

This administration opposes nearly every form of domestic energy production.

They do, however, support the use of clean, efficient, and domestically produced natural gas. Currently, 50 percent of American homes are heated with natural gas. In addition, 15 percent of our nation's electric power is generated by natural gas. And while demand for natural gas is expected to increase by 30 percent over the next decade, the administration has not provided the land access necessary to increase supply.

As this map demonstrates, federal lands in the Rocky Mountains and the Gulf of Mexico, along with offshore areas in the Atlantic and the Pacific, contain over 200 trillion cubic feet of natural gas. Access to this land could provide the resources necessary to meet current demand for nearly ten years.

Unfortunately, this land and millions of acres of forest are either closed to exploration or effectively off limits. Simply put, our nation's producers can't meet demand without greater access to the resources God gave us.

I am a strong supporter of alternative and renewable energy. I have been a leader in the Senate in promoting alternative energy sources as a way of protecting our environment and increasing our energy independence.

My support for expanding the production of ethanol, wind and biomass energy has directly led to the increased use of these abundant renewable energy resources. But right now, these are only part of the solution, and President Clinton and Vice President GORE know that.

The administration does not have a plan to deal with our current energy needs. I believe the solution is clear.

It is time to support and encourage responsible resource development—using our best technology to protect our environment—to increase domestic energy production. It is time to make use of the vast resources this great country has to offer. Only then will we be free from so much dependence on foreign sources of energy.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I express my appreciation to Senator GRASSLEY for his wise remarks about our energy policy. Certainly natural gas is the cleanest burning of our fossil fuels. We will need it more and more because every electric powerplant that is being built is a natural gas plant. The Senator makes an outstanding and valuable point that we have to do a better job of producing more.

(The remarks of Mr. SESSIONS and Mr. HUTCHINSON pertaining to the introduction of S. 3143 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

#### AN ATTACK ANSWERED

Mr. HUTCHINSON. Mr. President, when I was elected to the House of Representatives back in 1992, I spent 2 years serving in the minority—2 years; in 1993 and 1994—before the Republican victories in the 1994 elections brought about the first Republican majority in the House of Representatives in 40 years.

Having now been on the majority side for 5½ years, I am very appreciative of the 2 years I served in the minority. Having had the experience of knowing what it is to be in the minority, to have the agenda set by the majority side, to have the frustration of having vote after vote in which you come up on the short end, is important. I think it helps me in understanding the frustrations the other side has experienced. It also helps me understand now, being in the majority, how hard it is to lead and to govern.

I remember in those first 2 years, we were pretty organized in lobbying criticisms and lobbying objections and in presenting our agenda to the American people. We didn't have to worry about legislating. We didn't have to worry about passing anything. We didn't have the votes to do that. But we could do a lot in framing the debate.

As we approach the end of this session, it is much easier to criticize in the minority than to govern in the majority. It is easy to say no; it is easy to find even the slightest flaw with a legislative proposal as a rationale for opposing it and blocking it. When you are in the majority, the job of calling up tough bills, debating the very tough issues, taking the very tough votes, that is what governing is about.

That is why I have come to the floor this afternoon. I believe an attack unanswered is an attack assumed.

Last week, Senator BYRD, for whom I have the greatest admiration, came to the floor and noted that few Members in this body have ever witnessed how the Senate is really supposed to function. I concur with that; I agree entirely. I believe it takes a commitment, a commitment from both sides of the aisle to complete our appropriations obligations in a timely fashion and to ensure the Senate is governing and functioning the way it is supposed to.

The fact is, there are a number of Senators who don't seem to want bills signed into law but who want issues. Why? Because it is easier to demagogue an issue than it is to legislate an issue. So who gets left holding the buck? Who gets the blame if legislation, for any reason, does not pass? It is clearly the majority in the Congress who will get blamed if the Government shuts down, as we have already found out. It is those who are in the majority in Congress, clearly, who get the blame.

In terms of another Government shutdown, I assure the American people and my colleagues that despite any dispute over issues pending, the Government will not shut down if we have

anything to say about it or anything to do about it, if it can be prevented in any way. Social Security checks will be delivered, health care services under Medicare will be funded, and our Nation's veterans will not be left out in the cold.

