

change. China—and listen to this one—puts two new coal-fired powerplants in service every week and now uses more coal than the United States, the European Union, and Japan combined. India is in the process of building the largest coal mine in the world. With facts like these, America could totally shut down all of our emissions-producing activities and we would not make a dent in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

Americans should not suffer for symbolism while countries such as China and India emit increasingly large quantities of greenhouse gases without consequences. Ohioans are already struggling with the cost of living due to higher prices for gasoline, home heating fuel, electricity, food, and health care. Lieberman-Warner will only make things worse.

We cannot tolerate policies that harm our economy and drive businesses overseas to countries that do not recognize their environmental responsibilities or just do not have the political will to act. If we do, we will be worse off on two counts: fewer jobs and an environment that is not any cleaner than when we started.

That is why I am spearheading the development of an alternative solution to climate change which is less intrusive, less costly, and will more quickly achieve greater environmental benefits than the one option now before us. The smart way to address this problem is through collaborative, multinational efforts to develop and deploy the clean energy technologies that everyone recognizes as necessary to solve this global environmental problem.

I am pleased, with the support of our President, that consideration is being given to a clean energy technology fund—of some \$2 billion we would participate in—an international clean energy technology fund. I know from reading a paper by Dr. Lin Jiang that China is giving serious thought to working with us. In a paper called “The Nexus of Energy, Global Warming, and Environmental Concerns: Opportunities for U.S.-China Cooperation,” Dr. Lin wrote:

It is clear that greater investment is urgently needed to help China develop cost-effective methods to use coal more cleanly, through, for example, gasification and carbon capture and storage (CCS).<sup>2</sup> Collaboration between the U.S. and China in accelerating the adoption of such technologies could be mutually beneficial, since the U.S. is equally abundant in coal reserve as well.

The Asian Pacific Partnership, which resulted from the passage of the Hagel-Pryor-Voinovich, et al. bill, is in its infancy in sharing technological breakthroughs on controlling carbon emissions. It is already happening through the Asian Pacific Partnership. For those who are really interested, you can go to [www.asianpacificpartnership.org](http://www.asianpacificpartnership.org) for more information on what is happening.

Recently, Richard Armitage and Dr. Joe testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and submitted

for the record a paper called “Implementing Smart Power: Setting an Agenda for National Security Reform.”

In this paper, Dr. Nye suggested that:

The next administration and Congress should establish and fund a joint technology development center. International collaboration helps reduce costs and accelerate the pace of innovation. The U.S. Department of Energy in partnership with major global energy companies should establish a 10-year endowment for funding energy and technology related research. This could be administered by an international consortium of the National Science Foundation and equivalents and disburse grants through a peer review process to researchers to provide venture capital to develop and deploy next generation energy technologies, such as biofuels.

Also, the paper suggests that the next President should “seek to identify areas of mutual interest between the United States and China on which the two powers can work together on a smart power agenda.”

“Work together.”

Energy security and environmental stewardship top that list, along with other transnational issues such as public health and non-proliferation. Global leadership does not have to be a zero-sum game.

The point I am making is, we are on the edge. We are seeing the result now in terms of the high cost of gasoline, the high cost of natural gas, the high cost of heating oil because of the fact that we did not put together a comprehensive plan some years ago, realizing we are in a global economy, the world is expanding, demand for these resources is growing every day, and in order for us to survive in this century, we have to become a whole lot more independent in terms of energy—as I said, the “second declaration of independence.” The only way that is going to happen is to develop a comprehensive plan.

My colleague, Senator ALEXANDER from Tennessee, did a very good job earlier this evening in laying out a comprehensive plan we should put in place. It is not going to happen overnight. It is going to take time for it to take place.

The reason I am bringing up the issue of the legislation dealing with climate change is, again, how do we handle that issue? Do we just go ahead and say: “Well, we are going to go forward with it. Cap in trade. This is going to solve the problem,” when most of us know the technology is not there in order to cap carbon and sequester carbon, when most of us know the Chinese and the Indians and other growing economies are sending these greenhouse gases into the air.

