

We are saddled with high gas prices and high energy prices already.

Lawsuits blocking any new coal-fired powerplants can wreak havoc on Wyoming's economy before we have had a chance to finish developing the clean coal technologies of the 21st century. Clean coal technologies truly will address climate change.

Mr. President, all regions that depend on coal, particularly the Midwest, the South, and the Rocky Mountain West, would be the hardest hit. But we need real solutions to address species issues, while at the same time ensuring that we protect working Americans.

You want to drive your family to the beach or drive them to the mountains? Don't be surprised that in the not too distant future you need to get a government permit to do so.

I urge all Members of this body to consider cosponsoring this important bill.

By Mr. CORNYN (for himself, Mr. VITTER, Mr. ALLARD, Mr. CRAIG, Mrs. DOLE, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. ENSIGN, Mr. MARTINEZ, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. STEVENS, Mr. CHAMBLISS, Mr. BUNNING, Mr. KYL, Mrs. HUTCHISON, Mr. ENZI, Mr. WICKER, Mr. COBURN, Mr. COLEMAN, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. BOND, Mr. LUGAR, and Mr. THUNE):

S. 3073. A bill to amend the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act to improve procedures for the collection and delivery of absentee ballots of absent overseas uniformed services voters, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, the right to participate in democratic elections and vote for candidates of your choice is fundamental to the American experience. That right to vote is safeguarded by our men and women in uniform, often at great personal cost to them and their loved ones.

As the Global War on Terror continues, the need for overseas service by our troops is unlikely to let up any time soon. They routinely find themselves deployed to far-away battlefields in the Middle East, on ships at sea all across the globe, or assigned to overseas postings in Korea, Europe, or elsewhere.

What's more, the decisions of elected leaders of the Federal Government impact our troops often in a very direct and personal way. As a result of decisions made by those elected leaders, our troops can be called to deploy to a combat zone at virtually any time.

Statistics on overseas military voting in the 2006 election, compiled by the U.S. Election Assistance Commission, show that there is clearly a problem of disenfranchisement of our troops. It is absolutely despicable that, of our overseas troops who asked for mail-in ballots for 2006, less than half, 47.6, percent of their completed ballots actually arrived at the local election

office. Many of those arrived too late, and were therefore not even counted.

To me, that is an appalling failure of our current absentee voting system. We need to take action now, before the problem rears its ugly head again, to safeguard the right of our troops to vote and have their votes count.

I believe Congress has a duty to ensure these men and women in uniform, selflessly serving abroad, have a voice in choosing their elected leaders. They serve not only in the defense of freedom and the American way of life, but also in defense of the very system of government in which I and my Senate colleagues have the honor to serve.

These military service members have already given up so much for this country—often being apart from their families, living in the face of constant danger, and standing on the front lines of our defense. We must not allow one of their most fundamental rights as Americans to fall victim to an antiquated and inefficient system of absentee voting and slow—sometimes painfully slow—methods of delivering their marked ballots.

One of the biggest problems in absentee balloting for our overseas troops has been this inadequate delivery system for completed ballots.

The simple fact is that, for many overseas military voters, their marked ballots arrived at the local election office too late to be counted. There is no excuse for allowing inefficiency to disenfranchise our military men and women serving abroad.

That is why I have decided to introduce the Military Voting Protection Act of 2008, or MVP Act. This bill will improve the absentee voting system for our overseas troops by expediting the delivery of their marked ballots to ensure they are delivered in a timely manner and, at the same time, electronically tracked to provide accountability and allow for verification that completed ballots actually arrived at their local election office.

First and foremost, this bill would expedite the process by directing the Pentagon to make use of express delivery services, which many of us use on a regular basis, to get the completed absentee ballots of our overseas troops to election officials here at home. At the same time, it would require the DOD to take a more active role in organizing the collection, transportation, and tracking of these ballots.

We have at our disposal the tools necessary to more efficiently collect and deliver our troops' ballots to help make their votes count. We simply need to start utilizing more capable and expedited delivery methods to ensure that our troops' voices are heard.

