

I heard the Senator from North Dakota talk about the speculators. This legislation deals with that. Let me explain that. As Senator DORGAN pointed out, we have speculators, investors who are buying paper on future oil who are causing the price of oil to go up, which means we pay more at the pump. We should be regulating what we call the margins at a much higher level. Margins mean they have to put up not much money. They buy it on credit. Well, this legislation would have the FTC regulate the margin sales and purchases of futures on oil. That makes a lot of sense. It would calm the speculators and save us at the pump. It is another way we can reduce the cost immediately to the consumer. And it deals with offshore speculating, something else we should do.

The legislation also gives the Attorney General the ability to go after collusion on price fixing in gasoline.

So all these provisions in the Consumer First Energy Act are aimed at trying to bring down the cost to the consumer now and keep it lower than it is today. It would provide immediate help and would bring us closer to meeting our goal of energy independence for the sake of our national security, for the sake of our environment, and for the sake of our economy.

So let's remember the struggles of American families with rising energy costs as we work together. Let's put aside partisan differences, and let's pass the Consumer First Energy Act to provide real relief to the consumers in America. It is in the best interests of the consumers. It is in the best interests of our country. I urge my colleagues to act in a bipartisan way to pass this most important legislation.

With that, Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. WHITEHOUSE). The Senator from Texas.

PUBLIC OPINION

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, so far, the 110th Congress has failed to address some of the biggest problems confronting our Nation today. While some may be content to simply point the finger of blame, I think it is time for the Senate to take a long, hard look in the mirror.

I was struck by a poll I read which I would like to share with my colleagues dated April 9, 2008. This is a Rasmussen poll which said that just 13 percent of likely voters believe Congress is doing a good or excellent job—13 percent. The respondents to the poll were also asked whether they thought Congress had passed in the last year any legislation that was designed to make their life a little bit easier. Incredibly, only 12 percent of these likely voters said Congress had passed any legislation to improve life in America during the last year. Fifty-nine percent said we had not. Fifty-nine percent of the respondents said Congress had not passed any legislation in the last year that had made their life better.

This is quite an indictment. Frankly, I think we are going to have a chance tomorrow morning to demonstrate that either these respondents to this poll had gotten it all wrong or we are going to prove them exactly right, depending on the vote we have tomorrow morning on this important energy legislation I want to talk about in a moment. But first I wish to offer some suggestions on why it is that Congress is so poorly thought of by the American voter. Frankly, I think there are a number of examples. I have four examples of inexplicable delays in how Congress has failed to take care of the Nation's business.

First of all, the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act. Certainly, one of the most important jobs of the Federal Government is to make sure the American people are safe and secure. Our national security is job No. 1 for the Federal Government.

Over a year ago, our intelligence community alerted us to the fact that an outdated foreign intelligence surveillance system was causing our intelligence gatherers to operate essentially blind to new threats. Despite this urgent plea from the intelligence community, the Speaker of the House has denied an opportunity for the House of Representatives to vote on a bipartisan piece of legislation that came out of the Senate. In fact, this authority has expired for new threats some 87 days ago. Without the critical reform to our foreign intelligence surveillance system, we will not have access to time-critical information that will help protect not only our troops who are deployed around the world but also the American people at home as well. It is just a crying shame that the House leadership would have delayed passage of this important legislation. Again, legislation that was bipartisan and voted out of the Senate is now bogged down and blocked because the Speaker of the House has denied an opportunity for this important legislation to come up.

There is another example, unfortunately, justifying the American public's low opinion of the Congress, and this has to do with the Colombia Free Trade Agreement. We have been waiting 538 days—that is the second number on the chart, 538 days—for Congress to consider the Colombia Free Trade Agreement. After more than a year of trying to negotiate with Congress, President Bush finally submitted this important legislation for fast-track approval. But in a stunning display of just how far Speaker PELOSI is willing to go to delay this important agreement, she opted to rewrite the rules of the House of Representatives in order to avoid having to vote on the bill within the expedited timeline of our trade promotion authority.

