

threat posed by terrorists in other areas, such as Afghanistan, as well as around the globe.

I believe that General Petraeus has been an unapologetic supporter of this misguided war in Iraq, continually toeing the administration's party line and failing to acknowledge many of the grave failings that have occurred. The military alone will not be able to stabilize Iraq, we must understand the political and diplomatic situation at hand, and I do not believe that under General Petraeus' leadership, the necessary reconciliation to allow the Iraqi Government to take control has occurred. General Petraeus has shown no willingness to take us in this new direction, and it is for this reason that cannot support his nomination.

With respect to Lieutenant General Odierno, I believe that his past command of the 4th Infantry Division demonstrated what I consider to be serious flaws in judgment. General Odierno refused to characterize the insurgency that began after the fall of the Saddam Hussein regime as anything that was serious and worthy of U.S. strategy shift. As we know, the failure to correctly assess the nature of the insurgency helped fuel years of violence in Iraq.

We are long overdue for a new course in Iraq. The tragically overwhelming costs of this war in both lives and resources have distracted us from the initial task of fighting al-Qaida. It is time that we have leaders who will be able to independently assess our military mission in Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Middle East rather than unquestionably support the failed policies of this administration.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will now resume legislative session.

AMERICAN HOUSING RESCUE AND FORECLOSURE PREVENTION ACT OF 2008—Continued

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. KLOBUCHAR). Without objection, it is so ordered.

REQUEST TO BE EXCUSED

Mr. STEVENS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that I be excused from the call of the Senate until the first vote that occurs on July 14.

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

Mr. STEVENS. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

ENERGY

Mr. SANDERS. Madam President, I want to take a moment to speak about one of the most important issues facing our country right now, and that is the energy crisis, in terms of the high cost of energy and the fact that people will be suffering very significantly this coming winter—in fact, this summer—if we do not address it.

In that regard, on June 24, I introduced S. 3186, the Warm in Winter and Cool in Summer Act, to provide immediate relief to millions of senior citizens, families with children, and the disabled, who are struggling to pay their home energy bills. Specifically, this bill would nearly double the funding for the highly successful Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program, commonly called LIHEAP, in fiscal year 2008, taking LIHEAP from \$2.57 billion to \$5.1 billion, a total increase of over \$2.5 billion.

I thank Majority Leader REID for completing the rule XIV process for this important piece of legislation and placing it directly on the Senate calendar. My understanding is that we will have this bill on the floor before we recess for the August vacation. It is important we do that, and I thank Senator HARRY REID very much for allowing us to move forward in that direction.

I also thank the 26 Senators who are cosponsors of this tripartisan legislation. This bill absolutely is a tripartisan piece of legislation. At this point, we have 18 Democrats on board, we have 8 Republicans on board, and I expect more will be coming on in the coming days and weeks. I thank Senators OBAMA, COLEMAN, LEAHY, SMITH, DURBIN, SNOWE, MURRAY, SUNUNU, LANDRIEU, COLLINS, MURKOWSKI, CLINTON, LUGAR, CANTWELL, GREGG, KERRY, CARDIN, KENNEDY, SCHUMER, BROWN, KLOBUCHAR, MENENDEZ, CASEY, BINGAMAN, STABENOW, and LAUTENBERG for their support.

This legislation not only has strong bipartisan support here in the Senate, it is also moving in the House, and it also has been endorsed by numerous groups all across this country, including the AARP, the National Grange, the National Conference of State Legislatures, the National Community Action Foundation, the National Association of State Energy Officials, the Alliance For Rural America, the Northeast Public Power Association, the National Consumer Law Center on behalf of its low-income clients, the Edison Electric Institute, the National Fuel Funds Network, and the Petroleum Marketers Association of America.

I think we are going to show more and more support in coming weeks, but there is a widespread understanding

that we are facing a crisis in this country and that the President and the Congress have to act.

Let me read a support letter I received from the AARP, the American Association of Retired Persons. As you know, the AARP represents over 39 million Americans, and this is what the AARP said.