This bill also urges the DOD to make better use of modern technology to improve the ability of our troops to participate in elections. At the same time, the bill recognizes the clear importance of preserving the privacy and integrity of the voting system by calling on DOD to focus its efforts on secure,

efficient systems that would also achieve these important goals.

In this day and age, it is inexcusable for our troops to be shut out of the democratic process merely because they are far away from their homes as a result of their military service. We should not sit idly by and watch another election pass with a large portion of our brave military men and women being left out of our democratic process.

For far too long in this country we have failed to adequately safeguard the right of our troops to participate in our democratic process. We have allowed slow delivery methods, confusing absentee voting procedures, and myriad other obstacles to disenfranchise many of our overseas troops. We must put those days behind us.

I urge all of my colleagues to join me in addressing this important issue and protecting for our troops the very rights they fight to safeguard for us. Join me in cosponsoring the MVP Act. I look forward to working with my colleagues to pass this important bill quickly.

#### SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 574—EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA SHOULD IMMEDIATELY RELEASE FROM CUSTODY THE CHILDREN OF REBIYA KADEER AND CANADIAN CITIZEN HUSEYIN CELIL AND SHOULD REFRAIN FROM FURTHER ENGAGING IN ACTS OF CULTURAL, LINGUISTIC, AND RELIGIOUS SUPPRESSION DIRECTED AGAINST THE UYGHUR PEOPLE

Mr. BROWN submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 574

Whereas the protection of the human rights of minority groups is consistent with the actions of a responsible stakeholder in the international community and with the role of a host of a major international event such as the Olympic Games;

Whereas recent actions taken against the Uyghur minority by authorities in the People's Republic of China and, specifically, by local officials in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, have included major violations of human rights and acts of cultural suppression;

Whereas the authorities of the People's Republic of China have manipulated the strategic objectives of the international war on terror to increase their cultural and religious oppression of the Muslim population residing in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region;

Whereas an official campaign to encourage Han Chinese migration into the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region has resulted in the Uyghur population becoming a minority in their traditional homeland and has placed immense pressure on those who are seeking to preserve the linguistic, cultural, and religious traditions of the Uyghur people;

Whereas a new policy now actively recruits young Uyghur women and forcibly transfers

them to work at factories in urban areas in far-off eastern provinces, resulting in tens of thousands of Uyghur women being separated from their families and placed into substandard working conditions thousands of miles from their homes;

Whereas the legal system of the People's Republic of China is used as a tool of repression, including for the imposition of arbitrary detentions and torture commonly employed against any and all Uyghurs who voice discontent with the Government;

Whereas the Government of the People's Republic of China continues to apply charges of "political crimes" and the death penalty to Uyghurs and other political dissidents, contrary to international humanitarian standards;

Whereas the People's Republic of China is implementing a monolingual Chinese language education system that undermines the linguistic basis of Uyghur culture by transitioning minority students from education in their mother tongue to education in Chinese, shifting dramatically away from past policies that provided choice for the Uyghur people;

Whereas the Senate has a particular interest in the fate of Uyghur human rights leader Rebiya Kadeer, a Nobel Peace Prize nominee, and her family, as Ms. Kadeer was first arrested in August 1999 while she was en route to meet with a delegation from the Congressional Research Service and was held in prison on spurious charges until her release and exile to the United States in the spring of 2005;

Whereas upon her release, Rebiya Kadeer was warned by her Chinese jailers not to advocate for human rights in Xinjiang and throughout China while in the United States or elsewhere, and was reminded that she had several family members residing in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region;

Whereas while residing in the United States, Rebiya Kadeer founded the International Uyghur Human Rights and Democracy Foundation and was elected President of the Uyghur American Association and President of the World Uyghur Congress in Munich, Germany;

Whereas 2 of Rebiya Kadeer's sons were detained and beaten and one of her daughters was placed under house arrest in June 2006;