This act would have ensured that farmers in my State, the State of Texas, as well as manufacturers and small businesses—it would have provided them a duty-free entry into the

markets of the nation of Colombia in South America. Right now, those goods and services bear a tariff of up to 80 percent on their products, notwithstanding that my State of Texas, last year, sold \$2.3 billion worth of goods and produce to the nation of Colombia and the people in Colombia. It is one of our best trading partners in South America. So why should our American goods and produce be discriminated against because of these high tariffs? Well, we had a way to solve that 538 days ago, but the Speaker of the House of Representatives has simply refused to allow the House to vote on it.

Recently, American businesses crossed the \$1 billion mark in money lost to tariffs in Colombia as a result of the refusal to consider this important legislation. That is \$1 billion that could have been saved and invested in our economy, and it is opportunities lost to small businesses and large businesses in America—such as farmers—to sell their goods and produce in Colombia without a tariff.

Well, it is also important because Colombia is one of our very best allies in South America in the fight against the drug cartels and terrorist organizations. Just last week, Colombia extradited a reputed drug kingpin, Luis Hernando Gomez Bustamante, to America. This man is believed to head an organization responsible for 60 percent of the cocaine in America. He is finally now in custody pending trial in America, thanks to the Colombian Government. We need to support Colombia and President Uribe in their fight against men such as Luis Gomez Bustamante who are bringing deadly drugs to our streets. But, instead of the kind of cooperation and reinforcement and appreciation you would expect one friend to show another friend, our friends in Colombia have gotten nothing but a stiff arm from the Congress in a refusal to act on important legislation that would benefit them and would benefit us and would tell the world what it means to be a friend of the United States: beneficial trading relationships that are to the mutual benefit of the trading partners. But that was 538 days ago, with no action, and the clock is still ticking.

Mr. President, 683 days is another important example of mismanagement of the opportunity we have been given to serve the interests of the American people. It was 683 days ago that Peter Keisler was first nominated for a judicial appointment by the President of the United States. Unfortunately, he is not the only nominee who continues to languish while the majority continues to drag its feet in providing an opportunity for an up-or-down vote for these judicial nominees.

Today, as our colleagues from North Carolina have already pointed out, is the 300th day since Judge Robert Conrad's nomination came to the Senate, and he has not even been given the courtesy of a committee hearing—300 days after his nomination came to the Senate.

So far this year, the Senate has approved a total of one circuit court judge—just one. That by any standard is abysmal. While we continue to delay the confirmation of judges, there are 46 judicial vacancies in the Federal judiciary, 13 of which are considered judicial emergencies. And what does Congress do? What does the Senate do? Well, not much, almost nothing to deal with the judicial emergencies and these vacancies and to provide an up-or-down vote on these nominees.

The American people depend on fully functioning courts to find justice. The Senate's failure to do its constitutional duty to confirm or at least to allow a vote on qualified nominees for these vacancies has a very real impact on communities, on businesses, on the residents of the areas in which those courts have jurisdiction, and crime victims to have access to justice. But having no judge who can sit and hear the case is essentially like locking and chaining the front door to the courthouse.

Finally, how long will it be before the majority makes good on its promise that Speaker PELOSI made 749 days ago? It was 749 days ago when she promised the American people that if the Democrats were given the majority, they would have a commonsense solution to rising gas prices. Well, last week, after waiting more than 2 years, Democrats did unveil a plan. The irony is that it has become all too commonplace to find that these energy plans do not have one drop of additional energy but, rather, they recommend, really, more of the same—more taxation, more litigation, more investigations—but not one single drop of additional energy, not one single watt of new energy.

While oil and gas prices have hit record highs virtually every day—today hitting \$3.72 a gallon—on January 4, 2007, when Speaker PELOSI and our friends on the Democratic side took charge of both the House and the Senate, that price of a gallon of gas was \$2.33. Now it is \$3.72. That is about a \$1,400-per-family increase in the cost of living. And Congress continues to do next to nothing to deal with it, notwithstanding the promise Speaker PELOSI made some 749 days ago.