AARP fully supports the Warm in Winter and Cool in Summer Act. This legislation will provide needed relief for many older persons who may not receive assistance—despite their eligibility—due to a lack of funding. Older Americans who are more susceptible to hypothermia and heat stroke know the importance of heating and cooling their homes. They often skimp on other necessities to pay their utility bills. However, today's escalating energy prices and the Nation's unpredictable and extreme temperatures are adding to the growing economic hardships faced by seniors. LIHEAP is underfunded and unable to meet the energy assistance needs of the program's eligible households.

I thank the AARP very much for their strong support of this legislation.

Let me also quote from a very recent New York Times editorial. This is what the New York Times said the other day.

A bill just introduced in the Senate would provide about \$2.5 billion under the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program. Half would be released to the States to help low-income residents pay their energy bills and half would sit in a contingency fund that could be tapped at the discretion of the President. When the bill comes up for a vote, likely later this month, Congress should approve it and President Bush should sign it into law. As the economy slows and oil prices rise, helping Americans who cannot afford to heat their homes is a matter of public health and safety as well as a moral imperative. People without adequate heat are vulnerable to illness, and people struggling to pay the heating bills may be tempted to skimp on medicines and even food. No one should have to choose between heating and eating. If they act this summer, as they must, before the Presidential and congressional campaigns send everyone home, Congress and President Bush can help make sure that nobody has to make that choice.

That is from the New York Times, and I appreciate the support of the New York Times on this issue.

Make no mistake about it, we have an energy emergency in Vermont and all across this country, and it is about time the President and the Congress treated this as the emergency it is. As many of my colleagues understand, the price of heating oil skyrocketed last winter, making it extremely difficult for some of my constituents and people all across this country to stay alive, especially when the temperature dropped well below zero. Next winter will even be worse.

At this time last year, heating oil prices were about \$2.50 a gallon. Today, they are about \$4.50 a gallon. Fuel dealers in Vermont are telling me that if this trend continues, heating oil prices could surpass \$5 a gallon by December. I must tell you, Madam President, that all across my State people are very worried about how they will in fact be able to adequately heat their homes next winter.

Meanwhile, LIHEAP funding is 23 percent less than it was 2 years ago, completely eviscerating the purchasing power of this extremely important program. In fact, after adjusting for inflation, the Federal Government spent more money on LIHEAP 20 years ago than it is spending today. So we have a real crisis we have got to address.

It is not an exaggeration to say this is a life-and-death situation. People use that phrase often, but in this sense we are describing the reality facing a number of people. According to the Centers for Disease Control, over 1,000 Americans all across this country died from hypothermia in their own homes from 1992 to 2002, the latest figures we have available. Over 1,000 Americans died from hypothermia. In other words, they froze to death in the United States because they were unable to afford to heat their homes. How many of these deaths were preventable? Well, the answer is, all of them, according to the CDC.

We will probably not know for several years how many Americans died last winter because they could not afford to heat their homes, but clearly one death is too many. And everything being equal, if we do not act, I think we can reasonably expect the number of people dying of hypothermia in this country will only go up. If heating oil even approaches \$5 a gallon by next winter, we will have a public health emergency throughout the northern tier of this country, and this is something we have to address.

I wish also to point out that, although I come from a cold weather State—and I hope and expect all of my colleagues understand this—LIHEAP does not only help constituents in the northern part of our country stay warm in the winter, it also helps people in the South and the West stay cool in the summer. Right now, many people in the southern and western States are suffering with temperatures frequently soaring past 100 degrees while their electricity prices are rapidly increasing.

I was in Nevada last week, and the temperature there was something like 110 to 115 degrees. That is hot. I cannot imagine a frail or elderly person, somebody who is ill, trying to survive in that kind of weather. Those people are going to need help today as much as people in the North will need help when the winter comes.

Recently, USA Today ran a headline on its front page and it said:

Price jolt: Electricity bills going up, up, up.

That was a headline, front-page story. According to this story:

Utilities across the USA are raising power prices up to 29 percent, mostly to pay for soaring fuel cost. . . . The spikes come after rising fuel prices already have driven up utility bills nearly 30 percent the past 5 years, the sharpest jump since the 1970s energy crisis.