Whereas President George W. Bush recognized the importance of Rebiya Kadeer's human rights work in a June 5, 2007, speech in Prague, Czech Republic, when he stated: "Another dissident I will meet here is Rebiyah Kadeer of China, whose sons have been jailed in what we believe is an act of retaliation for her human rights activities. The talent of men and women like Rebiyah is the greatest resource of their nations, far more valuable than the weapons of their army or their oil under the ground.";

Whereas Kahar Abdureyim, Rebiya Kadeer's eldest son, was fined \$12,500 for tax evasion and another son, Alim Abdureyim, was sentenced to 7 years in prison and fined \$62,500 for tax evasion in a blatant attempt by local authorities to take control of the Kadeer family's remaining business assets in the People's Republic of China;

Whereas another of Rebiya Kadeer's sons, Ablikim Abdureyim, was beaten by local police to the point of requiring medical attention in June 2006 and has been subjected to continued physical abuse and torture while being held incommunicado in custody since that time;

Whereas Ablikim Abdureyim was also convicted by a kangaroo court on April 17, 2007, for "instigating and engaging in secessionist" activities and was sentenced to 9 years of imprisonment, this trial being held in secrecy and Mr. Abdureyim reportedly

being denied the right to legal representation;

Whereas 2 days later, on April 19, 2007, another court in Urumqi, the capital of Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, sentenced Canadian citizen Huseyin Celil to life in prison for "splittism" and also for "being party to a terrorist organization" after having successfully sought his extradition from Uzbekistan where he was visiting relatives;

Whereas authorities in the People's Republic of China have continued to refuse to recognize Huseyin Celil's Canadian citizenship, although he was naturalized in 2005, denied Canadian diplomats access to the courtroom when Mr. Celil was sentenced, and have refused to grant consular access to Mr. Celil in prison;

Whereas a spokesperson of the Foreign Ministry of the People's Republic of China publicly warned Canada "not to interfere in China's domestic affairs" after Huseyin Celil's sentencing;

Whereas Huseyin Celil's case was a major topic of conversation in a recent Beijing meeting between the Foreign Ministers of Canada and the People's Republic of China; and

Whereas there have been recent armed crackdowns throughout the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region against the Uyghur population: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That it is the sense of the Senate that the Government of the People's Republic of China—

(1) should recognize, and seek to ensure, the linguistic, cultural, and religious rights of the Uyghur people of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region;

(2) should immediately release the children of Rebiya Kadeer from both incarceration and house arrest and cease harassment and intimidation of the Kadeer family members;

(3) should immediately release Canadian citizen Huseyin Celil and allow him to rejoin his family in Canada; and

(4) should immediately cease all Government-sponsored violence and crackdowns against the people throughout the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, including those involved in peaceful protests and political expression.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, the Chinese people have endured an unspeakable tragedy, as we know, with the loss of tens of thousands in a major earthquake. Those numbers continue to grow. On the radio this morning, I heard it looks like more than 50,000 Chinese people have died in one of the greatest tragedies of the last decade. My prayers are with the people of Sichuan Province and all those brave men and women who are there now providing support as volunteers, especially providing support to the Chinese people in Sichuan Province.

I wish to focus on something else in China. This isn't the Chinese people, it is the actions of a few people at the top of the Chinese Government—actions we must confront. When I say "only a few people at the top," the Chinese Government is called the People's Republic of China for a reason. It is a Communist government, a very top-line hierarchical system, where a few people at the top enjoy so much of the benefits and so much of the power and they wield that so unfairly and immorally and, many times, against so many in their country.

For us to ignore the behavior of the Chinese Government, to dismiss that

behavior, to minimize that behavior is a reprehensible act on our part.

In a little more than 3 months, the world will witness one of its great quadrennial events—the summer Olympic Games. The games have been billed as a way for the host, China, to reintroduce itself—a new China, if you will—to the international community. And China has pulled out all the stops: \$38 billion in infrastructure improvements, including a brandnew 91,000-seat stadium, 300 miles of new roads, and an entirely new terminal at Beijing's International Airport, all because of the Olympic Games.