Instead of just saying: Well, we will do it on our own, I think it is time for us to get together and realize we are part of this global economy. By working together, not only could the United States be a leader in dealing with climate change and greenhouse gases, but it would also be one of the most fantastic things our country could do in terms of public diplomacy.

We have been banged over the head over the years because we have not got on into Kyoto. That was voted on here on the floor of the Senate and it went down overwhelmingly “no.” Then, 2 years ago, we passed the Pryor-Hagel bill. The reason it passed is because it had an international dimension to it.

I think where we are today is we have to say: Here we are and here is where we want to be, and how do we get there. Wouldn't it be wonderful, as I have said, if the United States could be a leader in doing this and bringing other countries together in saying we are going to do this together. I have a motto: Together we can do it. I think that is the approach we should take. If we don't do that, if we go ahead with this cap-and-trade legislation and say: Well, it is going to take care of the problem, we are going to be having the same problem we are having today, only it will be compounded: a 55-percent increase in electric costs by 2012, an 80-percent increase in natural gas costs, and a 30-percent increase in gas costs. We can't handle that. We have to worry about the standard of living of our people. So we have to balance this.

I think if we work on a bipartisan basis, we can come up with something that is spectacular. It is overdue.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania is recognized.

#### PUBLIC SAFETY EMPLOYER-EMPLOYEE COOPERATION ACT

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, we are debating a number of measures in the next couple of days, and one of them that is before the Senate right now is the Public Safety Employer-Employee Cooperation Act. I wish to speak for a couple of moments about that legislation.

This legislation would allow States that do not currently provide first responders with collective bargaining rights 2 years to revise their State law to do that. After 2 years, the Federal Labor Relations Authority would become responsible for protecting the rights of first responders in those States that still don't provide these rights. The Federal Labor Relations Authority would issue regulations to establish procedures for employees to choose whether to form a union for collective bargaining but would not have any say in the terms of the agreement.

This legislation is critically important for us to respond to emergencies across the country. There are some States that can do it better than others because of limitations. We think at times such as this of the tragedy of 9/11, and it is important at this time to remember that every New York City firefighter, emergency medical person, every police officer who responded to the disaster at the World Trade Center on that horrific day in American history was, in fact, a union member under a collective bargaining agreement. So their unions strengthened their ability to respond to this crisis.

The bill before us, the Public Safety Employer-Employee Cooperation Act, would give public safety officers the right to bargain over wages, hours, and working conditions, and would ensure that these rights are enforceable in State court. It also provides an efficient and effective dispute resolution mechanism for labor-management conflicts.

It is important to note that this bill does not force any specific regulatory scheme on the States. It gives States plenty of leeway to adopt new collective bargaining laws that make sense for their States. States that choose not to craft their own system can get the help of the Federal Labor Relations Authority.

I guess in summary form, we think of the importance of this legislation in the context of the threats we face: the threat of terrorism, the threat of disasters, all kinds of threats our communities are faced with. I and a lot of other Americans, I believe, want to make sure those who are putting their lives on the line every day, whether they are firefighters or police officers or other emergency personnel, have the peace of mind to know they are protected under law and that they also have the ability to negotiate and watch out for their own wages, benefits, and working conditions.

That is what this legislation seeks to do: To bring States that don't currently have this in place—this labor relations authority in place—to make sure we are doing that in every State of the Union so no matter where you live, those who are protecting us—the police officers, firefighters, and others—have the ability to benefit from the protections they should have under law.

I urge my colleagues, as so many others who have already done so, to support the Public Safety Employer-Employees Cooperation Act. It is very important legislation, and it is important that we pass it here in the Senate.

With that, I yield the floor, and note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

#### OIL AND GAS PRICES

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, despite a little snow the last few weeks, spring is finally arriving in Minnesota. In fact, we had our fishing opener this weekend. It is the time of year when people start going up north. They have their cabins up there. It is not exactly extravagant, but that is their vacation place and that is where they spend a lot of their summer.

A lot of my constituents have been calling our office saying they don't

know if they can afford to go up north this summer. Worse than that, we have had many people who drive trucks for a living, who have long commutes to work, who are concerned about even keeping up with their jobs. You can see why. The oil and gas prices have tripled since 2002: Minnesota, \$3.49 per gallon; in the United States, gas prices are at \$3.66 per gallon. You can see why the truckers are upset with diesel at \$4.15 per gallon and oil at \$122 per barrel.

