

That would simply lead to more supplemental spending.

While the President is calling for a biennial budget, and his budget for 2006-2007 failed to provide a discretionary spending policy beyond the first year.

For the first time since 1989, this President, when he put out his budget, only gave 1 year of detail. Always before they had given 5 years.

Why it makes any sense to go to 2-year budgeting is beyond me.

In addition, they have proposed a line-item veto, even though the Supreme Court said it is unconstitutional. In this package, they come with line-item veto again. But they have done it in a way that requires our colleagues' attention. They have done it with no opportunity to amend or to have extended debate on the proposed line-item veto target.

They also allow the President to cancel new mandatory spending proposals, such as those dealing with Social Security, Medicare, veterans, and agriculture.

That is an extraordinary grant of power.

What if we had a bipartisan agreement to deal with the long-term challenges of Medicare and Social Security, and then the President would be given the power, under this act, to go undo it based on what he wanted to do, forget about the bipartisan negotiations? No, that can't be the way we do business around here. We truly need, on a bipartisan basis, to get together and deal with our massive deficits and debt. We can't engage in a negotiation, a detailed, difficult negotiation and then have the President, on his own authority, be able to undo the very agreements we have reached. What earthly sense does that make? How could we possibly have a negotiation under those terms?

The CBO Director believes the line-item veto was unlikely to greatly affect the bottom line. He said:

Such tools cannot establish fiscal discipline unless there is a political consensus to do so. In the absence of that consensus, proposed changes are unlikely to greatly affect the budget's bottom line.

He is right. No President needs the line-item veto.

This is from the Roanoke Times in Virginia. They said:

The President already has the only tool he needs, the veto. That Bush has declined to challenge Congress in 5-plus years is his choice. The White House no doubt sees reviving this debate as means of distracting people from the missteps, miscalculations, mistruths and mistakes that have dogged Bush and sent his approval rating south. The current problems are not systemic. They are ideological. A line-item veto will not magically grant lawmakers and the President fiscal discipline.

They are not alone in that view.

Here is a conservative columnist, George Will, who believes the line-item veto will shift too much power to the executive branch. He said:

It would aggravate the imbalance in our constitutional system that has been growing

for seven decades. The expansion of executive power at the expense of the legislature.

An American Enterprise Institute scholar calls the line-item veto proposal "shameful."

Shameful. The larger reality is this line-item veto proposal gives the President a great additional mischief-making capability, to pluck out items to punish lawmakers he doesn't like, or to threaten individual lawmakers to get votes on other things without having any noticeable impact on budget growth or restraint.

He went on to say this:

More broadly, it simply shows the lack of institutional integrity and patriotism by the majority in Congress. They have lots of ways to put the responsibility on budget restraint where it belongs, on themselves. Instead, they willingly—even eagerly—try to turn their most basic power over to the President. Shameful. Just shameful.

The chairman of the Budget Committee indicated he has changed his proposal so the Commission on Social Security and Medicare would require a 60-vote majority in the Senate. That is true. His original proposal did not do that. His original proposal had a simple majority being able to pass whatever a commission sent back.

What is wrong with the commission proposal he has left us with? What is wrong is, this proposal comes to us on a fast-track basis. In fact, the way it is designed, you could have a circumstance in which no amendments are permitted. I hope my colleagues are listening. They want to adopt a commission process that would permit the following: The commission, which has a majority of Republicans, says we want to cut Social Security 50 percent, comes up here to the Senate, the majority leader gets recognition, which he has the right to do under Senate rules, puts in an amendment, offers a quorum call, goes into a quorum call for 50 hours, with no amendments, no debate, and at the end of the 50 hours, we vote on the commission proposal. That is at the heart of what is wrong with what the chairman proposed. That is a completely unacceptable procedure.

