

our energy needs which could shut down factories, lay off workers, cause lines at the gas pumps, and cause economic hardship in this country? That is our choice, and the choice is before us today: Are we going to choose to be self-reliant, like the greatest country on Earth at war, or are we going to rely on imports from countries that have already said they are going to cut us off? It is a no-brainer, Mr. President. It is a no-brainer. We must look out for the interests of America. If we are going to be the beacon of freedom in the world, this is part of our ability to protect that freedom.

We can do no less than pass an energy bill, go to conference, and work out with the White House the differences we have. Let us put the partisan differences aside and let us make sure America has a balanced energy policy. This includes conservation, renewable energy, electricity deregulation, more production in our own country of oil and gas, and lessening the liability for nuclear powerplants, so we will once again be able to build nuclear powerplants for clean energy.

The United States is not going to walk backward on protection of the environment. We will never do that. We are going to protect the environment, and at the same time we are going to protect the national security of our country, if we do the right thing.

I hope my colleagues, who have come back from 2 weeks at home, have seen the prices rise at the pump, have seen the moms in SUVs who are taking their children to school in carpools saying: My gosh, I cannot afford to fill up my tank and pay \$150; I cannot do it.

No one says: Well, do not have an SUV. If they have five or six children and they are car-pooling, they are saving a lot of money because they are doing something that would take two cars to do. They are also looking out for the safety of their children by having heavier vehicles.

The time is now. We have the opportunity to pass an energy bill and put one more piece of our homeland security in place. It is our responsibility, and I hope the Senate will step up to the plate and do the right thing.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senator from Georgia is recognized.

PRESCRIPTION DRUG LEGISLATION IS NEEDED TO HELP AMERICA'S ELDERLY

Mr. MILLER. Mr. President, there is a little family restaurant in my hometown of Young Harris, GA, that is called Mary Ann's. It is where the locals gather, and often some tourists, to enjoy the north Georgia mountains. It is a good cross-section of folks: Blue-collar laborers who build houses and cut timber; teachers from the little junior college up the street where I once taught, and may do so again;

young folks determined to eke out a living without having to move to Atlanta; retired folks who did go to the city to find work and then came back home as soon as they could.

There is also a percentage of people from States such as New York and Michigan who dreamed of retiring to the sunshine of Florida, and did. Some found it a little crowded and then came on up to our area in north Georgia. We call them halfbacks. They retired to Florida, then moved halfway back home. Nothing wrong with Florida, mind you. They just enjoy the beauty of our mountains.

The point I am making is this is a great cross-section of folks, usually equally divided between Republicans, Democrats, and Independents. It is where I do my focus groups, for free—or not exactly for free: sausage, a biscuit, and a cup of coffee.

I suggest to both parties in Washington who pay those enormous sums of money for focus groups and polling that there is a much cheaper way to do it, and I swear I believe it is just about as accurate.

Anyway, the point I want to make is over the recess I was in Mary Ann's a lot, and I processed a lot of information on the cross-tabs of my brain, you might say.

One day, an old timer, so thin he was mostly breath and britches, followed me out into the parking lot. That is where you can have real private conversations, usually with one leg propped up on the bumper of a pickup. We have known each other all of our lives. He stared deep into my eyes and he said: ZELL, I am worried about Hoyle.

Hoyle Bryson is my uncle, kind of like a father since my dad died when I was a baby. Hoyle has always lived next door. When I was a little boy, he played professional baseball in the minor leagues at far-away and exciting places such as Tallahassee, FL; Tarboro, NC; Portsmouth, VA. Most of his life he was a hunter and a trapper and worked as a lineman for the Rural Electric Association. He is 88 years old now, has lived alone for over 20 years since his wife died. Once, a strong mountain man, he now has diabetes, prostate cancer, recently had angioplasty, and this week was bothered with a kidney infection. That once strong body is gradually growing weaker.

So I am worried about Hoyle. I am worried about Hoyle, even though he still makes his own garden and keeps a passel of hound dogs, as he always has.

I took him to the doctor a few weeks ago and stopped back with him at the drugstore to fill his prescriptions. They came to well over \$100 and will only last him a couple of weeks.

