to include efforts to move our Nation toward a greener economy as part of a comprehensive infrastructure bill.

We must address climate change for three reasons: first, the Earth is part of the divine creation, and we have an obligation to preserve and protect our precious gift; second, moving toward a green economy that retrofits homes and buildings and installs solar and wind farms will create good jobs at good wages that simply cannot be exported; and, third, the main topic I wish to address this evening, is moving toward a green economy, reducing our dependency on foreign oil, and addressing climate change is essential to our national security.

□ 2030

Americans rarely talk about it and sometimes forget, but we supported Osama bin Laden against the Russians in Afghanistan. We supported Saddam Hussein in Iraq after we lost the Shah after the Iranian Revolution. We supported the Assads in Syria. And we still maintain a close relationship with the Saudis, despite their support for Wahhabism. Why? Because our national economic strategy and security has relied for decades on access to foreign oil.

Our meddling in local affairs to ensure the oil spigot flowed freely has sowed distrust across generations throughout the Middle East.

By moving towards a green economy and eliminating our dependence on foreign oil, we can clearly say to the Middle East: We never wanted your land, we never wanted your money, and now we don't need your oil. All we want is for people of the region to stop trying to kill each other. It will take some time, but moving towards an economy independent of foreign oil is the best way to get there.

In addition to eliminating our dependence on foreign oil, we must try to stall the rapid rise in extreme weather events, droughts, and desertification that is destabilizing huge swaths of the Middle East and Africa. The number of refugees in the world has grown from 35 million only 10 years ago to 65 million today. War and violence are exacerbated by the instability caused by climate change.

One of the most violent regions in the world today is Syria. The instability in Syria began with droughts that destroyed the livelihoods of the Syrian people that rely upon an economy which is 85 percent agrarian. When people lost their farms, they fled to the cities looking for work, but, of course, they could not find it. Then they looked to the Assad government, but, of course, were ignored. Fomented by the Arab Spring, they began to revolt. The result? The Syrian Government has killed almost a half million of its own people and millions more refugees. This story is being repeated throughout the region.

Although the people suffering are thousands of miles away from the United States, our national security is threatened by these failing states. The rise of ISIS in Syria and Iraq is a prime example of the impact of failed states on Western security. Mass migrations by those seeking to alleviate suffering, millions seeking political and economic reforms place pressure on corrupt and incompetent governments that are unable to respond to the needs of a population seeking opportunity and hope.

Our enemies who wish to foment instability—Russia, Iran, North Korea, and violent terrorist factions—are aided by the effects of climate change and the instability it causes. We must do everything we can to stall the growth of this nefarious trend.

The good news is that there is a growing bipartisan consensus in the Climate Solutions Caucus and the armed services community that we must act. The Armed Services Committee in the 2008 National Defense Authorization Act acknowledged that “climate change is a direct threat to the national security of the United States,” and that “the Department of Defense must ensure that it is prepared to conduct operations both today and in the future, and that it is prepared to address the effects of changing climate on threat assessments, resources, and readiness.”

Secretary of Defense Mattis has said, “Climate change can be a driver of instability, and the Department of Defense must pay attention to the potential adverse impacts generated by this phenomenon.”

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Joseph Dunford has said that climate change and rising sea levels pose serious long-term threats to the country. The number of natural disasters will increase in the coming years, along with “the requirement for humanitarian assistance” and the response required for the military for civilian disasters.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank again my colleagues for the work that they have done to try and bring the issue of climate change to the American people, and to try and find solutions to this very real problem that is not only affecting us here at home, but our national security throughout the world.

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for all of his work on this and other issues.

Mr. Speaker, I now yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. CARBAJAL), my colleague.

Mr. CARBAJAL. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. LIPINSKI for yielding to me.

Mr. Speaker, we are out of time to debate the reality of climate change. Its effects are already here. Recently, each year has brought with it record-breaking droughts, hurricanes, and natural disasters.

My home State of California just experienced our deadliest wildfire season yet. This year alone, natural disasters will cost more than \$22 billion in recovery efforts. That is why I am proud to work with my colleague and cofounder of the Climate Solutions Caucus, Mr. CURBELO, to introduce the bipartisan Coastal State Climate Preparedness Act, H.R. 3533, which will help coastal States better plan for extreme weather events and implement climate change adaptation strategies.