We are not going to have a circumstance in which the future of Social Security and Medicare could be determined in the Senate under fast-track procedures that deny Senators a chance to amend or debate what comes from an unelected, unaccountable commission. Is that what we have come to in this country? I don't think so. This is not some dictatorship where things come up here and Senators could be precluded from their right to amend or debate. That is the genius of the Senate.

Under the chairman's proposal, that is exactly what could happen. He says no majority leader would ever do that. Maybe not. Maybe what they would do, using that power, is say: There can only be five amendments, or I will use my power to preclude all amendments. Have we ever seen a majority leader do that? Yes, I have been here. I have seen it.

I say, as one Member, I will never, ever, go along with something that

would be so consequential, determine the future of Social Security, the future of Medicare, and set up a circumstance in which no Senator could offer an amendment except the majority leader of the Senate. That looks like not just a fast-track process, that looks like a bum's rush.

The Senator gets a big push back from our side, you bet. He will get a real big push back because we are not going to agree to that. That is radical. That is reckless. We are not going to go along with that. The Senator can say it can never happen, but we all know it could happen.

I respect the chairman of the Committee on the Budget. I like him. We work together well. When he came out here and said we offered no alternatives, that is flatly untrue. We gave a detailed, comprehensive alternative which he praised publicly in the committee. To come to the Senate and say we offered no alternative is just not true. He knows it; I know it. The record shows it.

I am quite certain the Senator was exercised and upset and probably mis-spoke. I hope he corrects the record on this question. It cannot stand. It does not enhance this discussion or debate for either side to say things that are not accurate. He is upset that some of our side apparently said the commission proposal would come up here on a simple majority. That was his initial proposal. Under my criticism of that approach, he did alter that. But he still left us with a fast-track process that could preclude amendments and debate on something as fundamental as the future of Social Security and Medicare. That is just not acceptable.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado.

ENERGY

Mr. SALAZAR. Madam President, let me first say my colleague from North Dakota does an incredible job in terms of leading our country with a voice that stands for fiscal discipline. When he talks about the mountain of debt that we are continuing to build in this country, and passing on that mountain of debt to our children and our grandchildren, the American people deserve more of this Congress and more of Washington, DC, and more of this President. I look forward to his continuing leadership on this issue to try and bring about fiscal integrity and fiscal honesty to the United States of America. The American people deserve no less than that kind of candor and integrity from the Senate.

I rise today to talk about an urgent issue which we all ought to be very concerned about in the United States of America. That is the issue of energy. Last year, this Senate put together a bipartisan template on the National Energy Policy Act of 2005 which may go down in our history as being one of the most important achievements of the 109th Congress. Notwithstanding

the fact that we put together energy legislation that did some great things for conservation, that stood out for renewable energy, that said that new technologies were part of how we could look in the future of our Nation's energy independence, we have had many opportunities to move forward and to continue to address the issue of energy. Yet we have not done that as a Congress nor as a Senate.

Six months of this year have already passed. It has been 5 months since the President of the United States, before the American people, said that we were addicted to foreign oil and we needed to take aggressive steps to move forward to get ourselves to energy independence.

I had the honor of hosting the President at the National Renewable Energy Lab in Golden, CO, and we looked at the possibility of renewable energy. Yet some 6 months after that January speech, we still are here in this Senate without having moved forward with any significant kind of energy legislation. That is wrong. Part of the people's business, the highest priority, is for us to look at this energy dilemma we are facing in this country and to embrace in a real, honest, and ethical way the imperative that moves us toward energy independence.

I will address part of what I think we ought to be doing with our movement toward energy independence in our country today. The time to get serious about growing our way to energy independence is long overdue. If Brazil, a Third World country, can do it, it is inexcusable for the United States of America, the strongest Nation on Earth, to do otherwise.

Today in Brazil, ethanol substitutes for 204,000 barrels of gasoline sold every day. Over 40 percent of all the gasoline that is sold nationally in Brazil comes from ethanol, making that country energy independent today.