Let me give an example of why LIHEAP funding is vital, right now, for

these hot-weather States. Arizona, Georgia, Louisiana, Kentucky, Mississippi, and Florida have either exhausted all their LIHEAP funding or are on the verge of running out of funds. In other words, they will have absolutely no support from the Federal Government to help millions of senior citizens on fixed incomes, low-income families with kids or the disabled stay cool this winter. They are running out of funds right now.

As I have indicated, with the price of electricity going up and up, with the economy in the tank, people are having a harder and harder time paying their electric bills, air-conditioners are run on electricity, and if you don't have your electricity, you don't have your air-conditioner, and if you are old and you are frail and you are sick, you are in a lot of trouble.

From 1999 to 2003, over 3,400 deaths in this country were due to excessive heat. All these deaths were preventable, and air-conditioning is the best way to prevent these deaths from occurring, according to the Centers for Disease Control. In fact, more people in the United States—and this is an interesting fact that I think many people are not aware of—more people in the United States have died from the extreme heat than from floods, tornadoes, and hurricanes combined, since 1998.

CNN may not be in a senior citizen's bedroom when she expires because of heat exhaustion. They are there with the floods and hurricanes and cyclones and tornadoes—we understand that. But we need to reiterate that more people in the United States have died from the extreme heat than from floods, tornadoes, and hurricanes combined.

Meanwhile, the Federal Government spends less money preventing these deaths from occurring than any other natural disaster we face, according to the CDC.

My point is, hurricanes and floods certainly are emergencies. I have always supported efforts to address these emergencies. I want my colleagues to know that when the weather gets 20 below in Vermont and Maine and New Hampshire, that is an emergency. When the weather gets to 110 degrees in California or Nevada, that is also an emergency. We have to act.

My legislation will begin to move us in the right direction. If this legislation becomes law, as I certainly hope it will be, the State of Arizona would receive over \$24 million, the State of Kentucky would receive over \$34 million, the State of Georgia would receive over \$70 million, and the State of Florida would receive over \$80 million to keep their residents cool this summer.

The point I am making is, I don't want anybody to think that because I represent Vermont and we are from the Northeast, that this is simply a cold-weather issue. It is not. It is an issue for every region of this country.

In addition to all that I have said, it is important to understand that tens of thousands of Americans have had their utility and natural gas service shut off this year, and millions more are in danger of having these services cut off because they are at least 1 month late in paying their bills. There is a lot of attention, obviously, on housing foreclosures that we have been focusing on. But let us not forget that as people lose their jobs, as people's wages decline, as utility bills go up, we are looking at utility cutoffs in a very dramatic way.

Increasing LIHEAP funding will allow these Americans to turn their electricity and other essential utility services back on right now so they can cool their homes this summer and heat their homes next winter. According to the National Energy Assistance Directors' Association, a record 15 million American families, or nearly 15 percent of all households, are at least 30 days overdue in paying their utility bills.

Let me conclude by thanking the 26 cosponsors, including 8 Republicans, who are onboard this legislation. Let me thank AARP and the many national organizations that are supporting this. Let me thank Senator REID for completing the rule XIV process.

I hope very much that in a week or two, certainly before we break for the August recess, we will be voting on this legislation. I hope we win it by a very large majority.

I thank Majority Leader REID and all my colleagues who are supporting this legislation and look forward to, in the very short term, reassuring people throughout this country that we are mindful of the impact high energy costs are having on their lives, and we are here to do something about it.

I yield the floor and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, I ask the question, are we in morning business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate is not in morning business.

Mr. GRASSLEY. I ask unanimous consent to speak for a few minutes as in morning business.

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

ENERGY

Mr. GRASSLEY. We are all aware of the impact rising energy costs have had on Americans and our economy. Every home and business in America has seen energy costs skyrocket. That is true with the price of home heating oil, electricity generated from natural gas or the gasoline and diesel for our cars and trucks, and probably a lot of

other energy uses and sources of energy you could throw in there as well. These costs permeate through our economy by driving up costs for the transportation and production of food, to the manufacturing and industrial sectors of our economy. Obviously, those hurt most are the families who feel it in their pocketbooks when they pay their utility bills, fill their cars or trucks to get to work or take their kids to school, or even buy groceries. They do not have the ability to pass it on, as do people in the middle of the chain.