We can save lives, homes, and billions of tax dollars by encouraging these vulnerable communities to prepare their infrastructure for the impacts of climate change.

After severe weather events like Hurricanes Maria and Harvey, it is imperative that we invest in readying our infrastructure for the next extreme weather event. Moreover, we also need to invest in developing renewable energy sources.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues in the House to join me and Mr. CURBELO in this effort.

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. CARBAJAL for his work. That was a great lead-in to our next speaker. We just had, a couple of speakers ago, the Democratic co-chair of the Climate Solutions Caucus. Our next speaker is the Republican co-chair. I give him a lot of credit and I thank him for the work that he has done in putting this caucus together.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. CURBELO).

Mr. CURBELO of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I am grateful to my colleague from Illinois for leading this special discussion tonight. I am grateful to have the opportunity to come here for a few minutes. And more than anything, I thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, Republicans and Democrats, who have stepped up and said: Enough of the demagoguery, enough of the fact-less conversation. Let's focus on what is happening in the world, on how human beings are contributing to it, and let's try to make the situation better.

I oftentimes say that, on this climate issue, neither the deniers nor the alarmists have much to offer. It is the men and women who are willing to sit at the table and have a sober conversation that can really help solve this problem. There are a lot of people who are counting on us to solve this problem.

Sea level rise is a reality. It is happening all over the world. Mr. Speaker, you might understand why this might be important to me. I represent a community where most people live near sea level and near the sea. This is a real concern, especially in the Florida Keys, one of the most attractive and dynamic parts of the country, an area that is recovering. We hope our fellow Americans will help us continue recovering after Hurricane Irma.

The Florida Keys and most of south Florida are significantly exposed to this sea level rise challenge, and we know that human activity is at least, in part, responsible for this dynamic. The Climate Solutions Caucus is not about blaming people. It is not about pointing the finger. It is about coming up with solutions.

I think there are really three phases to our caucus and our work. The first phase was to bring Republicans and Democrats together, sit at the table, have a discussion about our different perspectives on this issue, invite in some key witnesses to help inform us. We have done that. We have done a good job. Caucus members have a very good relationship, a good rapport.

The next phase has been to block anti-climate legislation. We have done that successfully here with some appropriations amendment where the caucus has come together and said: No. We are not going to prohibit the Defense Department from assessing the risks associated with climate change.

Again, this is critical in my district. I happen to represent Naval Air Station Key West, where the men and women of the Navy work hard to train and prepare to defend our country overseas. That is a facility that is exposed to this threat.

We came together and we defeated an amendment that would have prohibited the Defense Department from assessing these risks.

I am really excited for the next phase of the caucus, which I hope we can reach during this Congress, which is to find legislation that we can all get behind and say that these are reasonable solutions that not only help the environment and help guarantee that we are going to hand off to our children and grandchildren the same beautiful Earth that we inherited, but also that we are going to provide opportunities for American innovation and growth, and new good jobs, high-paying jobs, for young men and women from all over this country. That is going to be very exciting, and we are all working together to get to that day where we can promote an agenda in this Congress that will bring Republicans and Democrats together behind a pro-environment, pro-growth policy that will save this planet and keep our country on the cutting edge of innovation, leading the world.

This is a not an issue that we should shy away from. We should rise to this occasion. This is the country that has led the entire world through a host of different challenges over the last couple centuries. We can also do it on this climate issue, but I think we can only do it if we do it together.

Mr. Speaker, I thank all of my colleagues, but especially my Democratic colleagues tonight who have led this Special Order, organized this Special Order. I think we all would like to invite our colleagues from both sides of the aisle to join the caucus, especially on my side. We are up to 30 Republicans, 30 Democrats. That is very exciting. When I arrived here a couple years ago, I probably had only two or three Republican colleagues who were even willing to discuss this issue, and now there are 30 on the record. Let's keep the caucus growing, let's keep it strong, let's work together, and let's change the world for the better.