What China will not be highlighting is its human rights record. That is because it is abysmally disgraceful.

As China rolls out the red carpet to welcome hundreds of thousands of tourists and as Olympic-related media flock to Beijing to watch the events, no one will be allowed to go to Tibet, no one will be allowed to go to the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, no one will be allowed to see the hundreds of political prisons, no one will be allowed to visit the areas of China where hundreds of millions live in abject poverty.

Last year, Amnesty International—a no more respected and fairminded group in the world—said of China:

An increased number of . . . journalists were harassed, detained, and jailed. Thousands of people who pursued their faith outside officially sanctioned churches were subjected to harassment and many to detention and imprisonment. Thousands of people were sentenced to death or executed. Migrants from rural areas were deprived of basic rights.

The Presiding officer, from the State of Rhode Island, has talked passionately about the freedom of the press and journalism in countries where we have the kind of relationship we have with China and how important it is. Others in this body have talked about human rights and labor rights, and now China has violated those values we hold dear and that international organizations that serve all of the world hold so dear.

Beijing will continue to attempt to paint its repressive regime during the Olympics in the best light possible, as we have seen in the last month with the unnerving events in Tibet. The repression in Tibet, a region similar in its treatment by the government as the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, is nothing new. For almost 60 years, Tibetans have survived under Beijing repression. Tibet was swallowed up by China in 1950. The Uyghur Autonomous Region was swallowed up by China the year before.

China's policy is straightforward: Declare war on human rights, bring in native Chinese for the best jobs, eradicate the indigenous culture, the language, the spiritual center, disperse the population. It seems to have worked for China's interest every time.

China's policies keep import prices low by allowing inhumane treatment of

workers, slave wages, and unsafe working conditions have become all too common.

China, the Communist regime, has become China, the world's largest one-company town where workers are interchangeable, replaceable parts and where members of the Communist Party are its shareholders.

The United States as purportedly the world leader in human rights—we talk about exporting democracy, we brag about our values, yet out business is with encouragement and incentives—unbelievably enough, sometimes from our own Government—even though we say we are the world leader in human rights. The United States should not be endorsing in any way the brutal and horrific policies of the Chinese Government. Again, the United States, by our actions by the Government and by business do not seem so interested oftentimes in human rights in China in spite of what we say. We should not be sacrificing our moral compass at the altar of the dollar. We do that way too often.

I met with Rabiya Kadeer, the Uyghur dissident leader and head of the Uyghur American Association. She told me of her time in prison for political advocacy on behalf of her people. She spent 6 long years in prison, arrested in 1999 on her way to a meeting with foreign activists and leaders. She told me of her children who either live in fear or live in prison because of her advocacy on behalf of basic freedoms for the 12 or 13 million Uyghur people. She told me of her exile. She is not allowed to return to her native country.

We need the strength to stand up to rather than apologize for China's brutal regime. This has been the systematic policy of a highly efficient and powerful central government.

The Chinese Uyghurs have long fought for more autonomy from Beijing and greater freedom to practice their Muslim religion.

This is not a new policy. We have seen the same in the Zinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region where ethnic Uyghur people have been systematically relocated and repressed. Their Turkic language is prohibited, their women are placed into forced labor, especially young women taken out of the Autonomous Region to other parts of China, in many cases to be slave labor, forced labor, in other cases to be sex slaves, and their political leaders are jailed. Yet we allow China into the World Health Organization, the World Trade Organization, and made them a preferred trading partner.

Communities across America feel the reverberations of this policy. Not only does it blacken our name as a country when China violates every kind of human rights we care about, but then it affects our country in so many other ways.

We have lost more than 3 million manufacturing jobs across this country since President Bush has been President. Many of these jobs have been

eliminated because of government-subsidized imports from China, because of cheating on currency rules, and because of direct off shoring to countries such as China.