Well, the irony is that we have heard, in the plan that has been made by some on the other side of the aisle, that all we need to do is to raise taxes on the domestic oil producers and that will somehow find a way to solve our lack of oil and gasoline. Unfortunately, some of these ideas have been tried before and found to be total and abject failures. For example, according to the nonpartisan Congressional Research Service, this same tax idea was tried back during the Jimmy Carter administration. If you are too young to remember what happened during the Carter administration, there were shortfalls in the supply of gasoline, resulting in interminable lines waiting at gas stations. As a result, the Congress-

sional Research Service said that domestic production—that is America's energy production—fell by roughly 5 percent, resulting in an overall increase in the dependence on imported oil from foreign sources. Is that what our friends on the other side of the aisle want, an increase in our dependence on imported oil? Well, I would think not. So why would they come up with these tested and failed schemes to increase our reliance on imported oil? I noticed the distinguished Democratic chairman of the Senate Energy Committee, Senator BINGAMAN from New Mexico, has expressed it in words that perhaps I think are prophetic when he says this windfall profits tax is very arbitrary and bad policy.

Now, while this plan would help further line the pockets of OPEC, the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, and anti-American foreign leaders such as Hugo Chavez, this bill would also authorize the American Government to sue OPEC to demand that they increase oil production.

Now, we ought to think about that one a minute. OPEC, after all, is composed of Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Venezuela, Algeria, Angola, Ecuador, Indonesia, Libya, Nigeria, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates. What our friends on the other side of the aisle have proposed is we file a lawsuit against Iran and Venezuela and tell them to turn the spigot all the way open. What that would do, of course, assuming it were possible, is it would mean that we were even more dependent on imported oil from our enemies such as Iran and Venezuela—not less. This would only make us more dependent on OPEC—not less.

Now, I believe there is a better solution, and that better solution is to take advantage of the natural resources God has given this great country of ours, one with which we have been supremely blessed. If, in fact, our friends on the other side of the aisle would allow us to pass the Domenici energy amendment—the American Energy Production Act—it would have the potential of producing as much as 3 million additional barrels of oil a day from American natural resources. This bill would open domestic resources such as shale oil in the Arctic and offshore deposits to domestic energy producers. It would immediately send a message to the speculators and commodity investors that there is going to be an additional amount of oil available in the future, up to 3 million barrels a day, and I believe have an immediate downward effect on the price of oil—a barrel of oil which, of course, is 70 percent of the cost of gasoline.

One thing is for sure: By taxing and penalizing our own domestic producers, that is not a solution, and we need to do everything we can in our power to lower prices and not to play additional games by trotting out tired and failed efforts of the past to try to bring down prices. We know the law of supply and demand is one Congress cannot repeal,

so that is why we ought to pass the Domenici amendment tomorrow.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey is recognized.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, we are debating two very different amendments on gas prices that are up for a vote tomorrow. We have the proposal of the minority leader that is full of old ideas that will not work and will do absolutely nothing to affect gas prices now or in the future. In fact, the only provision in the minority leader's amendment that would do anything to lower gas prices is lifted directly from the Democratic plan to lower gas prices. This is the provision to temporarily suspend filling the Strategic Petroleum Reserve. In response, the majority leader has offered a clean amendment to temporarily suspend filling the Strategic Petroleum Reserve. This is one of the few options we have to address the pain at the pump our constituents are facing right now.

Every time my friends on the other side of the aisle decide to pay attention to our energy crisis, their solution is always the same: help big oil. In 2005, they authored energy provisions that gave ExxonMobil and other oil giants lavish subsidies that totaled over \$14 billion, and these companies are reaping the rewards with record profits announced every quarter. ExxonMobil recently announced \$11 billion in profits over a 3-month period. To put that in context, this means ExxonMobil's yearly profit this year might well be almost twice the annual budget of the Department of Energy.

