

We did not hear from these companies today because they have declined to appear at this hearing. I am disappointed by their decision. Boycotting this hearing will not stifle our questions or the need for their accountability to Congress and American consumers. The chairman has announced a second hearing for the end of this month, and the executives from the oil companies will attend, whether voluntarily or in answer to subpoenas. We will not rest in our effort to understand, and then correct, the problems in the energy markets.

On its face, the deplorable issue here is not the unprecedented profits garnered last year. Surely, any business the size of these corporations could produce a high yield selling their product at \$60 a barrel. Rather, the striking issue here is how these profits compare with years past. For example, since 1999, oil refiners have seen a 334 percent increase in yield made on each gallon of gasoline refined. Moreover, these same companies have more than doubled their control over oil production.

Time and time again, oil companies have defended startling statistics such as these. They claim that increased costs for production, exploration, and meeting environmental standards justify increasing prices at the pumps. This is obscene. I say it is time to invest in the American people. We need to investigate excessive market concentration in the oil industry that is stifling competition, constricting supply, and ultimately harming consumers. And then we need to do something about it.

I was glad to hear the President sounding like a Democrat on energy last night in his State of the Union speech. I can only hope that his words mean that he has finally abandoned the failed policy of the Cheney energy task force that had worked in secret with Ken Lay and other energy industry bigwigs. Had we adopted the Democratic energy proposal on which Senator BINGAMAN and others have worked so hard over the last several years, we would be much farther along. Nonetheless, we welcome the President and, I hope, some congressional Republicans to the Democratic emphasis on alternative and renewable fuels. After all that the Bush administration and the Republican leadership have done to advance the interests of the oil companies, including the attempts by House Republican leadership to insert special interest provisions in conference reports to give oil companies immunity for the environmental and health damage they cause, this reversal of position would be a good development for the American people.

Along with conservation, renewable energy is a key to a cleaner, more efficient energy future. If the President would work with us and follow through with sensible proposals, we can forge a bipartisan partnership. Working together, we can do better to make this a safer more energy efficient and more

prosperous country. I along with the rest of America will be watching to see if these statements are reflected in the President's policies and budget request, however.

We need to relieve America's dependence on foreign oil. Although the Midwest is not the source of the majority of our energy, its share has grown during this administration. I also urge the President and the Republican leadership of Congress to work with us to relieve our dependence on foreign investors and on borrowing from Social Security to finance the record deficits and growing debt that their policies have created.

#### REMEMBERING CORETTA SCOTT KING

Mr. TALENT. Mr. President, it is with great sadness that I offer my condolences on the passing of Coretta Scott King, who passed away at the age of 78. Indeed, I offer these remarks on behalf of all Missourians who have been touched by her legacy and that of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. A tireless champion and partner in her husband's work, Mrs. King's life represents an American story from which we can all draw strength. She never stopped working toward the prize God called her to achieve.

Born in rural Alabama on April 27, 1927, Coretta Scott was the second child of Obadiah and Bernice Scott, hard working parents who wanted more opportunities than they had for their children. An ambitious student, Mrs. King graduated first in her high school class and continued her studies at Antioch College in Yellow Springs, OH. She had a passion for education and music and went on to the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston, following her graduation from Antioch.

It was in 1952 in Boston where she met the man who would become her husband, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. They were married the next year and eventually settled in Atlanta, where they reared their four children, Yolanda, Martin, Dexter, and Bernice. Mrs. King was by no means a bystander in the groundbreaking changes her husband worked to achieve. She was a partner in her husband's historic work to make this country whole.

Following the murder of her husband in 1968, Mrs. King could have chosen to retreat into the privacy of her family. Indeed, in the aftermath of that tragedy, she was a widow who had the sole responsibility of raising four young children. But instead, Mrs. King bravely chose to continue her husband's work and his quest for racial equality. She worked tirelessly to have her husband's birthday memorialized as a national holiday and to establish the King Center, a lasting memorial and research institution dedicated to the Dr. King's principles of justice, equality, and peace.

Mr. President, Coretta Scott King continued her work to bring this coun-

try together until her final days. She never stopped believing that we have a historic responsibility to move America forward and extend the American dream to all those who seek it, regardless of race. Today, as a nation, we mourn Mrs. King's passing. We are thankful for her time here with us, the fruits of her labor, and the profound impact she has left on a grateful country.

