

EXTENSION OF MORNING
BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that morning business be extended until 2 o'clock today.

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

Mr. REID. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DODD. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

NEGOTIATIONS ON THE ISSUE OF
VOTER IDENTIFICATION

Mr. DODD. Madam President, I just want to give the Presiding Officer a little bit of an update on where things are regarding negotiations on the Schumer-Wyden-Bond issue involving the question of voter identification.

Staffs are meeting. There has been no resolution, I am sad to report, at this juncture, but they are meeting and are working on this.

I thank Senator SCHUMER and Senator WYDEN and their staffs, along with Senator BOND and his staff, to see if they can come forward with a compromise proposal. As I mentioned two or three times already today, I hoped that would have happened before we got to the vote today. I made a pitch and appeal on numerous occasions, but there was not much of an appetite for a compromise until now.

My hope is we can come to this sooner rather than later. I apologize to my colleagues. I apologize to Senator DASCHLE, who has been absolutely stellar in all of this. I am sure he is going to remind me for years to come, when he asked me how long this bill might take, I said I thought we could do it in a day. I suspect I will hear that story over and over again for many years to come.

We have been on it 2 days. We were on it for 2 days when we were not in session, a Friday and a Monday. We did get some work done then. On the Thursday of the week before recess, we were here, and yesterday, now today, so at least 2½ days.

My hope is that by later this afternoon, sooner rather than later, we can report a compromise proposal, then the rest of the amendments we can deal with fairly quickly. There will be votes on some. I don't anticipate that any one of them, regardless of the outcome, would provoke the kind of situation we are in at this particular juncture.

Hope springs eternal, even in February. I am hopeful that before the afternoon is out, we can make a favorable report to the Chair and to our colleagues that the election reform bill is prepared to move forward and get to final passage.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

STEEL

Ms. MIKULSKI. Madam President, today I come to the Senate Chamber to stand up for steel. There is a crisis in America's steel industry. The next few weeks will determine the fate and future of that industry and, I believe, the fate and future of our steelworkers today and our retired steelworkers.

I commend President Bush for initiating the section 201 investigation on steel. That means an investigation by the International Trade Commission on whether or not we are facing unfair dumping. I am now calling on the President to impose an effective remedy; that is, a remedy of 40-percent tariffs across the board on steel.

Since 1997, 31 steel companies have gone bankrupt, putting at risk over 62,000 jobs. Why is this? It is exactly what the International Trade Commission found: Subsidized foreign steel companies dump their excess products on the United States market at below market prices. They come into the United States and flood us with their imports at fire sale prices.

In response to this unprecedented crisis, President Bush did take an important step of initiating an investigation under section 201 of the trade act. The ITC unanimously found that these imports have caused serious harm to the American steel industry. Now the President has to act before tens of thousands more jobs are lost and retirees face the threat to their pensions and their health care. He must take meaningful action, not just some half measure that doesn't meet the challenge of the crisis.

Steel is in crisis. Last year, 17 steel companies filed for bankruptcy protection, 14 steel mills shut down, and nearly 30,000 workers lost their jobs.

Why does steel matter? This is not nostalgia for our industrial past. This is about our national and our economic security.

If we are worried about dependence on foreign oil, we should certainly be worried about dependence on foreign steel. We need steel to build America, whether it is our bridges or our automobiles, and also for our national security. In my own home State of Maryland, Bethlehem Steel made the steel plate to repair the U.S.S. *Cole*. It is American steel that is building Navy ships, Navy subs, American planes, the kind of steel we need for those bunker-buster bombs we need.

Are we going to rely upon Russia, China, and other countries and be steel dependent? I don't think we should do that.

What about our steelworkers and our steelworker retirees? There are over 300,000 people currently working as steel and iron workers. There are now over 700,000 retirees and surviving spouses. All told, there are more than 1 million Americans, both retired and on the job now, who depend on steel for their livelihood, their pension, and their health care.

What caused this crisis? Is it because American steel was inefficient, because the unions wouldn't cooperate with management, because we didn't use new technologies or new processes? Absolutely not. The reason American steel is in such dire straits is unfair trade. Foreign steel companies, subsidized by their government, dump excess steel in our market at those fire sale prices.

The United States of America does not have excess capacity. The United States and Canada have been net importers of steel. If you want to look at examples of these subsidies, let me give you one: Russia. This comes from the Bloomberg Business Report. This does not come from BARB MIKULSKI. The Bloomberg Report last week talked about how the Russian Government keeps 1,000 unprofitable steel plants open through Russian subsidies. That is not 1,000 workers; that is 1,000 steel plants. Because of those subsidies, they are able to stay in operation.

How can we compete with Russian subsidies where they have comrade health care, all their health care is paid for, they get subsidies in steel, and at the same time we are expected to compete?

What is the solution? We need a level playing field by reducing excess steel capacity abroad.

The way we also send them a message to stop the dumping is by imposing a 40-percent tariff. That would level the playing field. Half measures will not do. We need that 40-percent tariff and we need it without exception. The effects will last much longer than the 3 or 4 years because America's steel industry will have a chance to get back on its feet.

America's steel industry is the best in the world and I can't emphasize how competitive we are. It is the most efficient, uses the fewest man-hours available per ton, thanks to our steelworkers making the best use of technology and a willingness to cooperate with management. It is also the most environmentally sound, producing less emissions on steel produced.

Do you think those 1,000 Russian steel mills are going to be environmentally sensitive and OSHA compliant? I don't think so. American steel companies have invested over \$20 billion in new technology to achieve these efficiencies. American steelworkers have made painful concessions in wages and benefits so that the industry would be efficient and competitive and would have a future.

