

much time on judges, but the fact is I wish to express my appreciation to Democratic Senators for being so cooperative. Since the agreement was made a week or two ago, my Senators have been so cooperative. Senator LEAHY has had to change his whole schedule around this Monday to take care of the Griffith nomination. There has been an agreement made that we are not going to use all the time on Pryor.

I also express my appreciation to Senators LEVIN and STABENOW for allowing us to move forward on the Michigan judges. In spite of the fact that there are some hurt feelings as a result of the way the Michigan Senators were treated, they have agreed to set those aside and move forward on these two individuals. From all I have been able to determine, the two Michigan judges coming before us are well qualified, and there will not be any rancorous debate about either one of them. But I just want the majority leader to know that we have moved forward on these matters as expeditiously as possible, in spite of the relatively difficult time we have had arriving at this point.

I look forward next week to a vigorous debate on the Energy bill. It is great that we are going to be legislating here for a change. This is an extremely important piece of legislation. I am also indicating to all those within the sound of my voice how appreciative—I don't think the word "proud" is right but how appreciative—I am of the work of Senators BINGAMAN and DOMENICI to get the bill to this point.

We haven't had such cooperation on this committee in many years. We have a bill now that was reported out by a heavy margin of the committee, and I think as a result of that we will have some vigorous debate. There are some things on this side we believe should be done differently, but that is what legislation is all about. Again, having spent most of my life as a legislator, I look forward to the Senate returning to what it does best.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I think this 4-week period does demonstrate the Senate responding to the American people and what they expect, the fact that this week we are moving forward on judges, which people know has been very contentious over the last several weeks, months, and even the last couple years. We are making great progress working hand in hand on both sides of the aisle and delivering what the American people want and expect. As the Democratic leader said, we will be returning to an issue I know we care extremely about. We have not been able to make progress in several years. Because of the work of the two leaders, Senators DOMENICI and BINGAMAN, they have delivered an energy bill in a bipartisan way that will come to the Senate floor and be fully debated. We will be spending next week, week and a half, 2 weeks on the bill for debate, offering amendments, and we will start

that process in the early days of next week.

#### ENERGY INDEPENDENCE

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I do wish to comment just a bit further on energy, really as a prelude to what we will be spending a lot of time on beginning hopefully Monday and then spending the course of that week into the next week, and that is the issue surrounding gasoline prices, natural gas prices, concerns that individuals think about every single day as they turn on the lights in their home, as they go to work, on the way filling up the gas tank of their automobile with gasoline, as they use energy sources over the course of the day in the activity of their small business, and that is the energy challenges that are before us, have been before us. Now is the time to address them, and that we will.

With gasoline now averaging over \$2 a gallon, anyone who has gone to the pump lately feels that impact, they feel that squeeze of higher energy prices. It is costing families who have driven to work this morning more and more just to get to work, over the last several years costing them more to go pick up their kids from school in the afternoon, or as many people prepare for summer vacations costing them more because of this increase in energy prices. It is not just the gasoline prices that are climbing. We have rising natural gas prices that have been driving up electric bills in the last 4 months, higher electric bills for everybody, especially families and small businesses.

As energy costs take a bigger and bigger bite in the family budgets, families are able to spend less on other necessities in their lives, whether it is food or shelter or health care. As electric bills consume more and more of the small companies' assets or their bottom lines, they invest less, they invest less in inventory or in capital expenditures, or they invest less in how much they can pay employees working for that small business. In order to keep our economy strong, and it does translate down into jobs, making others' lives more fulfilling every day, we must rely on a reliable and affordable and secure supply of energy, reliable, affordable, and secure. That is the purpose of the Energy bill that will be brought to the floor of the Senate early next week.

Right now, we face enormous challenges, huge challenges. We have not had a comprehensive national energy policy or energy strategy, cohesive strategy in over 10 years. This has contributed to the higher prices. It has threatened our ability to maintain a reliable, affordable, and secure supply of energy for the future. The fact is that—and it is probably the easiest thing to remember when you start talking about energy other than the impact it has on everybody in everyday life—we are too dependent on foreign sources of energy. We have to look to a

more diverse energy series of sources. We have to look to new technologies here at home. Yes, absolutely we need to conserve more, and we also need to produce more in order to enhance our energy independence and to enhance our energy security.

