

Mrs. BOXER. Well, absolutely, I say to my friend, and again I thank him for yielding for another question.

Several of our offices are part of this model project to see how energy efficient we can be. It is a pretty straightforward way for us to lead by example.

The other question I have for my colleague is this: The bill that is on the Senate floor, which Senator REID worked so hard to put together, along with Senator BINGAMAN, myself, and Senator INOUE and others—Senator KERRY was involved, and I know my friend was involved as the assistant leader. There are other provisions in this bill—which is why I am so hopeful we will get this done—that take this notion of the Federal Government being a model to our buildings as well.

I am not sure my friend is aware of the exact number, but the Federal Government either runs or operates 8,000 buildings—8,000 buildings. When my friend talks about global warming, it is a fact that in America 39 percent of the greenhouse gas emissions comes from buildings. So if we can set the tone here, and we can move forward with a bipartisan vote—we were able to pass a lighting efficiency bill for the Federal Government, which is included. This also has a component where grants will be given across this country to cities and counties to make their buildings energy efficient in terms of lighting. It will save money, and it will reduce the carbon footprint.

Then, with the help of Senators LAUTENBERG and WARNER, we got another piece of legislation included in this bill, which is called the green buildings bill, which also impacts all new and existing Federal buildings and also requires the EPA to come out with a model of green buildings for schools. So we will help our schools because you are so right when you talked about your 11-year-old grandson. I have a 12-year-old grandson, as you know. They are going to ask those tough questions, and they may well ask it of the schools they are in too.

So I wanted to make sure my friend knew, since we really are talking more with the leadership of Senator BINGAMAN, who has been working on the most contentious amendments, that there is so much in the underlying bill that came out of his committee, my committee, and other committees that is strong, and that is why we would hate to see this derailed. This would be an enormous setback.

The people want us to reach across party lines and take care of business, and an energy policy is going to take care of business.

Mr. DURBIN. I might just say to the Senator from California that it wasn't that long ago we used to hear about all the California laws, rules, and regulations. It was a source of amusement to many of us in the Midwest that you had your own design in automobile engines, and we thought: What is going on with these crazy people in California? We learned our lesson because

in the period of time that you led the Nation in thinking about these things, you proved something: that you could keep economic growth moving forward in California and conserve energy in the process.

That is a lesson the Nation needs to learn. We don't want to sacrifice jobs, business growth, or opportunity in America. Instead, we want to create opportunity in a reasonable, wise, environmentally sensitive way.

I thank the Senator from California for her leadership on this issue.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

VETO OF STEM CELL RESEARCH ENHANCEMENT ACT OF 2007

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the veto message on S. 5 be considered as having been read and that it be printed in the RECORD and spread in full upon the Journal. I further ask unanimous consent that the message be held at the desk.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(The veto message of the President is printed in today's RECORD under "Presidential Messages.")

Mr. REID. Mr. President, let me briefly say I have had a conversation with the distinguished Republican leader and this will be brought up at a later time. We will fully consult with the distinguished Republican leader, and we will do it at a time that is more appropriate than today.

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, in 6½ years in office, President Bush has picked up his veto pen only two times. Today he adds a third; and once more, he is standing against hope for thousands of Americans afflicted with deadly diseases. His veto of the Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act is a grave moral error.

Embryonic stem cell research may one day provide relief to more than 100 million Americans suffering from Parkinson's, diabetes, spinal cord injury, Lou Gehrig's disease, cancer, and many other devastating conditions for which there is still no cure. Today, Federal funds are only allowed for work on 21 stem cell lines that existed as of August 9, 2001, all of which are contaminated. Scientists understand that access to more stem cell lines would significantly expand the scope and possibility of their research. That is why the Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act expanded the number of embryonic stem cell lines available for federally funded research by allowing the use of stem cells derived through embryos from in vitro fertilization clinics. Stem cell research turns embryos that would otherwise be discarded into the seeds of life-giving science.