Hoyle, as do most of our elderly, lives below what statistically is known as the lower poverty level threshold. This is the group that is hurt most by taxes and especially by rising health care costs. They are a valuable human re-

source that we must be, as my mountain friend said, worried about. It is not always pleasant and uplifting to see this segment of our society. They make us sad. Many of us—too many—even refuse to see them. We refuse to see them because we fear we may see ourselves to be the lonely elderly waiting, waiting for someone, anyone, to knock on their screen door and, as John Prine sings, say, "Hello in there."

The elderly are waiting for something else, too. They are waiting for us to do something about their needs. So far, they have waited in vain, each day growing older and weaker and many dying.

Do you know who we in Washington are like? We are like those people in the biblical story of the Good Samaritan who passed by the man in the ditch and refused to help him. We are no better than they are.

Our elderly have always been the backbone of our society, and if we do not give them some help soon, this Nation is going to get a permanent curvature of the spine.

Twenty-five centuries ago, Plato said it best: States are as men are. They grow out of the character of man—and woman, I might add.

If we in the Senate are to be called civilized, decent, God-fearing and God-obeying, we who are so richly blessed must meet this stark question of human need. We must have a meaningful prescription drug benefit, and we must have it soon.

I say to my fellow Senators, let us get our priorities in order. Sure, it was important to pass campaign finance reform, to try to take big money out of the political process. But is there anyone who would argue it is more important than a prescription drug benefit?

Election reform, we are going to get back on that. I am for it, too. We need to make the process easier, and we need to make it fairer. Fast-track trade, let's debate it. It is important.

These important time-consuming, well-meaning pieces of legislation that will tie this body in knots and run out the clock, are any of them close to dealing with the clear human need of a prescription drug benefit for our elderly?

If someone tuned in to the debates in this Senate since Christmas, they would conclude we care more about the welfare reform of the caribou than we do about the welfare reform of our elderly. This is a life-and-death issue about our fellow human beings, for goodness' sake. It is not about the fragility of the tundra in some far away isolated place only a very few people will ever see. It is about the fragility of a human being's last days on Earth.

There is absolutely no reason, no reason except cheap political gamesmanship, that we can't have a prescription drug benefit before election day—no good reason, no acceptable reason at all.

There are 11 prescription drug bills pending in this Senate today, all of

which would be better than what we have. With 54 different Senators listed as cosponsors, that says to me a majority of this Senate wants to do something and do it now. All of the budget proposals floating around out there include money for a prescription drug benefit.

Both parties made this promise to our elderly in the 2000 election. So why are we waiting? How much longer must we wait? How long are we going to continue to play this nonproductive, partisan, never ending ping-pong game of retribution and payback that takes up so much valuable time and, frankly, makes us all look silly and petty? How long will we keep using the antiquated rules that slow down everything to a crippled snail's pace, that on a regular basis thwarts the clear will of the majority of this body and instead substitutes the tyranny of a minority? We should stop this dilatory dillydallying and put up a sign around here that says "No Loitering."

We should cut down on some of this Presidential candidate posturing. I know you cannot do away with all of it, of course. But you want to be a contender? Quit preaching and preening and produce. You want the well off to show you the money? Show the not so well off a prescription drug benefit.

To do that, you will have to say no to some of those high-priced political strategists, those consultants who couldn't get elected dogcatcher themselves, whose advice is always the same: Have an issue, not a result. Never compromise, never accept a half of loaf of anything.

Remember FDR once said:

Try something. If it doesn't work, try something else. But for God's sake, try something.

That is what I am trying to say. I want Hoyle and all those millions like him in the land of plenty who have played by the rules and worked hard all of their lives to have some peace and hope in the twilight days of their last years.

If this so-called center of democracy keeps piddling and procrastinating and postponing this issue, I hope the American people will rise up as did those fans at that football game in Cleveland and run both teams off the field.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senator from Tennessee is recognized.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. WYDEN. For the purpose of a unanimous consent request, I ask to be recognized after the Senator from Tennessee.

