

but creating jobs here in the United States of America.

The Trump administration's proposal rejects the status quo and puts American workers and families first. It would open areas with significant oil and gas potential—areas off the coast of Alaska and the Atlantic and Pacific and portions of the eastern Gulf of Mexico.

What are the ramifications of this? According to one study, opening the eastern Gulf of Mexico would create nearly 230,000 new American jobs by 2035. It would bring roughly \$115 billion of investment to the United States. Federal, State, and local governments would collect an additional \$70 billion in tax revenue by 2035, not because rates are going up—rates have now gone down—but, rather, people are making more money, and because they are making more money at lower rates, Federal, State, and local tax receipts continue to increase. American energy production would be boosted by about 1 million barrels of oil, making our country more secure.

Let's take a look at the State-by-State job increases from these lease sales. Florida gets the biggest gain of all—87,000 new jobs by 2035. Texas would add 62,000. My home State of Louisiana would add 31,000 new jobs. Alabama would add 21,000; Mississippi, 12,000; and the rest of United States, 15,000 new jobs.

I know some of my colleagues across the aisle, including my Democratic colleague from Florida, have expressed concerns about this energy production plan's impact on fishing and military training in the Gulf of Mexico. Let's remember that oil and gas manufacturers have coexisted with other activities for decades. I share my colleagues' interest in protecting our communities, businesses, and the environment. The reality is that these goals are not mutually exclusive, especially on the gulf coast.

Let me use Louisiana as an example. According to NOAA, Louisiana has 4 of the 10 top ports in the country by volume and value of seafood landed. In 2016, two Louisiana ports alone received 670 million pounds of seafood landed in the gulf. This is in addition to the oil and gas production off of our coast. Together with Texas, our two States accounted for half of U.S. shrimp landings.

NOAA also reports that roughly half of the jobs in commercial and recreational fishing in the gulf exist in States where there is also oil and gas production. Recreationally, gulf anglers accounted for 33 percent of fishing trips, which equals 39 percent of the total U.S. catch.

Of course, more than 85 percent of recreational landings were in inland estuaries or State territorial waters. Most of the oil and gas activity we are discussing today is in deeper, Federal waters many miles away.

Again, the gulf coast is a working coast, and it has been proven over the

decades that multiple industries can successfully coexist.

When my colleague from Florida brought up his concerns about potential conflicts with the Department of Defense operations in the Gulf of Mexico, I took that very seriously. Ensuring that our military is equipped to train and test is vitally important. However, it is simply not true that the eastern Gulf of Mexico must be completely free of energy production in order for the military to conduct operations. Our military's own testing data from the last 5 years makes that very clear. This map shows all the Department of Defense testing done in the last 5 years in the eastern Gulf of Mexico. The Department of Defense used only 19 percent of the eastern Gulf of Mexico during the last 5 years. To put it differently, 81 percent of the gulf went untouched.

When you look even more closely at the space regularly used by our military, it becomes clear that this objection to energy production in the eastern gulf does not pass the smell test.

This is the Panhandle of Florida. Right here is the State of Alabama. For those who are interested in it, the Florida-Alabama bar is right there, and this is where folks from Louisiana love to go and enjoy themselves.

This is, if you will, zoomed in on the last map and shows the spaces the military used for more than 14 days during that 5-year period. So over 5 years, these are the spaces it used for more than 14 days—not per year but over the 5 years. Only 0.5 percent of the eastern Gulf of Mexico was used by the Department of Defense for more than 14 days over the last 5 years—0.5 percent. That means that the Department of Defense regularly uses only 1 out of every 200 acres in the gulf.

I have met with both the Interior Department and the Defense Department and urged them to work together to ensure the best use of Federal waters. This data shows that it can be done.

I am confident that, under the Trump administration's proposal, we can provide thousands of Americans with good-paying jobs, boost our energy manufacturing and security, strengthen our economy, and do it in a way that is environmentally responsible and protects our communities.

I applaud today's announcements because it will make a true difference for our country and for the American people, the American worker who has not done well over the last 8 years but under this administration has begun to do well, and this is the next step in making sure that his and her future is as bright as it ever could be.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CORNYN). The Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senator from Texas, Mr. CORNYN, be recognized at the conclusion of my remarks.