In the last couple of months, we have had a lot of ideas discussed in this Senate and through multiple press conferences about how we can ease the pain at the pump for the American consumers. We have heard ideas to give \$100 tax rebates. We heard ideas to create a tax holiday for gas, to enact a Federal gas price-gouging statute, to reduce the number of fuels that are currently on the market, to end royalty relief, and on and on. There are lots of ideas talked about that we should give careful consideration.

We should also talk straight to the American people. We are a nation that relies on oil to power our economy. We import almost 60 percent of our oil from countries such as Saudi Arabia, Nigeria, Iraq, and Venezuela. We are hostage to a cartel of oil-producing countries that decide how much oil will reach the market at any given moment. Many Members of this cartel are unfriendly to the United States. They know how much power their oil has over our national security.

The bottom line is that energy independence is important to all of us in

the 21st century if we are to achieve national security.

Without a reliable and affordable supply of homegrown energy, our dependence on foreign oil will only continue to increase, further warping our foreign policy and jeopardizing the stability of our economy. If we continue at our current pace, in two decades we will be importing 70 percent of our oil from foreign countries. We cannot afford to stay that course on our energy policy.

Expanding our domestic production of oil and gas is an important component in our Nation's movement toward energy independence. We should continue to encourage the balanced development of the resources that we have. We should accelerate our development of clean coal technologies to produce clean-burning synfuel gases and jet fuels from coal, an abundant domestic resource. But none of the rhetoric can change the fact that we just don't have enough petroleum resources in this country to drill our way to energy independence.

Today, we are the world's third leading producer of oil, but our rate of oil consumption—primarily for transportation—is almost three times our rate of oil production. Furthermore, the sad truth is that we only have 3 percent of the world's reserves in the United States of America. That 3 percent includes the proven reserves in the State of Alaska.

We ought to look at our renewable energy future. If we make a dramatic, perhaps even a revolutionary new commitment to renewable energy, the fuel grown in American fields can help power our vehicle fleet. With a bold new commitment, we can produce enough fuel on our farm lands and ranch lands to meet 25 percent of our energy needs by the year 2025.

Farmers and ranchers and all of rural America are rallying behind this cry for a goal of "25 by 25." Our farmers are growing corn, soybeans, and sunflowers to be used for ethanol and biodiesel. Ranchers are building windfarms and using animal manure for power. Rural business men and women are investing in biorefineries. New jobs are springing up in many places where they had no jobs. Rural economies, long forgotten, are starting to gather steam as part of the renewable energy chapter opens in America.

It is time for Congress as a whole to embrace rural America's vision for this renewable energy future. Senator CHUCK GRASSLEY and I have introduced a resolution that would make "25 by 25" our national goal.

I urge my colleagues to cosponsor this resolution because producing 25 percent of our energy on agricultural lands by 2025 is, in fact, a fully achievable goal. We can do it. We can do it if we get on task and we make a bipartisan commitment to work toward this goal. We should begin on this goal immediately.

First, we should raise the renewable fuel standards we set in last year's En-

ergy Policy Act. That goal, in law today, is to produce 7.5 billion gallons of renewable fuels by 2012. That goal is far too modest. We will easily meet this goal under current policies. Yet we will not be putting enough renewable fuels on the market to give consumers a real choice or to make a real dent in our oil dependence on foreign countries. We should increase this target so we are producing 9 billion gallons of renewable fuel by 2012 and 30 billion gallons of renewable fuel by the year 2025.

Second, we should extend the renewable energy production tax credit until 2012. The existing production tax credit is now set to expire in 2007. That creates uncertainty for business people and investors who want to invest in renewable energy.

We have legislation that I have introduced, S. 1093, the Research and Development Investment Act, which extends the renewable energy production tax credits through 2012, allowing more investment and quicker growth in the renewable energy market.

Next, we should pass S. 2025, the Vehicle and Fuel Choices for American Security Act. This is an important piece of legislation with broad bipartisan support. S. 2025 will essentially do three simple but very important conceptual things.