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. CURBELO for his leadership and for pointing out some of the victories that we already have had here on this House floor, the Climate Solutions Caucus. That is just the beginning. There will be plenty more to come as we grow this caucus and do the work that we are here to do.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. PANETTA), a freshman Member who is already making a big splash here getting a lot done in Washington, working especially on a bipartisan basis on a lot of these issues, getting some good things done.

Mr. PANETTA. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate Mr. LIPINSKI's kind words, but I

think he and I know best that we had good teachers to help us understand what it takes to get things done here in the United States Congress, and, most importantly, that is the ability to work together.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to stand here today with all of my colleagues, Republicans and Democrats, who are on the Climate Solutions Caucus. As you have heard tonight, and as we know, the Climate Solutions Caucus is a bipartisan caucus that gives Democrats and Republicans the opportunity to sit down and to discuss ways not only to protect our environment, but to protect our homes, our Nation's economy, and our Nation's security.

Yes, this caucus consists of people from separate political parties, but all of us are united in our belief that we must have this dialogue to defend our future.

Being from the central coast of California, where we have over 120 miles of stunning coastline in my district, we understand the vulnerability that comes with rising sea levels, something that can impact our economy, our security, and, of course, our daily lives.

The co-chairs of the Climate Solutions Caucus, Florida Representatives CARLOS CURBELO and TED DEUTCH, they understand and they appreciate that threat, for earlier this year Florida was pummeled by Hurricane Irma and the subsequent severe flooding, a storm that affected the lives of millions of Americans and cost billions in recovery and cleanup efforts.

We have seen that at times of crisis like that, despite the damage and despite our differences, our government and even this Congress can come together and put back together those communities. That is our government during an emergency, and at times where there are storms, where there is damage, we are motivated to come together and govern.

This year, my district saw this type of governing due to damage it suffered during the major winter storms earlier in 2017.

□ 2045

Every county in my district saw devastation. One county in particular, Monterey County, suffered an extreme amount of damage—the town of Big Sur, along the coast of California, in particular. The northern route of Highway 1, going into Big Sur, suffered a knockout of a major bridge. The southern route had a major landslide, leaving that community isolated.

But I can tell you, 2 weeks ago, I stood on the brand-new bridge that was built. And as I was standing there, to me, it was a story of the people of Big Sur, very resilient, always coming back from these types of situations. But it was also the story of government working, people and government coming together, getting things done to help people.

Now, just prior to that, I had read a New York Times editorial, where the

title of that editorial was, “We Used to Build Things.” And it was by David Brooks, and he talked about this big fire called the Big Burn, back in the early 1900s, that started in Washington and Oregon and spread throughout the upper West, all the way into Montana. And from that devastating fire arose something, and that was the U.S. Forest Service.

When I read that article, it reminded me that, throughout the history of this Nation, we have always built things to help people. We have engineered infrastructure to energize our economy, and we have expanded agencies to embolden and to empower our communities and the people who live there.

So now, after the storms on the West Coast, after the flooding in the Midwest, and after the hurricanes on the East Coast, it is our turn. It is time for this generation, our generation, to build things in a smart and resilient fashion, so that future generations are secure and safe in their homes and in their communities. And we need to start by focusing on and building infrastructure that is strong and stable to sustain the inevitable intense storms of the future.

Now, we know, and what has been confirmed by the nonpartisan Federal Government Accountability Office, that extreme weather events are already costing U.S. taxpayers billions and billions of dollars each year. According to that GAO report, the Federal Government spent more than \$350 billion over the last decade on losses to private property and disaster assistance programs from natural disasters.

Now, that amount doesn't even include the massive price tag on the recovery effort from this year's hurricanes and fires that are expected to be amongst the costliest in our Nation's history. And we know that it is going to get worse as storms are more intense, and recovery efforts are going to cost more. So we need to recognize and we need to realize the need for smart rebuilding.

Now, after the 2012 hurricane up in New York, Hurricane Sandy, there was a Rebuilding Task Force that was put together, and it recommended that Federal flood protection measures should entail that projects receiving Federal dollars, they should comply with elevation and flood-proofing measures to avoid rebuilding them after future storms. The report wanted to ensure that we do not need to pay multiple times to repair for flooding damages in flood-impacted areas.