The authors of these proposals argue that if we simply shovel more taxpayer money in the direction of oil companies, this money will eventually trickle down to the people. But, as we have all too often seen, it does not. Gasoline prices are now over \$3.70 per gallon, and the specter of \$4-per-gallon gasoline is looming around the corner. While oil companies hoard their windfall profits, the American people are suffering.

Yet my friends on the other side of the aisle do not want real relief for the country; they only want to protect big oil's huge profits at any cost by opening every environmentally sensitive area in the country to drilling. Now, President Bush was right when he said we are addicted to oil, but what amazes me is the President's party is unaware they continue to act like addicts. Instead of supporting real plans to conserve oil or even transition to sustainable fuels, they go out in search of their next oil fix.

Some claim the way to lower gas prices is to end a bipartisan, 26-year moratorium to open the Outer Continental Shelf to oil exploration and drill, drill, and drill. But the Energy Information Administration projects that even if we opened the entire Outer Continental Shelf to drilling off the east coast, off the west coast, and opened the entire eastern Gulf of Mexico, nothing would happen to gas

prices. Why? First, because production would not begin before the year 2017. The infrastructure to drill for oil is not just a large oil platform but a network of hundreds of miles of pipeline to transport oil from the platform onto land and then to refineries. This kind of infrastructure simply does not exist on the east coast and in only limited exceptions on the west coast.

The second reason why opening all our shores to oil drilling will not lower gas prices is because by the time full production actually ramped up, in 2030, drilling off all our coasts full tilt would only result in a whopping 3-percent increase in domestic production. And even in 2030, as our continent is rung all the way around by oil platforms, all of this new supply will be eaten up by a 7-percent increase in domestic demand. The Energy Information Administration predicts that: "Any impact on average wellhead prices is expected to be insignificant."

So even opening all of our coasts to drilling, as the minority leader proposes, will have no impact on gas prices at all. As my colleagues can see by this chart, the Federal Government has been issuing more and more leasing permits for drilling, but at the same time the price of gasoline has continued to rise. In fact, over 80 percent of the resources in the Outer Continental Shelf are already open for exploration. Since 2001, the Bush administration has issued over 100 new leases. Many of these leases are in the eastern Gulf where the oil industry already has much of the infrastructure necessary to go into production but only 12 of these new wells have been drilled. The industry is only developing a small fraction of the area already open for drilling. Why isn't ExxonMobil pumping some of its profits into developing these areas? If companies are not interested in developing the large fields already open in the Gulf of Mexico, why is it so critical to open environmentally sensitive areas to more drilling?

One might say it is to be expected that those on the side of big oil would use this sort of rhetoric in an election year, but it is much worse than that. The McConnell amendment could be both economically and ecologically devastating. If you look at a picture here taken after a recent oil spill in San Francisco, this is what we can routinely be facing if we allow widespread drilling on the Outer Continental Shelf. We could see our beaches closed for business because of oil spills.

In my home State of New Jersey, our shore is a priceless treasure that my State would protect at any cost, but the shore also generates tens of billions of dollars in revenues each year and supports almost half a million jobs. It simply makes no sense to jeopardize a tourism and fishing economy worth tens of billions of dollars in exchange for a cumulative total of only a half year's supply of oil. The people of New Jersey cannot afford the risk of mil-

lions of gallons of oil washing up on our beaches.

This is not just a New Jersey problem. Florida's beaches generate billions of dollars each year. In South Carolina, Myrtle Beach alone brought in \$3 billion in revenues. Do we want oil washing up onto the pristine Cape Hatteras National Seashore? What about Virginia Beach? Can Maryland's famous blue crab survive yet another environmental assault?

The bottom line is the minority leader's proposal will do nothing to lower gas prices, but it will jeopardize coastal economies all along both coasts. Is there anything we can responsibly do to ease the pain of such high gas prices? The answer is a resounding yes.