I yield the floor.

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, I wish to offer some remarks on our loss of Mrs. Coretta Scott King, who has passed away at the age of 78. I join my colleagues in cosponsoring and supporting S. Res. 362 to honor the life of and express the condolences of the Senate on her passing.

Coretta Scott King was born April 27, 1927, on a farm in Heiberger, AL, to Obadiah, Obie, and Bernice McMurry Scott. Though her family owned the land, it was often a hard life. All the children had to pick cotton during the Great Depression to help the family make ends meet.

Graduating from Lincoln Normal School in Marion, AL, at the top of her class in 1945, Coretta went to Antioch College in Yellow Springs, OH. After graduation, she moved to Boston, MA, where she met Martin Luther King, Jr. They were married in 1953 on the lawn of her parents' house and with the ceremony performed by King's father. Coretta King received a degree in voice and violin at the New England Conservatory, then moved with her husband to Montgomery, AL, in September 1954 after he was named pastor of the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church. Together, they had four children: Yolanda Denise King, Martin Luther King III, Dexter Scott King, and Bernice Albertine King.

Mrs. King received honorary degrees from many institutions including Princeton University and Bates College. She was a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha, a noted African-American women's sorority.

The King family was front and center to one of the most turbulent times of the 20th century. Just 2 weeks after the birth of her first child, Rosa Parks was arrested on a Montgomery bus, helping spark what would develop into the modern civil rights movement that would be led by her husband. The struggles that followed included a narrow escape from death in 1956 when Mrs. King and her daughter were home when a bomb exploded at the family's residence—her husband was speaking at Rev. Ralph Abernathy's First Baptist Church at the time.

Mrs. King later put together a series of Freedom Concerts that combined poetry, narration, and music to highlight the movement and also raise funds for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. In 1962, she served as a Women's Strike for Peace delegate to the 17-nation Disarmament Conference in Geneva, Switzerland.

Notably, she preceded her husband by 2 years in opposing the Vietnam War,

addressing a 1965 antiwar rally at Madison Square Garden in New York City, while also serving as a liaison to international peace and justice organizations.

Over the years, she was active in preserving the memory of her husband and in other political issues. After her husband was assassinated in 1968, she began attending a commemorative service at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta to mark her husband's birth every January 15th and fought for years to make it a national holiday, a quest that was realized in 1986, when the first Martin Luther King Day was celebrated and which we just recently celebrated 2 weeks ago.

In her own right, Mrs. King was vocal and influential on many issues, including opposing apartheid; opposing capital punishment; opposing the 2003 invasion of Iraq; and advocating for the rights of women, lesbians and gays, as well as AIDS/HIV prevention.

I was disturbed to hear of Mrs. King's hospitalization in August 2005 after suffering a stroke and a mild heart attack but encouraged by her progress in regaining some of her speech and continued physiotherapy at home. I understand that on January 14, 2006, Mrs. King made her last public appearance in Atlanta at a dinner honoring her husband's memory and that, fittingly, she will be buried in Atlanta next to her husband at The King Center.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Coretta Scott King were remarkable people who led remarkable lives. Our Nation is a better place for their actions, and they will continue to live in our collective memory for many years to come. I wish to offer her family and friends my deepest condolences.

Mr. LEVIN. We first came to know Coretta Scott King as Dr. Martin Luther King's wife, but we came to treasure her for the more than 50 years of courageous and inspiring leadership she gave to our Nation. During Dr. King's tragically brief yet profoundly important time as America's most prominent civil rights leader, Mrs. King played an indispensable role, speaking before church and community groups, serving as a pastor's wife, and raising four children. She was Dr. King's rock during one of the most turbulent times in our history.

Mrs. King's heroism and unyielding determination to continue the struggle for justice and equality for all could not be more evident than in how she responded to a despicable incident in 1956. Mrs. King was in her home with her infant daughter, Yolanda, while Dr. King was away on one of his many missions for the civil rights movement, speaking at the First Baptist Church in Montgomery, AL. Someone threw a bomb into the Kings' home, and the bomb exploded. Even though Mrs. King and little Yolanda narrowly escaped physical harm that day, the bombing failed to deter her. Instead, Mrs. King's involvement in the civil rights movement intensified.