I have to pause for a moment to say I have been coming to the Senate floor to address the price of oil for a number of weeks now and it continues to astound me that every time I speak, the prices have gone up even more, and there appears to be no relief in sight. We look at the skyrocketing gas prices in Minnesota where they have gone from about \$2.90 up to \$3.62 in only 3 months. This is astonishing, and it is even more astonishing that this administration continues to do nothing; that the attitude seems to be this is what is happening, this is what the market says.

I believe there are things we can actually do, of course, in the long term but also in the short term. I don't believe we can continue to do business as usual. I have heard from farmers who are having a hard time making ends meet, even with the high commodity prices, because the cost of their inputs such as diesel fuel for their farm equipment and fertilizer made from natural gas have spiraled out of control. I have heard from people who are having a hard time heating their homes and going on with their lives.

The high price of energy has inflated the price of everything from groceries to transportation to home heating. We had a hearing in the Joint Economic Committee a few weeks ago about the price of food. There are a number of factors at play there, including the low value of the dollar and the export market; including the weather; including some of the demand for biofuels, although that was put as a relatively small factor. But one thing that was mentioned time and time again was the cost of transportation.

In cold northern States such as Minnesota, where people have to pay off large heating bills, this is the time of year they do it. Some of them put it off until now. They are too afraid of thinking about paying their bills for next winter. Middle-class families are struggling with the high cost of health care and college education, and they can't afford the price of gas, especially in our rural areas. You look at the fact that there really haven't been any wage increases or the wages have been stagnant and, in fact, have been going down; you add that to the increasing expenses with the price of gas up about \$1,000 or \$2,000 a year, depending on how much you drive. For a middle-class family, health care is up something like \$1,500 a year; appliances are up, telephone service is up. It comes to

about \$5,000 extra a year that the middle-class families are expending in the last 8 years.

Not a day goes by that I don't hear about this kind of struggle from my constituents, so it is hard for me to understand how our President seemed so taken aback recently when someone asked him about \$4-a-gallon gas. This was on February 28, 2008, not too long ago, and the President said:

You're predicting \$4 a gallon gasoline? That's interesting. I hadn't heard that.

The fact is it is not just interesting to the people of my State; it is, in fact, a budget buster for too many people in my State. This administration has failed to provide Americans with a meaningful energy policy that would provide relief from high gas and energy prices.

This country needs a bold energy policy for the future—not little gimmicks, not little ideas that maybe give you an extra 20 bucks. This country needs something more than someone who is going to say it is interesting. We need a policy that will stabilize prices and give consumers more alternatives, reduce our dependence on foreign oil, and provide us with the next generation of home-grown biofuels.

Brazil has achieved energy independence. They have done it with sugarcane. It is easier to do, but they have done it. They basically leapfrogged our country because their government had the foresight to put a policy in place that pushed the development of biofuels. They have their own oil, but mostly they have their own biofuels.

We can do this; we just need the will. We need to pursue a forward-looking energy policy with the same sense of urgency we used to put a man on the Moon nearly 40 years ago.

In the long term, that is going to mean making strategic decisions in research on hybrid cars, new solar technology, cellulosic ethanol, and other forms of energy from biomass. It is just around the corner. We know that. Chevy is coming out with the Chevy Volt which gives you 30 miles, by plugging your car in every day and then it converts over to biofuels. That is 2 years away. We have new solar technologies. We have cellulosic ethanol right at the University of Minnesota where groundbreaking research is being done. We can do this.

We need better fuel efficiency for our cars and trucks. As the Presiding Officer knows, this Congress was the first Congress since I was in junior high to increase the gas mileage standards for new cars and trucks by 10 miles per gallon. We can do more. We also need a renewable energy standard such as we have in Minnesota where we simply basically are going to provide 25 percent of our energy, our electricity, from renewable sources by the year 2025. That was a bipartisan agreement in our State—the Republican Governor, Democratic legislature, nearly unanimous, supported by our biggest electricity company itself, which took even a higher standard—30 percent—for itself.