

leader Bill Frist that although it was coming a bit late, he was sorry for the fire incident.

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LOWER GAS PRICES

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, on another issue, 2 years ago today, Democrats announced they had a commonsense plan to lower gas prices. When Democrats took over control of Congress last January, the average price of a gallon of gas was \$2.32. Today, it is \$3.53, according to AAA. Apparently, their commonsense plan is not working as intended.

In fact, since taking control of Congress last year, Democrats not only failed to deliver on their promise to lower gas prices, they have repeatedly pushed for policies that in fact would raise, not lower, prices at the pump. Every week, I hear from Kentuckians who are feeling the squeeze each time they fill up their tanks. High gas prices hurt families, hurt commuters, hurt truckers, who are paying record prices for diesel, and drive up the prices of daily necessities, including food. Yet some of our friends, reverting to form, appear to have no plan except to increase taxes on energy companies, which of course will raise prices for consumers, not lower them.

At a time of record-high gas prices, Democrats want to tax them to even higher levels. The reality is high gas prices are the result of misguided policies that have been in place for many years and will take time to bring down. For example, for too long we have kept too much of America's oil and gas resources locked up, literally off limits and unavailable to help America's families meet their energy needs. This has left us 60 percent dependent on foreign sources of oil and vulnerable to price hikes and the whims of foreign governments.

We took a small step last Congress when we opened an area in the Gulf of Mexico to energy production, but there is much more we can and should do if we want to have a meaningful impact on supplies and prices in the long term.

Back in 1995, when President Clinton vetoed a bill opening a very small portion of the Alaskan National Wildlife Refuge to exploration, the price of oil was \$19 a barrel. Over a decade later, when a million barrels a day from ANWR would have been flowing to U.S. consumers, oil is \$118 a barrel. While there is not much Government can do to lower gas prices overnight, this was a policy that, had it not been vetoed 13 years ago, could be making a difference today.

Democrats have also blocked proposals to increase refining capacity, which would lead to additional supplies and lower prices. We have had some successes when we have acted in a reasonable, bipartisan way, as we did when we raised the fuel economy standards and increased the use of renewable fuels in last year's Energy bill. But we will not have a balanced, effective, sensible energy policy until we also address the issue of making more of America's energy here at home available to American customers.

So we want to know what is the Democrats' commonsense plan to lower gas prices? It was announced 2 years ago. What is it? We haven't seen it yet. What is taking them so long to unveil it? The American people are waiting and paying more at the pump each day they wait.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

CORPORAL CHRISTOPHER TYLER WARNDORF

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I rise today in honor of a young man from Kentucky who was lost in the performance of his duty. CPL Christopher Tyler Warndorf, of Burlington, KY, was tragically killed on August 29, 2006, in Iraq's Al Anbar Province, after an explosion set by terrorists went off.

A U.S. marine, he was 23 years old. Corporal Warndorf's mother Tina explains the circumstances of her son's death and how he died a hero.

The suicide bomber's plan was to come through the gates of their base. Tyler stopped him before that happened.

For his bravery in uniform, Corporal Warndorf received several medals, awards, and decorations, including the National Defense Service Medal, the Navy Unit Commendation Ribbon, and the Purple Heart.

Looking back, it is clear Tyler's service to his country, and indeed his entire life, was a gift. Tina remembers how she and Tyler's father Christopher Joseph Warndorf were once told they could not expect to have children.

A month before we were to be married, the doctors told us children would not be possible. We were ecstatic when we found out we were going to have a baby. It was a pretty high-risk pregnancy and a tough delivery. Tyler came in fighting and left fighting.

Tina and Christopher went on to have three children in all—Nicholas and Katelyn soon joined eldest son Tyler, who went by his middle name because Tina didn't want to hear her son called Little Chris.

As a child, Tyler had to wear braces to straighten his legs. But that didn't stop him from going on to play sports and becoming a leader of other kids both on and off the playing field.