In 2015, the administration put forward the Federal Flood Risk Management Standard. That was a standard that set out that federally financed infrastructure projects must be built to withstand future storms and flooding. That standard was meant to ensure that taxpayer dollars are spent wisely and communities are protected.

However, in August, this administration decided to roll back the Federal Flood Risk Management Standard, a

decision that was compounded by its poor timing, as it was announced 2 weeks before the hurricanes that ripped apart Houston, Florida, and Puerto Rico.

So last month, Congressman CURBELO and I introduced the Federal Infrastructure Flood Resiliency Act, a bipartisan bill that ensures that Federal agencies complete implementation of a Federal Flood Risk Management Standard; such a standard that will not just benefit our coastal communities, it will help our government, and it will help our country, because we know that every dollar that is invested in flood mitigation efforts results in \$4 in saved flood recovery costs. This is something that Republicans and Democrats understand.

After Hurricane Harvey, the Governor of Texas, Mr. Abbott, stated: “As we go through the build-out phase, and rebuilding Texas, part of our focus must be on rebuilding in a way that will prevent a disaster like this from happening again.”

Mr. Speaker, by investing in more resilient project designs, our communities will be able to recover quickly, and they will be protected against any future flooding. Taking these prudent steps will save taxpayer dollars and prevent future loss of life and property. It is a commonsense step that we can take toward responsible, bipartisanship governing; and it is this type of governing that needs to happen all the time.

Now, when I stood on that bridge, and I was there celebrating the reopening of that bridge, the reopening to Big Sur, I also thought that this was government at its best, where the government came together, it responded, it reacted in record fashion, and it reconstructed a major bridge.

So yes, it made me proud, but it also made me realize that we need to stop just governing by crisis. We need to start governing with leadership. We need to come together to get things done, not just in emergency situations, not just for natural disasters of today, but we need to start governing for tomorrow.

The Climate Solutions Caucus understands and believes that we, in Congress, need to lead. We need to do that by coming together. We do that by talking about the effects of climate change. We do that with Flood Risk Management Standard legislation, and we don't necessarily do it for us. We do it for our children.

That is leadership, and that is why I am proud to be on the Climate Solutions Caucus.

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, at this time, I just want to thank all my colleagues for their leadership on this issue. The time to take action on climate is now. We can't leave this problem to future generations to solve for us. As we heard this evening, there is no shortage of good ideas for how to do so.

I want to close by reading the mission statement of the Climate Solutions Caucus, which reminds us of the many reasons why our bipartisan group has come together to take action:

"The members of the Climate Solutions Caucus acknowledge the fact that, if left unaddressed, the consequences of a changing climate have the potential to adversely affect the health of all Americans and the strength of our economy, consequently imposing substantial costs on both State and Federal budgets.

"By seeking to reduce climate risk, we will, in turn, ensure the protection of our economy, infrastructure, and public safety, all while attaining energy independence from the world's most volatile regions. Therefore, it is our goal to take a market-based approach to substantially reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the United States in order to leave a better planet and stronger economy for future generations."

Mr. Speaker, this is something that all Americans can endorse and support. It is a better world and a better country.

So I thank, again, all my colleagues for joining me here tonight, and for their work, all of the 60 members—30 Democrats, 30 Republicans—for their work on the Climate Solutions Caucus.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

ADVOCATING FOR PATIENTS' RIGHT TO TRY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. BIGGS) for 30 minutes.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BIGGS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the topic of this Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Arizona?

There was no objection.

Mr. BIGGS. Mr. Speaker, I am here this evening, along with my friend and colleague, Representative BRIAN FITZPATRICK, as we advocate for the passage of the Right to Try Act. This bill, which we introduced together, has dozens of bipartisan cosponsors, including Members here tonight.

We are both supportive of Senator RON JOHNSON's efforts to champion Right to Try in the Senate. He has been a tireless advocate of Right to Try for years, and his bill has already passed the Senate with unanimous consent. If you are watching the Senate very closely, you will know that nothing comes out of there, and certainly nothing with unanimous consent; so that tells how strong the sentiment is in favor of this bill.