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

REMEMBERING THOMAS S. MONSON

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, I rise today to honor the life of a truly remarkable man: Thomas S. Monson, the president of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

On Tuesday night, at the age of 90, President Monson was called home by his Heavenly Father. I expect that his reunion with his wife Frances was a joyous occasion, and I am confident that this reunion will provide comfort to his three children and eight grandchildren.

But President Monson's legacy is far greater than his family, even though that was of paramount importance to President Monson and his wife Frances. President Monson's legacy also includes the countless men and women whose lives were touched by him, as well as the confident, global church he helped to shepherd, to expand, and to strengthen.

Consider this: In the 54 years Thomas Monson served as an apostle, church membership swelled from 2 million to 16 million. That accomplishment is a blessing from God, but it was realized by saints like President Monson, who devoted their lives to serving Him—in his case, starting at an exceptionally young age.

Thomas Monson was born and raised in Salt Lake City in a large and devoutly faithful family. He attended Utah State University. He served with honor in the U.S. Navy Reserve, and he worked for a time in printing, including for the Deseret News.

By the age of 22, he was the bishop of a ward, a local congregation in Salt Lake City, charged with guiding over 1,000 people in their walks with Christ.

By 36 he was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, one of the youngest people ever to receive that special calling.

But Brother Monson did not give in to hubris as a result of those unexpected and, in many cases, early promotions. Quite the opposite, he was humbled by the very heavy mantle that had been placed on his shoulders with each of these callings.

Members of President Monson's ward remember the young bishop as a steady companion to people who were enduring struggles and hardship. There were 80 widows in his ward, and Bishop Monson took the time to visit every single one of them on a regular basis. Also in his ward were 18 servicemen fighting in the Korean war. Every month, he sent letters to those 18 men to remind them that they had not been forgotten, and even decades later, he would speak of these servicemen and widows during the church's General Conference meeting. His love for them could still be felt by those in attendance.

Those stories illustrate the kind of man President Monson truly was. I can testify to this fact through personal anecdotes of my own, including the fact that in 2010, shortly after I had been elected to the U.S. Senate, President Monson invited me, along with

my wife Sharon and our three children, to visit with him in his office in Salt Lake City. He prayed with us, encouraged us, and offered us counsel. As much as anything, we just felt honored that he would take the time to meet with us and show interest in our lives.

This is perhaps the single most consistent thread in President Monson's life. He was someone who at every step of his life, at every stage of his service, was always willing to reach out to others, to visit them even without anyone else expecting it. He was known—famous, in fact—for routinely interrupting his daily routine just to visit someone who happened to be sick, who happened to be in the hospital, who happened to be going through something difficult. President Monson didn't always know the reason why he needed to visit the person in advance; he just knew it needed to be done, and he always did.

There are lessons that we can learn here in the U.S. Senate about this type of service—this type of service that is selfless, that is eternal in its scope and in its reach, this type of service that blesses the lives of other human beings without any expectation of remuneration. He was a leader who understood how even small, seemingly insignificant acts of kindness could affect people's lives in profound, lasting ways.

He always urged his brothers and sisters within the church and elsewhere to be on the lookout for signs that God was calling them to help. "Never fail to follow a prompting of the Holy Spirit," he would say, and on a regular basis, he did just that. This could mean visiting a relative in the hospital or delivering a meal to a coworker who was mourning a loss or just checking in on a friend he hadn't seen in a while.

For President Monson, it was always about taking time for that personal connection. President Monson knew that little encounters build strong relationships—and strong saints.

In 2008, President Thomas S. Monson was called to lead the church. He proved to be a good steward of the church in a fast-moving world and in an expanding, growing faith community. Many obituaries have already noted how in 2012 he lowered the age requirement for missionaries, a decision that increased the missionary force in short order from 52,000 to almost 70,000. That is almost 20,000 more young people to spread the Gospel and daily serve in those communities around the world.

But President Monson did far more than that to strengthen the church's commitment to caring for the least in our community. Under his leadership, the church expanded its poverty and disaster relief programs. He even added "caring for the poor and needy" to the church's official mission statement.