A key component of a strong and vibrant economy is reliable and affordable energy. For businesses to grow, for productivity to increase, we need more energy. And in the process of more energy, I mean more sources of energy, but I do not preclude any way we can save energy, and an ethic to save energy as well.

It is a fact of life that each American generation has lived better than the predecessor generation, and my generation and the next generation and the next generation expects to live a little better than the previous generation. That is the American dream; that is the American way. It is not going to happen if we do not have affordable energy. To have affordable energy, it is as simple as economics 101: when the price is high, with an increased supply, the price will go down.

So all of this means that we need to use energy not only more but more efficiently. It also means you cannot rely just on fossil fuels. God only made so much of that. We need to develop alternative and renewable sources of energy. But renewable energy and energy efficiency are only a part of the solution. I guess I would say that when you talk about energy, you talk about three: No. 1, more sources of present fossil fuels; No. 2, alternative energy—and for a guy like me from corn country, I am not talking only about ethanol, but biodiesel, biomass, wind. I happened to sponsor, 15 years ago, the wind energy tax credit that now exists and which has brought vibrant wind energy to a lot of the Midwest. And also, lastly, conservation. I am talking about not only a Government policy on conservation which we have in place in the sense of a tax incentive for fuel-efficient cars and also tax incentives for energy-efficient home appliances, to name two, but there is a personal ethic of more conservation that we are seeing in America right now. The latest figures I know of are March 2008 versus March 2007. Because of the increased price of gasoline, we drove 5 percent less miles this March than a year ago, and that is the largest decrease or greatest decrease in energy use since energy was this high on an inflationary basis back in 1979.

So Americans are conserving price, they are conserving when they buy these fuel cell cars where you get the tax credit. But it cannot only be conservation. And too often I hear in this body: Do not drill; conserve.

You have to do drilling and you have to do conserving. But you also have to have that third factor, which is very popular with a person like me, alternative energy, because alternative energy, in the case of ethanol as an example, is good for farmers, is good for the environment, and it is good for jobs in rural America. We never thought we would have these kinds of jobs where we set up a refinery in rural America to make alternative energy. It is good for our national security, and it is good for our economic security. So you have to have a broad base.

One area in which we have done little, though, to help ourselves is the developing of domestic sources of traditional energy. For too many years, we have shunned the use of domestic affordable coal and we have hindered the expansion of our domestic nuclear energy. Why would we do that when France gets 80 percent of its energy from nuclear? Why would we not have the reprocessing of spent nuclear fuel when they do it in other countries to reduce the necessity of finding a storage place for it to such a great extent as we have in this country?

What is it that people, young people, would come to my office last fall and say: We ought to stop using coal. Well, when you generate 55 percent of your electricity on average from coal, what do they expect—that we should not have lights, we should not have electric motors on our air-conditioning, et cetera? Where do they get ideas like that?

There is something wrong when there is not some reality to what the energy situation is in this country and you should not use coal and you should not use nuclear energy. Where does that sort of thought take you? It does not meet the commonsense test that we would establish in the Midwest of something being a good idea or a bad idea.

As a result of our policies here in Washington, we have driven the exponential demand for clean-burning natural gas and pushed our oil dependency to nearly 60 percent. Yet we have done very little to increase the supply of energy to meet new demand because of an attitude of “no drill, no drill.”

What is the sense of paying \$140 for a barrel of oil, sending it over to some Arab nation where they are going to train terrorists to kill us because they do not like us? It would be better to keep that \$140 here in the United States. It would be good for our economy. It would be better for our national defense. It would be better all around.

It is intellectually dishonest to talk about the offensively high prices of home heating fuel or \$4 gasoline for our cars while also opposing every effort to increase the supply of home heating oil and natural gas that would lower these prices, a la economics 101: if you increase supply, the price goes down. It seems to me that some of my colleagues whom I listen to here—the very

same ones who are blaming high gasoline prices on the Bush administration are the very same ones who do not want to drill. It does not add up. That is why I say it is intellectually dishonest. It is disingenuous to clamor about the cost of crude oil and gasoline while ignoring half of the law of supply and demand.