China gives their manufacturers that unfair competitive advantage by manipulating its currency and providing massive subsidies to its industry. We know all that. American companies have been complicit by hiring Chinese subcontractors and forcing those subcontractors to continue to cut costs, meaning contaminated vitamins, contaminated pharmaceuticals, and dangerous toxic lead-based paint on toys.

I am submitting a resolution today calling on the Chinese to free the Kadeer children, free the Uyghur political prisoners, and end the political, religious, and ethnic repression in that part of China.

I ask my colleagues to take a look at this resolution, to meet with Ms. Kadeer and to join me in working to bring the atrocities against the Uyghur people to an end. Instead of welcoming China, celebrating China, and trading with China on their terms, as we all talk about the great quadrennial events of the international Olympic Games, we should be helping China's repressed. We should not indulge China its abuses. It dishonors our own values.

#### SENATE RESOLUTION 575—EX-PRESSING THE SUPPORT OF THE SENATE FOR VETERAN ENTREPRENEURS

Mr. STEVENS (for himself, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. INOUE, Mr. AKAKA, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. CRAIG, Ms. SNOWE) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

S. RES. 575

Whereas the veterans of the United States have been vital to the small business enterprises of the United States;

Whereas the Nation should honor its veterans and in particular those veterans with disabilities incurred or aggravated in the line of duty during active service with the United States Armed Forces;

Whereas Congress passed the Veterans Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development Act of 1999 (Public Law 106-50; 113 Stat. 233) to assist veterans interested in starting or expanding small businesses;

Whereas the Veterans Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development Act of 1999 required the President to establish a goal of awarding not less than 3 percent of the total value of all Federal prime contracts and subcontracts to service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses;

Whereas Congress approved the Veterans Benefits Act of 2003 (Public Law 108-183; 117 Stat. 2651) to expand benefits for veterans;

Whereas the Veterans Benefits Act of 2003 gave agency contracting officers the authority to reserve certain procurement contracts for service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses;

Whereas President George W. Bush issued Executive Order 13360 (60 Fed. Reg. 62,549) in 2004, calling on Federal agencies to more effectively implement the legislative changes to the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 631 et seq.) included in the Veterans Entrepreneur-

ship and Small Business Development Act of 1999 and the Veterans Benefits Act of 2003;

Whereas, despite those Acts of Congress and the issuance of Executive Order 13360 by the President, service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses still struggle to receive a fair share of Federal contracts; and

Whereas Federal agencies have consistently fallen short of the statutory contracting goal for service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses set by the Veterans Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development Act of 1999: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the Senate—

(1) reaffirms the strong support of the United States for its veterans and veteran entrepreneurs; and

(2) calls on Federal agencies to work to improve Federal contracting opportunities for service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses.

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I rise to submit a resolution that is cosponsored by Senator MURKOWSKI, Senator INOUE, Senator AKAKA, Senator COCHRAN, Senator ISAKSON, Senator CRAIG, and Senator SNOWE.

I am submitting this resolution to honor veteran entrepreneurs and calling on the Federal Government to improve Federal contracting opportunities for service-disabled, veteran-owned small businesses. They call them SDVOSBs.

These veteran entrepreneurs have given so much to our country, and the Federal Government needs to honor them by utilizing their array of valuable skills.

Almost 9 years ago, Congress passed the Veterans Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development Act of 1999, which directed the President to establish a goal of awarding at least 3 percent of Federal contracts to service-disabled, veteran-owned small businesses.

In subsequent years, however, the Federal agencies have consistently failed to reach that statutory goal. In the most recent official government-wide report, contract awards for service-disabled, veteran-owned small businesses made up less than 1 percent of all Federal contracts.

As I travel home this weekend to observe Memorial Day, I will have the great honor of being accompanied by U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Dr. James Peake, who has accepted my invitation to visit our State.

Dr. Peake, a decorated combat veteran and former Army Surgeon General, is an exceptional American. An important challenge for the VA will be to provide adequate VA health facilities and services to veterans in rural areas.

Dr. Peake's decision to travel from our Nation's Capital to Alaska on this important holiday shows his commitment to all veterans, particularly those who come from rural areas.