President Monson lived in Utah almost his entire life, but his heart was with the church spreading throughout the world. During the depths of the Cold War, he helped lead the Latter-

day Saints trapped behind the Iron Curtain. Mormons in the Soviet Union were poor just like everyone else. They didn't have a temple, and their governments forbade them from traveling abroad. As a result, they didn't have access to temple ceremonies that are central to our faith. That didn't sit well with President Monson.

As he told his brothers and sisters from the pulpit during a trip to East Germany, he wanted them to share in "every blessing" of the faith. So he gave everything he had to help those people, even the shirt off his own back—quite literally. He returned from one trip to the Soviet Union in his house slippers because he had given his spare clothes to the less fortunate, a funny story that brings to mind the words of the Savior: "[For] I was a stranger, and ye took me in: [I was] naked, and ye clothed me."

Around that time, President Monson began two decades of quiet diplomacy with the Soviet authorities, including with Erich Honecker himself. His labor reaped a tremendous harvest. In a regime that was hostile to religion and to outsiders, he won approval for Mormon missionaries to come and spread the Gospel.

In 1985, he won an even bigger triumph when a temple opened behind the Iron Curtain in Freiberg, Germany. Ninety thousand East Germans attended the dedication of that temple.

He had followed a prompting of the Lord. The result was nothing less than that dramatic, impactful tear in the Iron Curtain, one that had stifled religious belief, but religious belief was facilitated by this noble servant of the Lord Jesus Christ.

These are just a few stories from President Monson's life that I have shared, and I would like to conclude with just one more. Not long ago, President Monson was asked what he wanted for his birthday, which was coming up. Here was his simple response:

Do something for someone else on that day to make his or her life better. Find someone who is having a hard time, or is ill, or lonely, and do something for them. That's all I would ask.

President Monson was always looking for little ways to help other people. That wish is as true in death as it was in life. In lieu of flowers for his funeral, the church has requested contributions be made to the church's Humanitarian Aid Fund.

President Monson's legacy will outlast his death because he chose to follow the One who conquered death, taking upon Himself the sins, the transgressions, the pains, the miseries of all mankind so that we, too, might return to live with Him.

President Monson will be missed. President Monson, God be with you until we meet again.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CASIDY). The majority whip.

#### ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE CONGRESS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I know we are back, fresh from the holidays, at the start of a new year, and all of us are already thinking a lot and working hard on the tasks we have at hand. We have a lot to do, especially before the next continuing resolution expires on January 19.

But I don't want to make the mistake of failing to recount the good work we were able to accomplish on behalf of the American people in 2017 because, sometimes, in the hustle and bustle of life, we fail to acknowledge those things that we have actually been able to do, for which we ought to be grateful, and that our constituents need to know about. I would like to take just a few minutes to do exactly that because, unfortunately, in the hyperpolitical and hyperpolarized political environment we live in today—especially with the advent of social media—there are always some naysayers and pundits who want to offer their comments. One of the things I have noticed most about many of those naysayers and pundits when they comment on what is happening here in Washington is how little they know about the facts. The facts matter, and I want to offer those for the public's consideration now.

In January of last year, the Nation was quickly called to order following the inauguration of President Trump. One of his first actions was to nominate Neil Gorsuch to the U.S. Supreme Court. I think most of us were astonished at the quality of this selection, many of us not being familiar with the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals on which Justice Gorsuch served in Denver, CO.

Justice Gorsuch was quickly confirmed in April, and then we moved on to fill other judicial vacancies, which, of course, are the prerogative of the President to make that nomination and to then be confirmed with the advice and consent of the Senate. We, like the President, have made filling these judicial vacancies a priority.

The fact is, though, that the Senate is in the personnel business. In other words, our friends in the House of Representatives don't have to vote on confirmation of judges and other Presidential nominees, but we in the Senate have that responsibility. All told, we have confirmed 19 men and women to the Federal bench in 2017, setting a record for appellate judges confirmed during a President's first year in office. Two of them, Jim Ho and Don Willett, I am pleased to say, will serve from Texas on the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals that sits in New Orleans. These are exceptionally qualified nominees—and typical in that description of the types of people that President Trump has selected to serve in the Federal judiciary.

But our work wasn't just confined to confirming the President's nominees. After 8 years of overreach, hundreds of burdensome rules passed during the