

The only long-term solution is to increase supply.

My guess is that when we talk about increasing supply, the land offshore Rhode Island is off limits to exploration and development.

The vice president of the Oklahoma Farm Bureau put it this way: One of the industry's highest dependence on natural gas as a feedstock and critical to American agriculture is the fertilizer industry. Natural gas is the primary feedstock in the production of virtually all commercial nitrogen fertilizers in the United States, accounting for nearly 90 percent of the farmers' total cost of anhydrous ammonia. Our domestic fertilizer production capacity has already experienced a permanent loss of 25 percent over the last 4 years, and an additional increase in costs, recommending the potential of another 20 percent shutdown of that industry.

Well, I could go on with quote after quote. I know I am not talking about reauthorization of the Welfare Reform Act at this time, but an economy that employs people is in direct relationship to getting people off welfare and getting them into a good-paying job. That is what an economy that grows is all about.

When this Senate refuses to pass a national energy policy and by that failure drives up energy costs, we drive jobs offshore, we drive jobs underground, and most assuredly those who are out looking for a job for the first time in this economy are not going to find that job; they are going to want to come back to their Government and ask for help and assistance.

I thought it was appropriate that we speak about a national energy policy, about a job-creating economy, when we are talking about welfare reform. I thank the chairman of the Finance Committee for the work he has done, the very bipartisan effort once again to do what is right and responsible in the area of welfare reform.

Let me challenge this Senate, Democrat and Republican alike, to do what is right when it comes to a national energy policy. Get this country back into the business of producing oil instead of using excuses that it is somebody else's fault that the price of gas at the pump is now at a national alltime high. I will tell my colleagues whose fault it is: Call your U.S. Senator. It is his fault that gas is now high today. Do not let them duck and hide and blame big oil or blame OPEC or blame someone else. Blame your Senator. Call him today. It is his or her fault we do not have a national energy policy.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa is recognized.

Mr. GRASSLEY. I have two unanimous consent requests. The first one deals with tomorrow's business and a vote on the Snowe amendment. I ask unanimous consent that the vote in relation to Snowe amendment No. 2937 regarding childcare occur at 12:15 on

Tuesday March 30, provided further that no second degrees be in order to the amendment prior to the vote, with Senator CARPER to be recognized for up to 10 minutes prior to the vote, and that the time be counted against any Democrat-controlled time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. GRASSLEY. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to a period for morning business with Senators permitted to speak up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Michigan.

Mr. LEVIN. Reserving the right to object, I wonder if as part of that agreement we could line up speakers as follows: That Senator DURBIN be recognized in morning business for 15 minutes; followed by Senator BENNETT for 20 minutes; followed by myself for 15 minutes; followed by the Senator from Minnesota, Mr. DAYTON, for 15 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? Without objection, it is so ordered.

ENERGY POLICY

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Michigan. He has waited patiently all day. I didn't realize he had left for his office to come back. I thank him. It is generous of him to give me an opportunity to share some moments with reference to this bill and the issues raised on the floor.

As I listened to the previous speaker, my colleague and friend from the State of Idaho, explain the energy problems of America, I certainly concur with his conclusion. The cost of energy is high. That is an input for business as well as for families. As those costs go up, it becomes more difficult for our businesses in America to be competitive. Frankly, families find themselves facing inflation and heightened expenses just to drive a car to work or to use the car in a small business. As energy costs, like the cost of gasoline, go up, this conclusion is inescapable.

But I have to question the premise of the Senator from Idaho; that is, the problem is we are not drilling for enough oil in America. That certainly is one of the problems. Having an adequate supply is essential. Those of us who believe we have to continue to look for environmentally responsible sources for oil and gas think that should be part of a national effort and a national energy policy.

What is missing in the speech from the Senator from Idaho was any reference at all to the conservation of energy. Over the weekend in Chicago I bought a copy of Consumer Reports, the April issue on the 2004 automobiles. I went through it out of curiosity to find how many miles per gallon the

most popular cars in America are getting. You will find time and time again that you are lucky to find a fuel-efficient car anywhere in the range of 20 miles per gallon. Very few of them are getting more than 20 miles per gallon.