Tina remembers:

Tyler was often teased for being so small. When he went out for football, he was so small none of the gear would fit him. The coach got gear from the pee-wee football league and told me he was on the team because of his heart, his soul, and his determination.

In addition to playing football and soccer as a kid, Tyler was active in his church, the First Church of Christ in Burlington. He convinced his family to join as well and made friends through the church's youth group.

Tina remembers how little trouble Tyler gave her growing up.

He always told me where he was going to be. I wish all parents could have that relationship with their kids. Tyler set the bar with Katelyn and Nick because they saw how I trusted him. There was never a reason to worry.

Tyler was interested in bridges and architecture and for a while set his sights on becoming a structural engineer. After a family visit to California, he thought about going to school there. But then came the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, and those plans changed.

Tina said:

When 9/11 happened, he came and told me he was going to join. He loved the Marines. He excelled at it.

Tyler enlisted in the Marine Corps in the fall of 2003, a few months after graduating from Conner High School. He spent the whole summer beforehand running and getting in shape. He was assigned to Lima Company, 3rd Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division, based in Camp Lejeune, NC, and was eventually sent to Iraq under the First Marine Expeditionary Force, Forward.

As a marine, Tyler deployed once to Haiti and twice to Iraq. While serving in Haiti, Tyler was appalled to see children forced to scavenge for food and eat out of garbage cans. He sent to his family a list of food to send, which he passed out to the neediest kids.

Tyler did not let the thousands of miles between Iraq and Kentucky weaken the bonds between him and his family. His little sister Katelyn received a special birthday present when she turned 13. Tyler had 13 white roses delivered to her class at Conner Middle School, while over the intercom a tape of Tyler singing "Happy Birthday" played. It was a touching gift from a big brother who, had he been there, would surely be looking over Katelyn's report card, as he had in the past. "He made sure we got good grades," Katelyn remembers of Tyler. "If not, he would give us a talking-to."

Tyler's family was blessed to receive a phone call from him in Iraq before his tragic death, on the happy occasion of a new niece born into the family. "My daughter and I got to talk to him 45

minutes before he was killed," Tina recalls. "If anything, it was comforting, because if it had been weeks, it would have been really hard."

The support the Warndorf family received during Tyler's funeral was of tremendous solace.

Tina said:

I didn't expect what we received. Streets were lined the entire way to the funeral. I had no idea. For the visitation, the people gave me strength. Over 4,000 people visited. They will never know how much their support and kindness meant.

One of those supporters was Tyler's captain, who used to invite Tyler to his house for dinner on weekends. He told the Warndorfs that Tyler was such a wonderful person, he was as proud of him as if he had been his own son.

My prayers go out to the Warndorf family for the loss of this fine young man. We are thinking today of his mother Tina; his brother Nicholas; his sister Katelyn; and many other beloved family members and friends. Tyler was predeceased by his father Christopher Joseph Warndorf.

Tyler leaves behind many grateful people who were happy to have known him and felt his presence in their lives. His mother Tina expresses this feeling best of all, so I will leave my colleagues with her words:

Many soldiers commented on how amazing he was. This made me very proud. He was my confidant, my son, and my best friend. At least we got to have him at all.

The Senate salutes Christopher Tyler Warndorf for his service to his country. He reminded those who knew him what it was to be a hero, and we will forever honor his noble sacrifice.

I yield the floor, and I 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. HARKIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

TEMPORARY EXTENSION OF THE FARM SECURITY AND RURAL INVESTMENT ACT OF 2002

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. 2903 introduced earlier today by myself.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2903) to amend Public Law 110-196 to provide for a temporary extension of programs authorized by the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 beyond April 25, 2008.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to modify the bill at the desk to insert the date May 9, 2008, in both paragraph 1 and paragraph 2, in lieu of May 2.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection to the modification?