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

Mr. WYDEN. I appreciate the graciousness of the Senator from Tennessee, and I ask unanimous consent that at this time morning business be extended for 10 minutes so at the conclusion of the remarks of the Senator from Tennessee I can speak as if in morning business for up to 10 minutes.

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

The Senator from Tennessee.

HUMAN CLONING

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, in the coming weeks the Senate will consider legislation to prohibit human cloning. In advance of that important debate, which will center upon this intersection of values, of ethics as it crosses with science, many have begun studying in a very careful way this complex issue.

A number of colleagues have come forward and asked me, personally, about this issue, in part because of my medical background, but also in large part because they know I am a strong advocate for and a strong supporter of stem cell research, as long as that stem cell research is conducted within a framework of a comprehensive, ethical, and moral oversight system.

The question I hear most is the following: Can one truly be an advocate for stem cell research and, at the same time, oppose human cloning experimentation? After an in-depth study of this issue from a policy standpoint, from the standpoint of being a Senator and looking at that legislation as a science, from a medical standpoint, I believe the answer to this question is yes.

Until now, the overall human cloning debate has been presented almost as an absolute choice between, on the one hand, medical science and the hope for cures and, on the other, ethical restraint.

This is an oversimplification that does not do justice to the clinical, scientific, philosophical, moral, ethical, and spiritual complexities underlying this discussion. I am glad to see that a number of my colleagues and people around the country have not locked into this false choice, but rather have stayed back to examine these in our deliberations.

After carefully considering all of the evidence brought forward in hearings and on the floor in support of human embryo research cloning experimentation, after considering the medical progress being made and that will be made through stem cell research, and after considering the overwhelming ethical concerns about human embryo cloning experimentation, I conclude that a comprehensive ban on all human cloning is the right policy at this time. I intend to support legislation consistent with this policy, and I will encourage my colleagues to do likewise.

As we move forward, one must understand the fundamental fact that I hope plays out over the next several days and weeks in the discussion. It is important; that is, embryonic stem cell research and human embryo cloning research are not the same thing. Human embryo research cloning—called therapeutic or research embryo cloning—is an experimental technique often confused with but distinct from stem cell

research. The promise of stem cell research, for Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's disease, diabetes, spinal cord injuries, autoimmune disorders, cardiovascular disease—the promise of stem cell research and the science can and will progress with a ban on human cloning embryo experimentation.

Most serious observers—I don't want to say all—agree that human reproductive cloning should be banned, must be banned. Indeed the legislation that will come to this floor will ban reproductive cloning. It is dangerous and it is unethical.

The question this body will be debating is whether or not this ban on human reproductive cloning should extend to all human embryo cloning. The issue is not cloning of DNA, that is going to continue no matter what; not cloning of molecules, that is going to continue; not cloning of cells other than cells that become or are an embryo, that is going to continue. That is not yet fully understood and, in truth, we have not debated the legislation on this floor. But that will become apparent.

The House of Representatives has already overwhelmingly passed strong bipartisan legislation comprehensively banning human embryo research cloning experimentation and reproductive cloning. Now is the time for the Senate to do so.

Those who favor human research cloning experiments often point to its potential to develop tissues that will not be rejected. In fact, on the next chart—which I will not deal with today, but will come back to—are the arguments, the overall claims that human research cloning, or human cloning research is necessary to prevent immune rejection and is necessary for other reasons.

As a heart transplant surgeon, one who spent many years of my life transplanting hearts, this immune phenomenon is something I will come back to the floor and talk about because it is very important for us to address. Advocates for human embryo research cloning and so-called therapeutic embryonic cloning experiments say it will increase the number of embryonic stem cells. We will talk about that. They say it will further basic biological knowledge. Again, we will come back and talk about that as the debate proceeds.

There are facts that will need to be presented. But moving away from the scientific standpoint, if you look at the overall ethical and moral concern, it is this: Regardless of our religious background, most of us—maybe I should say many, but I believe most of us—are extremely uncomfortable today with the idea of creating cloned human embryos, doing an experiment on them, and destroying the human embryo. That is the state of the science. That is the state of the art.

If one supports human research or therapeutic cloning, given where we are today—our understanding of science—you are in support of purposefully creating an embryo, of removing