If you put this in historic context it means that in the last 60 years we have decided, as a nation, in our buying habits and in the production of automobiles, that we want heavier, less fuel-efficient cars, and that we are prepared to be more reliant on foreign sources for fuel.

We are paying the price for it. Now we are seeing shortages because we are not engaged in any discussion or commitment to conservation of energy or the fuel efficiency of our energy-using vehicles and machinery. We are paying the price for it.

We cannot drill enough oil and gas to take care of our profligate habits when it comes to energy. Let me add, as we burn this energy without any concern for conservation, we are undoubtedly adding to global warming, air pollution, and serious environmental problems that we visit on our children.

The Energy bill to which the Senator from Idaho referred must include, I would assume, some provision for greater fuel efficiency for cars and trucks. But, lo and behold, it does not. There is nothing in that bill to deal with fuel efficiency. The original bill wanted to propose drilling for oil in the ANWR. That was defeated on the Senate floor. But, sadly, the bill that finally came to us for a vote had little or nothing in it that would move us toward more fuel-efficient vehicles.

My friend from Utah, who is seeking recognition at this point, is the model for the Senate. If you look at my tall, lanky friend from Utah, he goes out of this building, down the steps, and folds himself into a Prius, if I am not mistaken?

Mr. BENNETT. It is an insight, and the question is whether or not the Senator wanted a ride in a car that throughout its history has a 53.1 miles-per-gallon history.

Mr. DURBIN. What a model Senator. I am happy to give him credit where it is due. I have watched him fold himself in and out of that car, and I have commended him in the past and I will continue to commend him. But isn't it ironic that you have to go to Japan to buy these hybrid vehicles? Finally, Detroit, in a year or so, may be producing them.

My response to the Senator from Idaho is, yes, let's have a policy debate about energy in America. But for goodness' sake, let's not believe the key to America's energy future is just finding more environmentally sensitive places to drill for oil—offshore, wilderness areas. Let's also commit ourselves to conservation of energy.

Let me address another issue. If we are talking about the competitiveness of American business, it is not just the input of energy costs. You will find many businesses resist hiring new employees because they don't want to pay

for their health insurance. Health insurance has become a breaker for businesses large and small.

Those good American companies, patriotic companies, if you will, that provide health insurance for their employees, when they sell the product in competition around the world, have to bring into the cost of that product the cost of health insurance for their employees.

The obvious question is, What are you doing, Senator? What is the Senate or House or Congress or the President doing to deal with these skyrocketing health insurance costs? The answer is: Nothing. For at least 3 years and even longer we have been afraid to even discuss the issue, as this system has fallen apart in front of our eyes.

So if you are talking about businesses being more competitive and jobs being created and making certain that our products have a chance in world commerce, energy cost is important but so is the cost of health insurance. This Congress has done nothing.

I have introduced legislation with Senator BLANCHE LAMBERT LINCOLN of Arkansas and Senator TOM CARPER of Delaware that tries to create a system much like the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program so that small businesses have access to the same private insurance pool as Federal employees across America. It would give them at least an opportunity for enrollment in a competitive atmosphere where prices could come down as a result.

Let me address the bill before us, though, because it relates to this as well. Imagine the situation of the employees still working today—thank goodness many are and have not lost their jobs, or are in low-paying jobs—and they happen to have children. One of the concerns, of course, is what happens to the kids when these employees go to work. This bill before us is welfare reform. I voted for it when it first came out, but a lot of Democrats didn't.

My friend and mentor and one of my best influences in politics was the late Paul Simon of Illinois, and he thought it was a terrible bill. I disagreed with him. I didn't very often, but I did on this bill, and I voted for welfare reform. Thank goodness the Clinton boom occurred right after we voted for welfare reform, and a lot of people came off welfare to find work.

Now we are in the sad state of affairs under the Bush administration where we have lost more than 2.6 million manufacturing jobs since the President took office. We have lost manufacturing jobs for 43 consecutive months. Frankly, as a result of that, the jobs remaining are not paying as well. So now you have a person struggling to get by, they have a low-paying job, and children; they are worried about daycare.