First, it will increase the amount of biofuels we currently are producing in America. Second, it will ensure there are filling stations that are available across the country that will provide alternative fuels to give that choice to the American consumer. And, third, it will also help transform Detroit to embrace alternative fuel vehicle systems.

Right now, the United States consumes around 20 million barrels of oil every day. Twenty million barrels of oil every day are consumed in America. Two-thirds of those 20 million barrels a day are consumed in our transportation system—by our cars and our trucks—across this country. This is alarming: The massive amount of oil we are importing is barely enough to cover the needs of the transportation sector.

S. 2025 tackles this problem head on. It brings more gallons of biofuels to the market. It gives consumers access to alternative fuels. It retools America's vehicle fleet to run more efficiently and to run on alternative fuels. By passing S. 2025, we will give consumers more choices of fuels and vehicles, lower and stabilize the cost of fuel, and reduce our reliance on foreign oil.

This is not a Republican or Democratic agenda. This is an American agenda. And this American agenda toward energy independence is demonstrated by the group of Senators who are supporting S. 2025. They include Senator BROWBACK, Senator BAYH, Senator GRAHAM, Senator CANTWELL, Senator LIEBERMAN, Senator COLEMAN, Senator DODD, Senator BILL NELSON, Senator ISAKSON, Senator KOHL, Senator LUGAR, Senator OBAMA, Senator

SESSIONS, Senator CLINTON, Senator CHAFEE, and others. We think this bill is effective, and we would hope the Senate can move forward and embrace this bill and pass it so the President can sign it yet this year.

What S. 2025 does, in more detail, is it is aggressive in encouraging the increased production of biofuels. It provides loan guarantees to farmer-owned ethanol producers, to help them make investments in renewable energy systems and infrastructure. It also increases the ethanol infrastructure tax credit that we passed last summer in the Energy Policy Act so that credit is set at 50 percent. This will lower the startup costs for farmers and communities and businesspeople who want to build a biorefinery or a processing plant.

These producers will benefit from the bill's investments in biofuels research. By doubling the funding for biofuels research, S. 2025 will improve yields and efficiencies and expand the range of feedstocks that can be used for biofuels production.

Secondly, S. 2025 helps reduce our foreign oil dependency by giving consumers access to alternative fuels at filling stations. Currently, in the United States, we have 5 million flexible fuel vehicles. These vehicles can run on either gasoline or E-85, an 85-percent ethanol-gasoline mix. We today are adding about 1.5 million of these flex-fuel vehicles to our national fleet every year. The trouble is, as you well know, there are only 485 filling stations in the country that carry E-85. There are only 485 filling stations today in the country that carry E-85. We have the technology on the road that allows cars to run on biofuels, but because consumers cannot pump E-85 fuel at their local filling station, we are not taking full advantage of the oil-saving rewards of the flex-fuel technology, which is now being deployed into our national fleet.

S. 2025 would solve this problem. It would solve this problem by helping to build the pumps and filling station infrastructure needed to deliver biofuels to consumers. The bill provides loan guarantees and tax incentives to farmers and business owners for the construction of pump stations to dispense fuels. It also uses CAFE penalties that have already been collected by the Government from foreign manufacturers to expand funding for grants to finance alternative fueling infrastructure.

One of the DOE grantees from this year alone, the National Ethanol Vehicle Coalition, will be able to build 300 stations with its \$2 million grant. With at least 10 times the amount of that funding available, we should be able to equip at least 3,000 filling stations across America with the infrastructure that delivers biofuels to consumers who are in search for these alternative fuels.

The economic benefits of giving these fuel choices to consumers are clear. If

consumers can rely on filling their tank with E-85 fuel wherever they go, demand for the fuel and demand for cars that run on E-85 will increase dramatically, cutting demand for petroleum-based fuel. Not only will this help us deal with gas prices, but it will also stabilize them. We can count on our farmers to harvest their crops, but we cannot count—we cannot count—on Iran or the Middle East to sell us their oil.