One important way to address oil prices that I hope we will be debating more fully in the next week or so is to better regulate oil markets. Many analysts who have testified before the relevant House and Senate committees agree that based on pure supply and demand, the price of oil should be somewhere between \$50 and \$70 a barrel. So why are we hitting \$125 a barrel? In part, it is because of excessive speculation on futures markets, and unlike other markets such as the commodities involving corn or soybean futures, oil is being traded around the globe with little or no oversight by the U.S. Government. If the Enron disaster teaches us anything, it should be that markets cannot be allowed to operate without real oversight. In the upcoming weeks when the Senate debates the comprehensive Democratic plan to address runaway gas prices, one of the most important aspects of that package will be increased regulation of oil markets so we can effectively combat excess speculation and any possible market manipulation.

Another important measure to bring short-term relief to the pain at the pump is the majority leader's amendment to be voted on tomorrow. This amendment would suspend filling the Strategic Petroleum Reserve at least through December 2008. When the people of this country are suffering with almost \$4-a-gallon gas, when the price of oil has broken \$125 a barrel, why would we be burying this precious commodity when we need it the most? We should stop pouring all that oil into a hole in the ground until the price of crude oil recedes to \$75 or less. This will truly help drive gas prices back down by increasing supply and offering some immediate relief to Americans.

It is very important that we look at these proposals. Even Jim Woolsey is fond of saying, by buying oil in such huge quantities and at such high prices, we are funding both sides of the war on terror. So it seems to me that if we want to do something about kicking our addiction, we don't go after more of it; we move in a different direction. We suspend the Strategic Petroleum Reserve that is already 97 percent full. We will have that opportunity tomorrow. Then we look at mar-

ket speculation and these other elements of a truly broad-based effort that preserves our natural resources, preserves the economy that those natural resources generate, as the New Jersey shore does, and then ultimately achieves the goal of not only driving down the cost of gas but at the same time move us in a different direction to break our dependency.

So what are the real long-term solutions to ending our dependence on oil and greening our transportation fleet?

The first thing we need to do is drastically improve fuel economy. In 1976, our cars and trucks got 13 miles per gallon. Because of the Arab oil crisis, we passed laws to improve the fuel economy of our passenger vehicles. From 1976 to 1981, we saw a rapid increase in fuel economy. In 1981, our fleet had improved to 21 miles per gallon. But since 1981, without the political will to improve fuel economy standards and the rising popularity of SUVs, the average fuel economy of our passenger vehicle fleet actually declined to 20 miles per gallon in 2006.

What would have happened if we had kept slowly improving the fuel economy of our vehicles from 1981 to the present? If we had increased fuel economy a modest 2 percent per year during that time, our new fleet of vehicles would now average 34 miles per gallon. While this is certainly a huge improvement over where we sit today, it was definitely achievable since this figure is still well below standards set in Japan which are over 40 miles per gallon.

Astonishingly, if we had followed this course, our current demand for oil would be over one-third less than it is today, down over 2 billion barrels of oil per year. Cumulatively, we would have saved over 30 billion barrels of oil. Thirty billion barrels of oil is more oil than the entire proven oil reserves remaining in the United States. This means that this sensible and achievable policy could have saved us more oil than we could ever hope to gain from domestic drilling. It is commendable that we have finally raised fuel economy standards, but we must make even further reductions if we want to make up for lost time.

Of course, fuel efficiency is just part of the answer to solving our addiction to oil. We also need tax incentives to increase the production and use of superefficient vehicles already out there—such as hybrids. We need a massive investment in cars that can run on sustainable alternative fuels like electricity or cellulosic ethanol. Once we truly have a choice of fuels, the grip of our oil addiction will finally loosen.

This country also needs to invest in our mass transit infrastructure. This weekend the New York Times reported that mass transit is up all over the country. We need a huge investment in mass transit to make sure that we all have multiple transportation options so we are not so reliant on driving.

But while most of the Democratic Party supports these sensible policy reforms, my friends on the other side of the aisle are stuck in the past advocating old positions from previous Congresses. Mr. President, I hope that this will be the last time I need to rise in this Chamber to point out that more oil drilling in environmentally sensitive areas is not the answer to our oil addiction. It is time for an intervention.