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, reserving the right to object.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, I am inclined to object. This is no reflection at all on the chairman of the Agriculture Committee and the ranking member. We are now 6 months into working on a new farm bill. In 2 weeks, we will probably start grain harvest in the panhandle of Texas. Last week, I came to the floor in a sense of frustration and urgency for American agriculture, for the Congress to complete its work. I am told by the chairman and the ranking member that a great deal has been accomplished this week and a sense of urgency is beginning to build. I would be willing to extend current farm policy for another week while the principals work on the finalization of a new farm bill because their work product is a good one. I am not here to destroy it. I am here to say, on behalf of American agriculture, they are sensing urgency—it is time Congress senses urgency. Six months negotiating a bill in most people's minds is about long enough.

So for a full 2-week extension, I will object. I object.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection is heard.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I say to my colleague from Idaho that in 1996 when that farm bill came up, it was 6 months late. It was signed into law April 4, 6 months past due. I do not recall the Senator from Idaho raising any objections. He was here at that time. And that was an easy farm bill. This is a very tough one. It is tough because there are tax measures that have come into it—not of my doing, not of the doing of my ranking member. But the Finance Committee and others got involved in this, so we have tax measures that have been a long, drawn-out process. This has sort of been out of our jurisdiction.

Senator CHAMBLISS and I have been dogged in getting the work done on the Agriculture bill, and we have. I say to my friend from Idaho, if this were only the Agriculture bill, we would have had this done a long time ago. This has to do with tax measures. As such, neither Senator CHAMBLISS nor I have control of that; we are not chairman or ranking member of the Finance Committee or Ways and Means.

I say to my friend from Idaho, so they were 6 months overdue in 1996. So we are over 6 months overdue right now. We are very close to getting this agreement done. We worked today, worked yesterday, and things are coming together. We made real progress. It has been slow, but it has been real. We have reached a number of agreements, and we are very close to putting this together.

Why would we want a 2-week extension? The House is not even in tomor-

row, for one thing. Then we have to finish this. We have to go back into full conference. There are some items that are going to require a little bit of debate and some votes. Even if we were to finish this bill by next Wednesday, which I think is possible, it is going to take another week just to do the paperwork and get everything together. It is humanly impossible—humanly impossible—legislatively impossible to get everything done in 1 week. That is why I asked for 2 weeks, because that is realistic. It is unrealistic, at this point in time, on Thursday, to say we can get everything done by next Thursday. It is just impossible. I want to be realistic.

I do not want to play any games around here. Frankly, we could finish our work, we can get the stuff done, but we can't get it all nailed down, the paperwork done, all that stuff that has to be done to clean up everything to get it to this body and get it to the House for a vote by next week—legislatively impossible.

I say to my friend from Idaho, you can either be realistic or unrealistic, you can help us out and be supportive of a process that has taken a lot of time and effort by both Senator CHAMBLISS and me, by Republicans and Democrats. We have been working very hard on this, and we are very close to getting it done. To put on just a 1-week extension is just unrealistic.

Mr. CRAIG. Will the Chairman yield? Mr. HARKIN. I yield to my friend from Idaho.

Mr. CRAIG. In everything I say, it is not a reflection on the work of the Senate, it is a reflection of reality, and 1996 doesn't have anything to do with it. This is 2008, and agriculture today is considerably different than it was in 1996.

Today on the news you are actually hearing some supermarkets talk about the shortage of a food supply. I don't know if we have ever talked food supply shortages—ever in my lifetime—for American consumers.

If what the Chairman tells me is accurate, and I have no reason to doubt him—and Senator CHAMBLISS has done a wonderful job of keeping me and our colleagues informed—but collectively you have told this Senate more in the last 10 minutes than we have heard in a month from the collective principals on where we are with the progress. If by next week you have completed your work and we are simply ready to ink it and get it into a final package—I told Senator CHAMBLISS I wouldn't be on the floor today if that had happened this week. But it has not happened.

You have made progress. What is wrong, Mr. Chairman, with coming back here at the end of next week, reporting your work product and saying: Give us another extension and we will put it in final. That is a report to American agriculture, the kind they now deserve, more than they did 6 months ago. This is the fourth extension you have asked for, and I am simply saying I will give you one more,