Finally, S. 2025 will help us retool our national vehicle fleet. S. 2025 sets goals for improving the efficiency of our vehicle fleet and for getting more advanced vehicles on the road. It sets these goals and then helps manufacturers retool their vehicle fleets to meet them.

The bill sets targets for manufacturers to produce alternative fuel vehicles, plug-in hybrids, fuel cell vehicles, flexible-fuel vehicles, and other technologies which can run on regular gasoline or biofuel alternatives. By 2012, 1 in 10 vehicles produced will be advanced vehicles. By 2016, 1 in 2 vehicles produced will be advanced vehicles that can run on these alternative fuels or these advanced technologies.

We will help manufacturers make these changes to their fleets. The bill establishes a tax credit for the costs the manufacturers incur when they are retooling or expanding their facilities to produce advanced vehicles. The bill also authorizes support for research that will provide lightweight materials to the auto industry and for technology for electric drive trains, batteries, and plug-in hybrids.

The bill closes the SUV tax loophole, limits idling by buses, and requires that fuel economy standards be set for heavy duty vehicles so we can stop burning fuel we do not need to burn. For each 1 mile per gallon efficiency we find in this country, we save 1 million barrels of oil per day, or \$20 billion a year.

These are sensible, easy-to-implement solutions. Many of them, many of these ideas, have now been included in two bills that Senator BINGAMAN, Senator CHAFEE, Senator LIEBERMAN, Senator COLEMAN, Senator CANTWELL, and I and others have introduced. These are the Enhanced Energy Security Act of 2006, which will push the Federal Government to save 2.5 million barrels of oil per day by 2016, and at least 10 million barrels per day by 2031, and the new energy tax bill, which provides multiple incentives to manufacturers, businesses, and consumers alike to utilize energy-efficient programs and alternatives themselves.

The provisions of S. 2025 and the energy tax bill will give consumers more choices at the pump and reduce our dependence on foreign oil.

Each of us should be asking: What if we do nothing? What if we do nothing? What if we continue our malignant neglect of the long-term energy policy of the United States of America? If we do continue this malignant neglect, we

will become increasingly vulnerable to the instabilities and whims of countries across the globe. The American consumer will continue to suffer, and the American economy will have lost an opportunity that has come its way.

We have devoted a lot of time to many issues over the last 6 months of this year in this Congress. We have not devoted enough time on this floor to the issue of energy and of energy independence. We need to do so because to do otherwise is to neglect the national security of the United States.

When you have a system that starts to break down, you have to address the cause as well as the symptoms of the problem. If your roof keeps springing leaks, you don't just put more and more buckets out. What you do is you eventually build yourself a new roof. We need to build a new energy policy in America, one that is built on the promise of renewable energy, technology, and conservation.

I believe Americans are eager for us as a Senate to do this. In States across the country, people are enacting renewable portfolio standards and demanding access to alternative energies. They imagine a renewable energy future that harnesses the business and work ethic of rural America and which breathes new life into sagging rural economies. They look at fields of corn, soy, and sunflowers and see the raw materials for biodiesel and for ethanol.

The renewable energy revolution is already underway in America thanks to farmers and ranchers and businesspeople who have been leading it, who have been doing their part. We now, as a Congress, need to do our part to push the renewable energy revolution forward.

I urge our Senate, in a bipartisan fashion, following the template of last year's national Energy Policy Act, to move forward to secure America's renewable energy future by making "25 by 25" our national goal.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. THUNE). The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

ATTACK ON PAN AM FLIGHT 103 AND LIBYA

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I rise to speak about an issue of great importance to the State of New Jersey, to the United States of America, and to all of those who stand against acts of terrorism and violence: the attack on Pan Am flight 103.

The attack on Pan Am flight 103 shocked the world and claimed the lives of 189 Americans, including 38 citizens from my home State of New Jersey.