Madam President, the President must act now. The next few weeks will

determine the fate and future of the steel industry. There is a March 6 deadline for a remedying decision, the tariff decision. The President has the authority. We want him now to have the will. We want him to impose this 40-percent tariff, give American steel mills a future and, most of all, protect the United States of America against dependence on foreign steel. Steel built our Nation; steel will continue to build our Nation, and most of all, steel will help us protect our Nation. Steel built America and it is now time that we stand up for steel. I hope we can count on the President to do this, and we thank him for the work he has already done.

I yield the floor and look forward to standing with the Presiding Officer as we stand up for steel.

Mr. REID. Madam President, before the Senator leaves the floor, I want to say that she is a leader on this issue. I told her privately yesterday that whenever she pointed me to help steel, I would be there. I also say it is not often that you find a Senator who works as hard privately as publicly. I have been in a number of private meetings with the Senator from Maryland, where she has been a staunch vocal advocate of doing something to help the steelworkers and the steel industry of this country.

The people of Maryland should understand the advocacy of this giant from Maryland who is working so hard for the people who have been so good to America—the steelworkers and the steel industry, generally.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Madam President, I thank the Senator from Nevada for those gracious and complimentary remarks. This is a man from Searchlight, NV. He knows what hard work is because of the way he pulled himself up by the bootstraps, and he has given opportunity to other people. All those people working in the mines in Nevada, who every day have those calloused hands in the end, have a very strong advocate in him. We have to stand up for the ordinary people who do extraordinary things in our country. I look forward to working with the Senator.

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Madam president, I ask unanimous consent that morning business be extended until the hour of 3 p.m. today.

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

Mr. REID. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DORGAN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

THE WIND ENERGY PRODUCTION TAX CREDIT SHOULD BE EXTENDED

Mr. DORGAN. Madam President, about a week ago I spoke briefly on a subject that falls under the jurisdiction of the Senate Finance Committee and that is referred to as the extenders. This term does not mean much to people, but the extenders are tax provisions that expire at certain times. For example, at the end of last year one of the tax provisions that expired was the wind energy production tax credit. It is a tax credit that was in law to stimulate the development of wind energy in our country.

That tax credit expired on December 31 and, at that moment, the development pretty well stopped because the expectation was that the credit would be extended, but it has not been extended. This credit is one of a handful of extenders that should have been extended at the end of last year. The Congress did not do it, because it got connected to the issue of the economic recovery package, and it went back and forth between the House and the Senate.

The fact is, at the end of the day, this tax provision expired and wind energy development has pretty well stopped around the country. By "wind energy development," I mean those developments that were on the books with plans underway, and ready to be financed and installed across the country.

What does this wind energy mean? We are going to take up an energy bill as soon as we figure out what to do with the filibuster on the election reform bill, and when we talk about the energy bill in this country we talk about the need to produce additional energy: more oil, more natural gas, more coal. Yes, we are going to produce more by digging and drilling, and do that in an environmentally acceptable way. But limitless and renewable sources of energy such as ethanol, biodiesel, wind energy, and others, are also a very important part of what we ought to be doing in this country.

Let me focus for a moment on wind energy, because I come from a State in which wind energy has great potential. The Department of Energy ranks the States and their potential for wind energy, and North Dakota ranks No. 1. We are called the Saudi Arabia of wind for its energy potential.

North Dakota is a lot of things. Most of all, it is wonderful. It ranks 50th, dead last, in native forest lands. That means we have less trees than anybody else. But we have a ranking of No. 1 in wind and the ability to take the energy from the wind, put it in transmission lines, and move it around our country to extend America's energy supply.

I held a wind energy conference in Grand Forks, ND, last week. Over 700 people came to the conference from all over the country. They had a display of a couple of the types of blades used in the new, very large turbines. One of these blades weighs 18,000 pounds.

This new technology is highly efficient and, with the small production tax credit, is also very competitive. We have brought the price of wind energy way down, and now if we extend this wind energy tax credit for 5 years, we will be able to unleash the opportunities in wind energy development.

A CEO of a company came to see me about 2 weeks ago and said his company has 150 megawatts of wind-generated electricity on the books and prepared to build in North Dakota. He told me the company has the money for it, \$130 million to \$150 million, the plans complete, but that it cannot move forward until the company knows whether Congress is going to extend the wind energy production tax credit.

The fact is, the Congress is messing around back and forth, stuttering, and not getting it done. This back and forth between the House and the Senate means the extenders did not get finished.

What does that mean? It means companies that were preparing investments and were going to be able to build wind energy facilities across this country have now put these plans on hold.

Does that make sense for the country? Is that a good energy strategy? I do not think so.

I am going to be asking unanimous consent, and I will not do it at the moment because I wanted to provide notice to others in the Chamber as a matter of courtesy, but I will ask either later today or tomorrow, unanimous consent to take up the legislation that I have previously introduced, S. 94. It provides a 5-year extension of the tax credit for electricity produced from wind. I will ask that it be discharged from the Senate Finance Committee and be brought to the floor and voted on.

This is not controversial. We have done this before. We should have done it last December but did not. It does not require a big debate. We have had debate after debate on this. It is widely supported by virtually the entire Senate and the entire House, but it does not get done. It is one of these things that runs off the ditch and gets stuck there, and nobody thinks much about it.

The problem is we are not producing the energy we could be producing, because these projects are not being built. As we get people in the Senate who ring their hands and gnash their teeth and wipe their brow about America's energy problems, I want everybody to understand that part of the solution—just part—to that problem is to build these projects that are ready to go, that can produce and create these new highly efficient wind energy turbines, that can put electricity in our transmission lines and move it around the country.

Does anybody remember California and the price spikes, some of the other problems we have experienced with energy supply? The fact is, this country needs this new form of energy.