Madam President, I rise today because my home—the state of California—is on fire.

Nearly half a million acres have burned in the last month, by the Dixie Fire alone. That’s more than ten times the size of the entire District of Columbia. Larger than the City of Los Angeles.

Thousands of Californians have been forced to flee their homes with only the clothes on their back and the belongings they can fit in their cars. Entire towns have burnt to the ground. As of Sunday, Dixie is the largest single-source fire in California’s history. And California is not alone. The entire Western United States is on fire.

Colleagues, this morning, the world’s foremost body of climate scientists presented a new report. 195 countries, including the United States, agreed on every statement it makes. And the verdict could not be clearer: climate change is happening and we must act now.

As the report says, in more than a thousand centuries, the Earth has never seen a decade as hot as the last ten years. Scientists can now show that particular disasters are caused by climate change. The heat wave that is fueling fires, destroying crops, and sending areas across California into drought—that is on us. Devastating floods, from Texas to Central Europe—those are on us. We have pushed our planet to this point. And if we continue to stall, the pace of record-breaking catastrophe will only increase.

This is Planet Earth’s ten-alarm fire.

And yet, my Republican colleagues pretend that they can’t see the smoke blowing across the country. The good news is: we have a Democratic majority, and we know how to fight this fire.

If we race to zero out our carbon emissions, we can slow the pace of climate change. We can even bring down temperatures by the middle of the century. But our path to avert a catastrophic cycle is narrowing by the day. We must act boldly and with urgency to tackle this crisis head on.

Across the country—across industries—and across the world, we need to end our dependence on fossil fuels. We need to aim high and fully fund transformational infrastructure that will allow us to not just survive this transition, but to come out better than we were before. On a zero-emission school bus, students won’t have to breathe dirty air. In an economy rebuilt to meet this challenge, millions of Americans will work in high-paying, sustainable jobs.

Madam President, sometimes I worry that we’ve grown numb to the idea of the “climate crisis.” If we truly understood the meaning of those words, how could we even contemplate business as usual? If my colleagues across the aisle were to listen to scientists, how could a single one of them argue that we need to spend less on climate?

As many of you know, my wife and I are raising three sons. We’re trying to raise three gentlemen. Today they are age fourteen, eight, and six-years-old. Trying to get them ready to go back to school. Protecting them, and giving them every opportunity to thrive, is the cause of my lifetime.

But the IPCC report makes clear that we will blow through 1.5 degrees of global warming by the year 2040, it’s right here. No matter what we do today, come 2040, my sons will be 33, 27, and 25. And I think about what their lives will be like at that age. Just starting their careers, and maybe their own families. What will their adulthoods look like?

If we act now, we have a chance to turn the tide—to begin the planet’s recovery as my children, my children, reach middle age. If we fail, they will face a world of accelerating disasters. Up to four degrees of warming the report says. Four degrees.

Now as an engineer by training, I understand how deadly serious it is to upset the careful balance of our environment. But if four degrees doesn’t sound significant to you, just listen to the scientists warning us what four degrees of warming will create.

Global conflict over food, water, and safe shelter. Millions of climate refugees and desperate migrants and desperate migrants.

Madam President, failure is not an option.

I refuse to tell my boys that we knew what to do, but could not muster the political will to act.

I refuse to leave them a world where their lives are defined by climate disaster. Where they fear that every summer will bring the fire or drought or storm that destroys their home. I refuse to leave that world for anyone’s children. That means time is of the essence.

Climate cannot be on the chopping block of any budget—it’s nonnegotiable.

Let’s rise to meet the challenge of our generation.

We cannot let our home burn.

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