Of course, the decision to dedicate embryos to research is a heavy one. We

have never argued otherwise. That is why the Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act contained strict ethical requirements. Under this legislation, the only embryonic stem cells that can be used for federally funded research are those that were derived through embryos created for fertility treatment purposes and donated for research with the written, informed consent of the individuals seeking that treatment. Any financial or other inducements to make this donation are prohibited under this legislation. These ethical standards are stronger than current law—possibly stronger, in fact, than the standards attending the creation of the 21 approved lines.

Stem cells from embryos have a unique potential to reduce human suffering—and for precisely that reason, embryonic stem cell research is supported by a strong majority of Americans. Today, President Bush set himself against that potential, and against that majority; he set himself in the way of our scientists, and our suffering patients. I hope that, when he has left office at last, he will come to regret his choice. If not, history will regret it for him.

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, once-terminal diseases such as leukemia, aplastic anemia, cerebral palsy, and sickle-cell anemia are now treatable, if not curable, by using stem cells derived from bone marrow and umbilical cord blood. Early this year, scientists at Wake Forest University School of Medicine found stem cells in amniotic fluid. These stem cells are particularly exciting for their pluripotency—the characteristic that enables the stem cell to turn into multiple bodily tissues and thereby be useful in a variety of medical treatments.

In the last few weeks, just as the House was engaging in a partisan effort to pass this bill that the President rightly vetoed, scientists discovered that human skin could one day be used to create limitless lines of stem cells that are virtually indistinguishable from embryonic stem cells in their characteristics. Already such newspapers as the Washington Post are glowing with reports about how this discovery could "revolutionize stem cell research and quench one of the hottest bioethical controversies of the decade." At the same time, the highly trumped benefits of stem cells derived from the destruction of a living embryo have yet to be demonstrated, despite considerable private and public funding.

All members of this body share a desire to find cures or successful treatments for horrible illnesses. Fortunately, such an opportunity has been presented in the way of adult stem cells. Even with all of the tremendous potential that adult stem cells hold for treating serious medical conditions, some of my colleagues are unwilling to support legislation that funds the development of ethically acceptable and medically beneficial adult stem cell research. This body should recognize the

fundamental differences—not just between Senators—but among the American people, over the appropriate use of taxpayer funding for stem cell research that destroys a living embryo. We may never move beyond this impasse, but that should not stop us from encouraging non-controversial and highly productive medical treatments.

While S. 5 contains provisions which are morally unacceptable to many people, S. 30, the “Hope Offered through Principled and Ethical Stem Cell Research Act” or the “HOPE Act,” which the Senate passed, is an opportunity for Congress to support highly-productive adult stem cell research free of ethical defects. S. 30 would specifically direct the Department of Health and Human Services to seek alternative sources of stem cells and study the possibility of establishing an amniotic and placental stem cell bank, similar to the bone marrow and cord blood stem cell bank, while reaffirming a policy that prohibits research that destroys human life. This goes far beyond the current policy in the extent to which it supports adult stem cell research.

Right now, as Senators prepare to consider an override of the President's veto of S. 5, there are millions of Americans suffering from serious illnesses who are waiting for the potential treatments offered by adult stem cell research. Rather than wasting precious time debating ethically divisive funding for stem cell research that destroys living embryos, the House should take up and pass S. 30. It is disappointing to see partisanship trump science and patients' hopes.

I applaud the President for issuing his Executive Order today, implementing many, but not all, of the key provisions of S. 30. I urge my colleagues to reaffirm opposition to S. 5 by upholding this justified veto, and to think twice about trying to add S. 5 or similar provisions that would promote embryo-destructive research onto other bills, including annual appropriations bills. Such a move would justify the veto of that legislation as well.

CREATING LONG-TERM ENERGY ALTERNATIVES FOR THE NATION ACT OF 2007—Continued

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Louisiana.

AMENDMENT NO. 1658

Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, I rise in strong support of an amendment I filed at the desk some time ago, Vitter amendment No. 1658, and I would like to briefly explain what that is.

At its core, this amendment would allow Louisiana to use more Federal coastal impact assistance dollars, which are already going to the State under preexisting law, a law we passed a couple of years ago, to be used specifically for one of our top priorities in the wake of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, and that is a hurricane protection effort.