It is time for a real cure based on a tough examination and reordering of our energy priorities—and not the tired old policies of the past.

I yield the floor.

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, it is time for us to get real about energy. It is time for us to get real about gas prices. Withholding from the American people new oil supplies needed to get gas prices down will only hurt our families and our workers more.

American families are suffering from record pain at the pump. Truckers and shippers face layoffs and losses. Farmers, processors, and packagers are sending their food to market with higher prices and higher costs, and airlines are once again threatened with bankruptcy.

Whether you drive a car, a big rig or a tractor, you know personally what I am talking about. With average gas prices now topping \$3.70 a gallon, you have a right to demand some answers about our energy future. Your pain and suffering demands we supply you with relief. Relief comes in the form of economics 101. Folks, every time prices are too high, there is too much demand and too little supply. Now, maybe some of our colleagues did not take the economics course, but I believe in common sense, and I believe the American people have common sense. They realize that when you don't have enough of something, and the demand keeps going up, the price goes up.

That is how our system works. Answers that focus only on demand and not on supply are not enough to fix the problem. So we are where we are today with record high gas prices inflicting record pain at the pump.

Don't get me wrong. I support good, strong measures to reduce the demand for oil. Last year, I supported Congress's measure to increase aggressively but achievable high standards for corporate average fuel economy, or CAFE. That would force better gas mileage from cars and trucks. But those new fuel efficiency requirements will take years before they have an effect. In the meantime, families and workers will suffer through years of higher gas prices. Auto makers cannot go out tomorrow and build a new fleet of high gas mileage cars and trucks. New cars take years to design and build.

Even if highly efficient cars were available tomorrow, families in the middle of 4-year car loans probably cannot go out and buy a new car. They have to wait until they can purchase a

more fuel-efficient car. In the meantime, these families will suffer through more years of higher prices.

We can cut demand with more people riding mass transit, and I have supported mass transit. I will continue to do so. But if you don't have mass transit in your area, such as where I live and where a whole lot of people in rural America live, you cannot move to the city or get a different job. In the meantime, you will suffer through years more of higher gas prices.

We can cut demand by subsidizing hybrid vehicles. Congress supported those tax credits, as I do. But hybrid cars are too expensive now and will take too many years to become affordable to most families. We are working in Missouri to get much more efficient, much lighter batteries that can help meet the needs for hybrid and plug-in cars. In the meantime, while we are working on those technologies, families will suffer through years more of higher gas prices.

I, for one, am unwilling to allow families to suffer years more of higher gas prices, while we wait for demand strategies to work.

To address supply, some say we should take our hat in hand and beg our Middle Eastern suppliers to produce more oil. Since when has increasing our dependence on the Middle East ever been a good idea?

Some propose raising taxes on suppliers searching and developing new domestic oil supplies. Since when has taxing something more ever increased its supply or lowered its price? Never. When we put taxes on those who are searching and developing for new domestic oil supplies, we ensure that there won't be as much and the price will be higher.

Some say we should investigate suppliers to probe what is making prices so high. I too support investigating wrongdoing, but since when has investigating something ever increased its supply or lowered its price?

The American people deserve more than begging, taxing, and investigating. American families and workers deserve real actions toward real solutions. America doesn't need to look that far. Indeed, the solutions to America's supply problems are right here in our own backyard. America's lands, ocean floors, and mountains hold billions of gallons of oil waiting for us to come and get it.

We have millions of gallons of oil beneath the frozen tundra of northern Alaska. Had there not been a veto in 1995 of the development of the sources above the Arctic circle in Alaska, we would be getting a million gallons of oil a day from Alaska. You cannot tell me that would not lower the price. It would have a huge impact. We also have millions of gallons of oil beneath the seabeds miles off our coasts. We have billions of gallons of oil trapped in the shale beneath our Rocky Mountains.

Tapping these new U.S. supplies will help relieve prices immediately. While

it is true it will take years before new supplies will come on, we will send an immediate signal to the speculators in the oil trading markets that new suppliers are on their way. They cannot continue to push prices higher.