That being said, we still have 11 appropriations bills unsigned and multiple unrelated issues on the table. The education of our kids, prescription drugs, and a Patients' Bill of Rights are all there, still on the table. Since these unrelated issues seem to get tossed around a great deal, let me talk about them plainly for a few minutes and why the minority continues to insist on their passage by holding up our Nation's spending bills.

First of all, in the area of education, the other side maintains that we are not having a debate on education in the 106th Congress. I suggest that the other side of the aisle doesn't really want a bill; they want an issue. They say that unless we vote for their few education proposals, which, by the way, would concentrate even more power in the Department of Education, we are not having a debate on education. I think that is not fair, and it is not accurate.

During the 106th Congress, we have already voted six times on the class size reduction initiative. Six times we have all been called upon to cast our vote, to go on the record, even though that has been misconstrued and misrepresented to the American people. We have been willing to debate it. We have been willing to cast votes a half dozen times during this Congress alone.

As my distinguished colleague from Alabama pointed out, the Department of Education has failed to pass an audit for 3 years in a row. They can't even account for how the money is being spent currently. So it is not unreasonable that many of us have reservations in giving them more power and more authority in the area of school construction and the hiring of 100,000 new teachers.

According to the Congressional Daily Monitor, a press conference was held recently with Treasury Secretary Larry Summers and Education Secretary Dick Riley, "demanding that Republicans accept their positions." So after voting six times against the class size reduction initiative in the Senate, you would think the attitude would not be their way is the only way. Our side of the aisle has been more than accommodating in providing funding that was reserved for class size reduction. In the fiscal year 2001 Labor-HHS appropriations bill, Republicans have appropriated the \$1.3 billion for class size reduction in the title VI State grant so that schools who want to use the funding for this initiative are able to do so. But schools that have already achieved the goal of class size reduction or have more pressing problems can use the funding for other priority items such as professional development or new textbooks.

One would think that is a reasonable, acceptable compromise, a middle ground. But instead, we hear the other side saying: It is our way or no way. We are going to block the appropriations bills unless you do it exactly the way we want it. They contend, again, unless we are voting for class size reduction, we are avoiding the issue of education, even though we have already voted on class size reduction six times in this Congress.

The Democrats considered bringing this issue up again in the HELP Committee just last week as an amendment to a bipartisan bill to fully fund the IDEA program. If a debate on education is what the other side really wants, then why did they object to multiple unanimous consent requests on the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act to keep the debate on education?

The ESEA debate was moving along very well on the Senate floor. There was a consensus that only a few amendments should be offered and they should be germane. They should relate to education. But then on the other side of the aisle there were those who objected to those agreements to keep the debate limited to education. I know that I and my colleagues on this side of aisle would be more than willing to return to S. 2, the reauthorization of this critical elementary and secondary education bill, to debate education, if we would simply have that agreement to limit the amendments not to everything under the sun, not to prescription drugs and a Patients' Bill of Rights and minimum wage and everything else, but to limit that debate to education.

I am not going to allow Members on the other side of the aisle to have it both ways. You claim that we are not dealing with education and then object to agreements to keep education debates on education bills. I suggest you are looking for an issue, not the passage of legislation.

Then on the issue of prescription drugs, my distinguished colleague from Illinois, Senator DURBIN, last week—I had the opportunity to preside as he made this speech, but I want to quote him—said:

On the other side, they make a proposal which sounds good but just will not work. Under Governor Bush's proposal on prescription drugs, he asserts for 4 years we will let the States handle it. There are fewer than 20 States that have any drug benefits. Illinois is one of them, I might say. His home State of Texas has none. But he says let the States handle it for 4 years. Let them work it out. In my home State of Illinois, I am glad we have it, but it certainly is not a system that one would recommend for the country. Our system of helping to pay for prescription drugs for seniors applies to certain illnesses and certain drugs. If you happen to be an unfortunate person without that kind of coverage and protection, you are on your own.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BUNNING). The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. HUTCHINSON. I ask unanimous consent for 5 additional minutes.