By way of background, in 2005, we passed the Energy Policy Act, and that

did a very important thing for the State of Louisiana and other producing States. It established a Coastal Impact Assistance Program for the six States in the United States that produce offshore energy, particularly oil and gas. Obviously, that includes Louisiana. Under that 4-year Coastal Impact Assistance Program, certain Federal dollars flow to those producing States in light of the enormous work they do producing energy for our country and the negative impact that activity has in many cases on our coastline.

Back at that time, a provision was made to restrict the amount of those funds that could go specifically to infrastructure projects, and that cap was established, with the work of Senator BINGAMAN and others, at 23 percent. Back in 2005, I argued strongly and worked with Senator BINGAMAN and others to say that cap should be lifted with regard to hurricane protection work, at least in Louisiana, because that work was absolutely so vital, so essential for our very existence. Unfortunately, that argument did not hold the day. The cap was not lifted, and an exemption was not put in place for hurricane protection efforts.

I am trying to get that cap lifted for hurricane protection work in Louisiana now. My argument that we should do it comes down to two words—two words that happened, that devastated our coastline between then and now, and the two words are “Katrina” and “Rita.” Since that original act in 2005, Katrina and Rita struck, and they struck literal death blows to the Louisiana coast. If hurricane protection was a big priority before that, it has only grown enormously with those two hurricanes coming upon our shores.

I think there is every rationale, every reason to allow us to use more of that coastal impact assistance money for hurricane protection efforts and to lift that arbitrary ceiling of 23 percent for infrastructure projects, specifically when we are talking about hurricane protection efforts.

I have been in contact with Senator BINGAMAN about this issue. We have just discussed it on the Senate floor. I know he is considering these arguments. Perhaps in wrapping up my discussion, I could invite the Senator to engage in a brief colloquy and ask him again to focus on the extreme needs of the Louisiana coast in the wake of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita and to continue consideration of lifting this cap in light of those extreme needs and to see where we are in that discussion.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, let me respond to the comments the Senator from Louisiana made.

Procedurally, we are not able to bring up or consider the amendment he has talked about today. I have explained to him the reason for that is there is a Republican objection to us bringing up and considering a great many amendments that Democratic

Members would like to bring up and consider at the same time. So I regret that.

On the substance, I am not in a position to indicate right now whether this kind of change would take place. I would assume that to make that judgment, we would have to know something about the hurricane assistance that has been provided and whether there are still adequate funds available for some of this wetland assistance that was the purpose of the original legislation in 2005.

Obviously, I think the entire Senate has been anxious to be of assistance to all of the gulf coast. This legislation he is referring to, the wetlands protection part of the 2005 Energy bill, was part of that. There have been several things that have been done since the devastating hurricanes hit that region. But I do not know enough about the specifics of those assistance programs to pass judgment on the contents of his amendment. I commend him for offering it, but I am not in a position to support it or oppose it.

Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, reclaiming my time.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Louisiana is recognized.

Mr. VITTER. Reclaiming the floor, I will put that down as an “undecided,” and “maybe.” I want to continue these discussions with the Senator from New Mexico. He is essentially the key to clearing this amendment, probably without objection.

Again, I restate that because of the devastating impact of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, I think there is every reason in the world to lift this arbitrary cap of 23 percent, specifically and only for hurricane protection work on our coast. It is absolutely vital for our survival. It will not mean we are not doing everything else we have been talking about. That is moving forward for a number of reasons, including the revenue sharing piece we were able to pass into law late last year. That will give significant new revenue to our coastal restoration efforts and other things. I again urge the Senator to continue to look at this and hopefully clear this so it can be adopted without even the need for a vote on the floor, adopted by unanimous consent.

AMENDMENT NO. 1776

Now I wish to move to a second very important amendment I have at the desk, which is amendment No. 1776. I just happened to get that number but I think it is a very appropriate number for this amendment because this goes to our very important, patriotic efforts to increase our energy independence and to get away from our enormous reliance on the Middle East, including very dangerous countries and regimes in the Middle East that are clearly not friends of ours at all.