Following her husband's assassination, Coretta Scott King picked up his mantle and made clear that his dream, of a just America, was her dream too. Over the nearly 40 years that followed, her fight for that dream took her to every corner of the world and into every heart that loved justice. She established the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change. She worked to advance the cause of justice and human rights around the world, speaking out for racial and economic justice, women's and children's rights, religious freedom, full employment, health care, and education. She championed the national holiday in honor of Dr. King's legacy. And, as she carried on Dr. King's message, she became an icon of the civil rights movement in her own right.

In September 2004, the Senate passed legislation to honor Mrs. King and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., posthumously, with Congress's highest honor—the Congressional Gold Medal—for their contributions to the Nation. It was my great honor to deliver this news to Mrs. King the next day at an awards ceremony sponsored by the Senate Black Legislative Staff Caucus, where Mrs. King was honored with their Leadership and Achievement Award. Over the next few months, my staff worked with Mrs. King, along with the U.S. Mint and Congressman JOHN LEWIS's staff, in designing the gold medal. In March 2005, Mrs. King contributed these words, from some of her favorite lines from Dr. King's speeches, to appear on one side of the medal: "I suggest that the philosophy and strategy of nonviolence become immediately a subject for study for serious experimentation in every field of human conflict, by no means excluding the relations between nations. This may well be mankind's last chance to choose between chaos and community." Mrs. King offered these lines less than a year ago, reflecting her steadfast commitment to nonviolence throughout her entire life.

Coretta Scott King moved our Nation forward, and we owe her a debt that we cannot repay. As we mourn Mrs. King's passing today, let us celebrate her exceptional life, and let us honor her by recommitting ourselves to the dream the Kings shared of freedom, justice, and equality for all people.

Our thoughts and prayers are with Yolanda, Martin III, Dexter, and Bernice King and all of the King family.

#### SPACE SHUTTLE "CHALLENGER"/ "COLUMBIA"

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I rise today to remember two events, one which occurred 20 years ago this past Wednesday, and another which took place 3 years ago today. These dates mark profound tragedies in the history of the U.S. space program.

As my colleagues will remember, the space shuttle *Challenger* exploded just minutes after takeoff in 1986, claiming

the lives of five men and two women, among them Christa McAuliffe, who was to have been the first teacher in space. She is quoted as saying shortly before the flight, "One of the things I hope to bring back into the classroom is to make that connection with the students that they too are part of history, the space program belongs to them." I believe this statement represents very well the spirit of curiosity and the hope for the future that both these brave explorers and the space program represent.

Then, just 3 short years ago, seven men and women lost their lives when the space shuttle *Columbia* exploded as it reentered the atmosphere. So many individuals pulled together to help in recovery efforts after this national tragedy. The police departments, firefighters, local VFWs and emergency services, as well as the thousands of volunteers from East Texas and across the State, worked remarkably well together to handle the crisis and to prevent further tragedy on the ground. Law enforcement officials, NASA, and FEMA faced such a difficult time in the aftermath—and they handled the stress with grace.

The NASA community suffered a profound loss with these tragedies. This dedicated team of professionals is a symbol of our passion for science, exploration, and the discovery of places and worlds as yet unknown, and we appreciate the service of all of these men and women.

The seven heroes who lost their lives that day had dedicated themselves to the future of our Nation's space program, seven men and women who knew the risks of climbing into a rocket, leaving the Earth, and exploring the heavens, seven men and women who volunteered for an extremely dangerous but critically important mission:

Shuttle Commander Rick Husband  
Pilot William McCool  
Payload Commander Michael Anderson  
Mission Specialist Kalpana Chawla  
Mission Specialist David Brown  
Mission Specialist Laurel Blair Salton Clark

Payload Specialist Ilan Ramon

These brave seven, as well as the crew lost with *Columbia*, as well as the three who lost their lives to the *Apollo 1* fire in 1967, are all shining examples of the courage, enthusiasm, and awe that runs through the veins of all the men and women of NASA—and all the eager children across this Nation who look to the stars and see the beginning, not the end, of their universe.

These brave astronauts throughout the space program inspire not only our Nation and our children—they inspire the world. Their actions, bravery, and achievement are a challenge to humankind. A challenge to dream, to achieve more and to reach farther than ever thought possible. I thank these courageous explorers—and those they left behind—for their sacrifice for our country.