One of the primary energy challenges we face is this reliance on foreign oil. In the 1960s and early 1970s, the United States produced almost as much oil as we consumed, and during that period of time imports were very small. In 1972, however, U.S. oil production began to decline, and that production has been declining steadily ever since. The U.S. consumption of oil has been steadily increasing. So we have declining production and increasing consumption.

As a result, our reliance—this I would say irresponsible reliance that we have today on foreign oil, on imported oil—is growing. Ten years ago, in 1995, we were 47 percent dependent on foreign sources of oil. Today, that 47 percent has grown to a 56-percent dependence on foreign sources of oil. If you project that out, by 2025, if we do nothing, we will be 68-percent dependent on foreign oil; much of it, as we all know, coming from countries that do not necessarily have our best interests at heart.

Today we import most of our oil from Canada, Venezuela, Saudi Arabia, and Mexico. However, as we look forward, the Department of Energy's Energy Information Administration did project more and more of the oil we need will come from the OPEC countries in the Middle East.

We must take steps to reduce our dependence on foreign countries and enhance our energy security at home. When we rely on other nations for more than half of our oil supply, we simply put ourselves at greater risk.

While there is no silver bullet that can make us 100-percent energy independent in the near future, there is a lot we can do right now to reduce our dependence and enhance our security. Much of it will be addressed on the floor in the next 2 weeks.

Everything should be on the table, including increasing conservation, enhancing energy efficiency, investing in new technologies that will allow us to both use energy more wisely and tap new sources of energy, and finally, increasing domestic production of energy sources at home. The transportation sector is a prime example. Nearly 70 percent of the oil we use goes to power the cars and trucks we drive every day. If we are serious about reducing our dependence on foreign oil, we must look for new ways to fuel our vehicles. We are already doing this with the hybrid cars—they are becoming more and more popular, as we all know—and with alternative fuels, such as ethanol and biodiesel.

We must continue to move in this direction by continuing to invest in hydrogen fuel cell research. President Bush has stressed this again and again, and he has said his goal is that today's

## EXECUTIVE SESSION

children will take their driver's test in a zero-emission vehicle. That would go a long way toward helping to reduce our dependence and enhance our security.

Natural gas is another energy source we depend on heavily and is another area in which we are, unfortunately, becoming increasingly reliant on foreign imports. Because natural gas is clean burning and relatively cheap, it has been the fuel of choice for new electric power generation in recent years. Sixty percent of American homes are now heated and cooled with natural gas. But while that demand has been growing, domestic supply has remained essentially flat. In 2003, we imported 15 percent of the gas we used. By 2025, that number will nearly double.

We simply cannot continue on this path, and that is why we are bringing this bill to the floor next week. We need to take bold action in the Senate. It is what the American people expect; it is what they deserve. This is exactly what we will do. We will take that action in the Senate to address these energy challenges head on.

The bill that was reported out of the Energy Committee last month was done so on a bipartisan basis, and it is a step in the right direction. It likely will be amended and improved on the floor of the Senate next week. I, again, thank Chairman DOMENICI and Senator BINGAMAN for their tremendous work and for the cooperative spirit with which they approached these issues. I hope that same bipartisan spirit will prevail on the floor and that we can get this important legislation to the President as quickly as possible.

Several of us had the opportunity to meet with the President yesterday, and this was at the very top of his list of issues that he expects us to address. Our goal is to get that legislation to his desk for his signature as soon as we possibly can.

America needs a policy that keeps our families safe, strong, and secure, a policy that keeps America moving forward.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MARTINEZ). Without objection, it is so ordered.

## RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

## NOMINATION OF WILLIAM H. PRYOR, JR., TO BE UNITED STATES CIRCUIT JUDGE FOR THE ELEVENTH CIRCUIT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of Calendar No. 100, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of William H. Pryor, Jr., of Alabama, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Eleventh Circuit.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time from now until 10:30 shall be under the control of the majority leader or his designee.