This bill, thank goodness, has a provision that is going to be added by the Senator from Maine in a bipartisan amendment in which Senator SNOWE

has suggested that we add \$6 billion for daycare. It is long overdue. Some 16 million children under the age of 13 live in low-income families, and they need childcare. Only 1 in 7 are eligible to receive current Federal subsidies for childcare.

The funding in the original Senate bill wouldn't even serve the children served today. So the bill that comes before us is not adequate. In 15 States there are waiting lists of families that cannot afford to pay for childcare, and they are hoping to get a subsidy which is not there.

Let me also tell you it is an expensive proposition. Full-day childcare can cost between \$4,000 and \$10,000 a year. It is comparable to the cost of college tuition. These are low-income families struggling to deal with the reality of childcare. Twenty-five percent of America's families with young children earn less than \$25,000 a year.

We have to make certain we not only take care of the childcare but also afterschool care. A lot of kids today get out of school at 2:30 or 3 in the afternoon and have nowhere to go. They are latchkey children who go home. What happens during that period before a responsible adult is on the scene? For some kids they watch television, they sit around and eat junk food; some do homework; some get in serious trouble—involvement with drugs and gangs and guns and pregnancy. Problems occur. Afterschool programs mean kids are in a healthy environment where they can learn instead of being exposed to the streets or left alone in a circumstance where they might not come out of it in a positive fashion.

Childcare works—not only childcare for smaller children but afterschool care as well. We need to make that commitment. If we are saying to a welfare mother we want her to step forward and change her life, let us accept the reality that if she is going to go, in good conscience, forward to get a job and acquire the skills and move forward, her first concern is her kid. Making sure her kids are taken care of in a safe way during the day and afterschool.

Senator SNOWE of Maine, my Republican colleague, has that bipartisan amendment which I hope is going to be adopted very quickly.

How much time do we have remaining under the unanimous consent?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Five minutes.

Mr. DURBIN. Thank you very much.

THE 9/11 COMMISSION

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I would like to close on an unrelated topic. I am in the process of reading a book, "Against All Enemies," by Richard Clarke, and as I started reading the book I was struck by the first chapter. You may remember Mr. Clarke served as the terrorism adviser and coordinator under President Clinton and then

again under this President Bush. He has been working for some 30 years as a professional in this field. He has made some statements over the last 10 days which have become a source of headlines across America.

The administration has spent more time since he first appeared on "60 Minutes" 7 or 8 days ago discrediting Richard Clarke than I have ever seen spent on any other individual. It is clear what he has said is painful to them. What he said is he believes this administration—the Bush administration, and the Clinton administration for that matter—could have done a better job in anticipating the threat of al-Qaida.

He says in his book, of course, that he thinks they were too focused on Iraq, even though there was no connection between Iraq, Saddam Hussein, and 9/11 and the al-Qaida terrorists responsible for it.

These statements have enraged the White House. They have sent everyone out—from the President on down—stating publicly that Richard Clarke is out to sell books.

If you read the first chapter of this book, you will get a much different impression of this Richard Clarke, who to many is just another faceless bureaucrat working in the White House. You will learn when you read this book—or others will tell you—that on 9/11 after the World Trade Center was struck in New York, it was Richard Clarke in his capacity as coordinator to deal with terrorism in the White House—who had I guess as much as any single person in the Government—who had a particular personal responsibility to deal with the safety of the President and the Vice President and the Cabinet, the continuity of Government, and the whole question of grounding aircraft around this country. He was the man who was at the controls at that point in time as everyone was trying to deal with what was going on.

I say that in a positive fashion because I do not know that I have ever heard many say what I have just said. But it tells me that a man who spent 30 years dealing with the intelligence and domestic security and terrorism who is now being discredited in a matter of 7 or 8 days as a person who can't be trusted to share his insights on what happened raises some important questions.

I honestly believe Richard Clarke has done us a service. He says in this book the Clinton administration could have done a better job. He says the Bush administration could have done a better job. And, frankly, we all could have done a better job, including Members of Congress, the Senate and the House. That is something we ought to face up to.

Let me also add he appeared last week before the 9/11 Commission. The September 11 Commission is a bipartisan commission cochaired by Governor Kean of New Jersey and former Congressman Lee Hamilton of Indiana—two good men, professionals who