Today's prices built on limited supply and a world dependent on trouble spots will see America deciding to open vast and safe new oil supplies. Oil prices, built on predicting the future, will have no choice but to fall in the face of a future safe, new supply source for America.

We can also face the future using new technologies. America owns, and uses every day, environmentally friendly oil technologies that are cleaner than ever before for exploring, developing, and producing. We can drill sideways deep underground to avoid sensitive areas above. We can drill many locations from a single site to avoid sensitive areas around.

Environmentally friendly operations in northern Alaska can drill in the winter and be gone long before any animals are active in the spring.

Environmentally friendly operations could drill in the ocean and survive hurricanes such as Katrina with no spilled oil or gas. Does anybody recall the spills resulting when Hurricane Katrina tore through the Gulf of Mexico drilling rigs? No, because they didn't happen.

To say we would repeat the mistakes of the 1960s and 1970s with the same 40-year-old technology is like saying we will all continue to call ourselves on rotary telephones or write each other on typewriters.

Another source of transportation fuel from new technology is coal to liquids. The technology to turn coal into liquid jet fuel or diesel has been around for a hundred years. We now have the technology to capture carbon emissions and make it cleaner than refining conventional oil and, in addition, providing a greater supply.

We are also developing even cleaner and more affordable forms of biofuels. Technology giving us clean-burning corn ethanol today will give us cellulosic ethanol tomorrow with grasses and wood chips.

In my State of Missouri, gas is 10 cents cheaper than it otherwise would be because we require 10 percent ethanol in all pumps. This will save Missouri drivers \$285 million this year. Some people say ethanol is driving up prices. Ethanol is a lot cheaper to produce, and it uses fermentation, not the cat cracking that goes into regular gasoline. It brings down prices; it doesn't drive up the price of the fuel. The overall shortage of fuel has driven up the price for food. But most importantly, the Government hoarding food is driving up the price. Don't make farmers the scapegoats. They are responding to the demand Congress made of them to go out and build ethanol-producing plants and produce the ethanol to get cleaner, cheaper, domestically-produced energy. That is what they are doing.

Now the future is brighter in many areas because of new, cleaner technologies. We can have a brighter future of energy supplies if we let all these new technologies work for us.

We can also have a brighter future of energy supplies if we stop being selfish and start thinking about the collective good. Too many individuals are willing to say "not in my backyard," even if it means the group suffers. Too many groups pursue NIMBY strategies even if it means the Nation suffers.

Nobody here is trying to force Alaska to do something Alaska doesn't want to do. Alaskans want to open more of their oil reserves. But it is people in places such as Massachusetts saying no to Alaska.

No one here is trying to force Virginia to do something it doesn't want to do. Virginians want to explore for oil and gas off their coastline. It is people in places such as California and New Jersey saying no to Virginians.

Nobody here is trying to force Colorado to do something it doesn't want to do. Colorado wants to tap the shale beneath its mountains. It is people in places such as Washington, DC, saying no to Colorado.

This type of NIMBY sentiment must end. This type of selfishness must end. This type of inflicting multiyear pain waiting for demand strategies must end. We must no longer deny Americans the new supply solutions they need. We must no longer refuse American families and workers the lower gas prices they demand.

We must not only suspend shipments to the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, we must also open new oil supplies in northern Alaska, open new oil and gas supplies under our oceans, and open new oil shale supplies under our mountains, and open our ability to refine more oil. We must open the ability of U.S. workers to manufacture more hybrid batteries.

I urge my colleagues to support the Republican amendment and provision that will be coming tomorrow.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts is recognized.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I know many of my colleagues have spoken about the energy challenge and the crisis we face. I look forward to supporting Senator REID's amendment tomorrow. That amendment has been outlined in great detail during the course of the afternoon. I am in strong support of that amendment.

We are facing a national challenge, and if you look back, historically, when we have been facing a national challenge—and this time is a wartime—not to say all of this crisis is from the war, but whether it is adding to the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, or bidding up prices in other parts of the world, it is unconscionable that we have these extraordinary windfall profits that are out of the pockets of working families. And the indifference of this administration to the plight of these working families is appalling.