The Senator from Alabama is now recognized.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I am delighted to be able to speak on behalf of William Pryor—Judge William Pryor now—for the position of U.S. Circuit Judge for the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals. He is an extraordinary individual, a wonderful human being, a brilliant lawyer, a man of the highest integrity, who has won the respect and support and confidence of the people of Alabama to an extraordinary degree. Democrats, Republicans, African Americans—the whole State of Alabama knows and respects him for the courage and integrity and commitment he brings to public service.

He was appointed attorney general to fill my seat after I was elected to the Senate, and he has done a superb job as attorney general. President Bush gave him a recess appointment to the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals after his nomination had been blocked here now for over 2 years. So it has been a burden for me to feel the frustration that I know he and his family must endure as a result of the uncertainty of his nomination process. I could not be more pleased that he was one of the nominees who was agreed upon to get a cloture vote, a successful cloture vote and an up-or-down vote here in the Senate. That is a good decision by the 14 Senators who reached a consensus on how they would approach this process of confirmations. I could not be more pleased and proud that Judge Bill Pryor was part of the group that was agreed upon by those Members of the Senate to get an up-or-down vote.

Bill Pryor is the kind of judge America ought to have. He grew up in Mobile, AL, my hometown. He was educated in the Catholic school system. His father was a band director at McGill-Toolen High School, a venerable, large Catholic high school there. His mother taught in African-American schools. He went to law school at Tulane University where he graduated with honors, magna cum laude. He was editor-in-chief of the Tulane Law Review. I know the Presiding Officer, the Senator from Florida, is a lawyer and understands that editor-in-chief of the Law Review is the highest honor a

graduating senior can have. To be selected as that in a fine law school such as Tulane is a great achievement.

After he left law school, he clerked for Circuit Judge John Minor Wisdom, a well-known champion of civil rights in the Federal court system—at that time in the old Fifth Circuit. Now it has been divided to become the Eleventh Circuit. Judge John Minor Wisdom was a circuit court judge in the 1950s and 1960s when much of segregation was brought to an end by Federal court action. Bill Pryor was positively impacted by his experiences, working with Judge Wisdom, and is a passionate believer in equal rights and equal justice, and he has a record to demonstrate that commitment.

He practiced law with one of Alabama's fine law firms before becoming assistant attorney general when I was elected attorney general. He handled the constitutional issues in our office. He was smart, hard working, courageous, intelligent, fair and, more than anybody I know in the legal business today, was committed to the rule of law, to doing the right thing. That is his very nature. That is the way he was raised. That is what he believes in and he will stand in there and do the right thing, no matter what others might say, time and time again. His record demonstrates his overriding belief that the law is preeminent and it should be obeyed, even if he might disagree and would like to see it different. I want to show some of the things that demonstrate that.

I say this because it was alleged when his nomination came up that somehow he had strongly held beliefs, or deeply held beliefs, and those deeply held beliefs were so powerful that, yes, he might be smart, he might be a good lawyer, he might be an honest man and all of these things people said he was, but because he had strongly held beliefs and believed something and had some convictions and had some moral principles, that somehow that couldn't be trusted. Maybe he wasn't smooth enough. Maybe his beliefs were so strong this would manipulate or cause him to manipulate the law and not be a fair adjudicator of the law.

I will share some thoughts about that because I think what that overlooks is his fundamental belief and great strength as a judge and a lawyer, which is his belief in the law and the primacy of the law. He understands, fundamentally, the greatness of our country, more than most people realize, is founded upon our commitment to law. We were given a great heritage from England. We have built upon that legal heritage. As I age and see the world, I know this legal system is what makes our country great. A person can go into any court, a company can invest in any State, and expect in this country they will get a fair day in court. You don't have to bribe the judge; you don't have to bribe the jury. You can expect a fair, just result, day in, day out, and it occurs in our courtrooms all over America. It is a heritage of unparalleled