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

Mr. HUTCHINSON. I know Senator MCCAIN is waiting. I appreciate very much his graciousness.

The fact is, while Senator DURBIN made that comment, every State does have a Medicaid program that offers prescription drugs today. In addition, they have State employee drug programs already in existence. These programs are separate from the State pharmaceutical assistance programs, of which 25 currently exist. So Senator DURBIN's argument is unfair and unjustified because the money given to the States is not required to be used to only start a new pharmaceutical assistance program.

They can be used to expand the existing Medicaid drug programs. So Governor Bush's helping hand drug plan provides greater assistance to low-income seniors, and provides it now, while Vice President GORE's plan requires an 8-year phase-in for those drug benefits. So I suggest that we are getting a lot of demagoguery.

The Patients' Bill of Rights is the final issue I wanted to talk about, but I will reserve that for another time. I will say this, and say it clearly: We have an active conference that has been working, and working hard. We had numerous votes on the Patients' Bill of Rights. We had endless amendments in the committee on the Patients' Bill of Rights. To suggest this isn't a deliberative body, as the Democratic leader suggested last week, is unfair. This issue has been debated, and debated thoroughly. It is the Democrats who stifled the debate by walking out on the conference in the spring. We can still have a Patients' Bill of Rights enacted if we have co-operation. There are two sides to every story, and both should be told. Let's not allow two competing agendas to prevent us from getting our work done on the spending bills. They are too important.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona is recognized.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

#### MOTOR VEHICLE AND MOTOR VEHICLE EQUIPMENT DEFECT NOTIFICATION IMPROVEMENT ACT

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, first I want to discuss an issue that is of sometimes importance, the Motor Vehicle and Motor Vehicle Equipment Defect Notification Improvement Act.

Last week, the Commerce Committee reported S. 3059, the Motor Vehicle and Motor Vehicle Equipment Defect Notification Improvement Act. The bill is in response to the systemic failure of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and the motor vehicle industry to share information that

could have prevented the fatalities that resulted in the recent recall of millions of Bridgestone/Firestone tires.

The key provisions of the bill would insure that NHTSA has the information that it needs from manufacturers to make sound decisions, including information about recalls in foreign countries. This legislation would increase penalties to deter manufacturers from withholding valuable information about recalls and establish appropriate penalties for the most egregious actions that place consumers in danger. It would also require NHTSA to upgrade the Federal motor vehicle safety standard for tires, which has not been updated since its adoption more than 30 years ago.

It is my understanding that a few Members have placed holds on this bill for various reasons—I think there are two—including opposition to the inclusion of criminal penalties for violating motor vehicle safety standards. Clearly, each member is entitled to place a hold on measures to which they object, but I hope that members can understand the importance of acting on the key provisions of this bill before Congress adjourns.

The criminal penalties provision in this bill have been the subject of much discussion. The provision is intended to allow for the assessment of criminal penalties in instances where a manufacturer's conduct is so egregious as to render civil penalties meaningless. An article in this week's Business Week, addresses the application of criminal penalties to such conduct. It reports that "prosecutors have been waking up to the fact that criminal sanctions may be a more effective deterrent and punishment than the worst civil penalties." Furthermore, a criminal penalties provision is not a novel inclusion. Multiple agencies are authorized to assess criminal penalties, including, among others, the Department of Labor, the Consumer Product Safety Commission, and the Environmental Protection Agency.

Already, NHTSA has linked more than 100 deaths to these tire failures. Last week, NHTSA announced that other models of Bridgestone/Firestone tires may be defective as well. We must act quickly to correct the problems that could lead to further loss of life. As I have repeated throughout the process, I am willing to work with my colleagues to address their concerns so that this vital legislation may be passed prior to the adjournment of this Congress.

In summary, more than 100 people have died. It is clear that we need this legislation. It is supported by the administration and by every consumer group in America. It passed through the Commerce Committee unanimously. I intend to come to the floor and ask that we consider this piece of legislation.

I expect those who are putting a hold on this bill to come forward and give their reasons for putting a hold on this