I applaud our leader for the legislation we will have a chance to vote on tomorrow and, hopefully, we will have a strong vote in support of it. It is inevitable that we are going to be successful because the American people are not going to tolerate the indifference and the extraordinary profiteering that is being experienced in this country at this time. I thank our leader for his efforts and his recommendations to the Senate, and I look forward to voting in support of that tomorrow.

DETAINEE BASIC MEDICAL CARE ACT OF 2008

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I am speaking in support of legislation Senator MENENDEZ and I have introduced today. It is the Detainee Basic Medical Care Act of 2008, to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to deliver timely and effective medical and mental health care to the individuals in custody.

In the past week alone, the Washington Post, "60 Minutes," and the New York Times have documented the shameful state of medical care in these detention facilities. These are people who come to the United States from all corners of the world. Some come to join their families; others come to search for jobs; others come as refugees. Some may be eligible to remain in the United States. Others may be subject to deportation. But at a minimum, they deserve basic medical care while in detention pending the outcome of their immigration proceedings, which often can take years. None of them deserves a death sentence.

Congress has an obligation to act. The bill's introduction is an important first step, and the legislation raises the medical standards and restores accountability for meeting those standards.

I look forward to working closely with Senator MENENDEZ and others in the Senate to address what is really a national disgrace.

EMPLOYER-EMPLOYEE COOPERATION ACT

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, one of fundamental importance and fundamental fairness, legislation we will be voting on tomorrow in the late morning, it is called the Public Safety Employer-Employee Cooperation Act.

This week, May 11 to May 17, is Police Week, when we honor the sacrifices of the men and women of the law enforcement community who lost their lives this year. These officers paid the ultimate price for their service to our communities. They are American heroes, as are all of the firefighters, emergency medical technicians, and other first responders across the country who protect our families and communities every day.

President Kennedy established the first Police Week in 1962. He called on all Americans to recognize the essen-

tial role public safety officers play in safeguarding our rights and freedoms. That role is even more important in today's complex and often dangerous world.

We all continue to enjoy the fundamental rights of a free people because of the sacrifices of these dedicated public servants. The least that we owe them in return is to protect their basic rights and to treat them with the dignity and respect they deserve.

Unfortunately, too many of our public safety officers do not have the same rights in the workplace that most Americans enjoy. Police officers and firefighters perform some of the most difficult and dangerous jobs in our society, but they often don't have a voice at work to talk about safety issues. They are the ones on the front lines fighting fires, preventing crimes, apprehending offenders and doing their best to keep people safe from harm. But they don't have a way to share the lessons they have learned about how to do these difficult jobs safely and effectively.

We are asking these workers to do so much for their communities, and the least we can do in return is give them a voice at the table in the life-and-death discussions that affect their families and their futures.

Across America, unions give millions of workers that kind of voice on the job. Throughout history, unions have always led the fight for a safer, fairer workplace. Unions mean decent wages and benefits. Unions mean economic security and dignity for workers, and a strong middle class for our Nation.

Public safety officers deserve the opportunity to choose for themselves whether they want the advantages that unions bring.

Providing these basic rights of first responders is essential not only for their own interests but also for the safety of our communities, and the safety of our entire Nation. In this post-9/11 era, we have asked first responders to take on a new and indispensable role in homeland security. We face new threats that require efficient and effective coordination between State and local public safety workers and federal security agencies. With these new partnerships, it becomes vital to our national interest that State and local public safety services are carried out as effectively as possible. Studies show that giving workers a voice at the table, and facilitating cooperation between public safety workers and their employers is the best way to improve the quality of public safety services and protect our homeland security.

That is why it is an honor to join Senator GREGG in sponsoring the Public Safety Employer-Employee Cooperation Act.

This important bill will ensure that all firefighters, police officers, and emergency medical personnel have the opportunity to have a voice in the policies that affect their safety and their