Our legislation allows terminally ill patients who have no further options

left—I repeat that, no further options left—the opportunity to try experimental drugs that could save their own lives.

Yes, there are also provisions in our bill to protect both the patients, as well as the pharmaceutical companies who want to participate, but those provisions are secondary to the primary purpose of this legislation. The primary purpose of the Right to Try Act is to give brave patients across this country some choice over their own destinies, when all other avenues are gone.

We want to give hope to these Americans, and we should all share that same goal of doing everything we can for patients fighting to save their lives. This policy has significant bipartisan support. The Trump administration strongly supports Right to Try, and President Trump has indicated he would likely sign this bill into law.

Time is of the essence, for time is one thing a terminally ill patient does not have. And the status quo is not the answer. The FDA and other agency officials claim that their own expanded access program is working and continues to improve. There may be some truth to that, but the program is simply not enough; and I know that because I have talked to dozens and dozens of patients, family members, and advocates who tell me it is not enough. They come to my office, they call me on the phone, they write me impassioned letters.

These same advocates have ensured that Right to Try has become law in 38 States. Think about that for a moment. With one more State, you could actually ratify a Constitutional amendment. And in half of those 38 States, Right to Try laws passed with unanimous support. In my home State of Arizona, voters approved that initiative by 80 percent of the popular vote.

At a time when pundits are claiming that our politics are broken, and Republicans and Democrats can't come together on anything, here is a cause that Americans of all political stripes can unite in.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. FITZPATRICK).

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my friend and colleague, ANDY BIGGS, for him joining all of us in this fight to stand up for terminally ill patients across this country.

Mr. Speaker, each year, more Americans receive the devastating news of a terminal diagnosis. Even with the amazing work done in American medical research and development, for too many families, access to these potentially lifesaving treatments will come too late or not at all.

Thousands of terminally ill patients, like my constituent, Matt Bellina, suffer needlessly while awaiting final approval for drug therapies and other medical technologies.

In April 2014, at age 30, Matt was diagnosed with ALS, otherwise known as Lou Gehrig's disease. ALS attacks

nerve cells in the brain and spinal cord, causing those with ALS to lose control of their muscles.

Although this disease stopped Matt's career as a U.S. Navy aviator in its tracks, he persisted and actively involved himself in the ALS community as a strong advocate for Right to Try legislation.

While the Food and Drug Administration carries out its three-phase approval process, which can take years and cost billions of dollars, many patients simply want the chance to try treatments that have already been demonstrated to be safe.

A bill that was unanimously passed by the Senate will offer them a chance to extend their lives. The Right to Try Act, S. 204, would ensure that terminally ill patients, together with their physicians and pharmaceutical manufacturers, can administer investigational treatments where no alternative exists. In fact, this bipartisan idea is already the law in 37 States.

A Federal Right to Try law would prevent the government from blocking access to potentially lifesaving medications. It would require patients to first try all other available treatments and be unable to participate in clinical trials.

I want to note that these provisions only apply to terminally ill patients. It does not undo the FDA approval process but provides a potential lifeline for those who cannot wait. Moreover, it requires a physician to certify that other options are either exhausted or unavailable.

This bill requires that a product meet a demonstrated level of safety by attaining FDA phase I approval. We have worked with the drug companies to ensure adverse outcomes are not used against the ongoing application for approval. Additionally, patients, doctors, and manufacturers do not assume any additional liability under this act.

For those patients caught in between the traditional drug approval delays, a clinical trial process for which they do not qualify, and limited time, the Right to Try simply establishes the freedom for patients and their doctors to try therapies where the benefits far outweigh the risks. It gives them the option of trying to save their life.

Mr. Speaker, whether it is a father like Matt courageously battling ALS, or a brave child living with Duchenne muscular dystrophy, they deserve the right to try.

□ 2100

Mr. BIGGS. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. FITZPATRICK; I appreciate all that he has done and continues to do in this cause, this important cause. He is a great leader in this, and I am grateful for all of his effort here.

At this point, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. GAETZ).

Mr. GAETZ. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding. I thank him for