Members of this body continue to point out the outrageous burden to our citizens because of high energy costs. I would suggest that some should look closely at the votes they cast that limited the development of our domestic resources. We have a responsibility here in Congress to address the underlying causes of high energy costs. That includes increasing energy efficiency, producing alternatives and renewables, and developing domestic traditional sources. In other words, let me get back to the three-finger rule: No. 1, more drilling; No. 2, Government incentives for alternative energy; No. 3, Government incentives for conservation and also what individuals can do in conservation.

I point out something that is just irrational, irrational right here on Capitol Hill. I saw it—let's see, what time was it today? It was 11 o'clock. I was out on the steps to meet with members of the Iowa FFA, the Future Farmers of America, the leaders who are here to study leadership and to learn about the political process. Lined up across this new brick area out here east of the Capitol were a whole bunch of black SUVs idling, parked and idling. Why can't we have an ethic on Capitol Hill, whether it is Ambassadors who are coming up here, whether it is the Vice President coming up here, or whether it is our own elected leaders who have chauffeur-driven cars, to turn off the cars? If you want to stay cool, come in this building and save the \$4 gas. We have to promote some leadership on conservation here, and it can start right here with the Federal Government. I do not know who owns those black SUVs. I got a couple of license plates I am going to look up. But we can set an ethic here.

But you have to have all three of these, and conservation is one of them. You can have tax incentives for conservation, but you can also do a lot of personal conservation. Even with my own staff sometimes, you drive up to park to go into a town meeting, and they sit there for 10 seconds before they turn off the ignition. I have learned to reach over and turn it off just as soon as the car has come to a complete stop or even just a little bit before.

Another problem we have in this country is the United States is the only country I am aware of that is choosing not to drill where we know oil and gas exist.

How many times have we heard on the Senate floor: There is only 13 billion barrels of oil in Alaska. It is going to take 10 years to access and get it down here. It is not going to make any difference.

That is not supposed to be a big deal? If that isn't a big deal, how come just within the last year they found 5 or 6 billion barrels of oil offshore of Brazil, and it was a big deal, a big deal from the standpoint of energy efficiency for Brazil? And it was a big point for enhancing the inventory of known oil supplies worldwide because, just like money is fungible, oil is fungible. Wherever you find another drop of oil, it has some impact on the inventory. It has some impact on supply. So it ought to be just as big or twice as big of a deal because we have 13 billion barrels of oil in Alaska, as an example.

Isn't this silly? Here in the United States, these lower 48, we have Mexico south of us, Canada north of us. They are doing everything they can to find every drop of oil they can; in Canada, getting it out of the tar sands. Yet what is unique about the United States? We are part of North America. We are right in the middle of North America. North and south of us is every attempt to get every drop of energy they can but not here. Isn't there something wrong with us when we take that attitude? But while you take that attitude, it is OK to ask the Saudis for more oil. It is OK to ask to be dependent on countries such as Iran and Venezuela for our economic security. It is OK to send \$140 a barrel over there. But, boy, don't take a drop of oil out of the ground here where we are not drilling now and keep the \$140 here. It is not OK to open areas at home where we know there is oil and gas.

As I say so often, this defies common sense. I think my constituents know it because in every one of the 14 town meetings I had Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday of last week in western Iowa, this issue of why we don't drill for our own oil has come up. For 4 years before that, I don't think I heard much about it. But it sure is a big deal waking up people. Maybe that is some advantage of \$4 gas. It is harmful to the economy, harmful to middle-income people, more harmful to low-income people, but it might wake up America to have a more balanced energy policy, which is threefold: drill, alternative energy, and conservation.

There are some on the other side of the aisle who wouldn't be able to point to a single area where we should look for oil and natural gas. We have four or five people on my side of the aisle. So this is just not a Democratic thing, but there are more Democrats who believe that than Republicans.

In 2006, Congress took action and voted to open 8.3 million acres in the Gulf of Mexico to oil and gas drilling. However, when the Senate considered the Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act in August of that year, 24 Democrats, including Senator OBAMA, or 57 percent of the caucus opposed that legislation. This was even after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita ripped through the gulf without a single oil or gas incident.

Today oil is more than \$135 a barrel. Families, small businesses, and truck-

ers are suffering from the increased cost of energy. Farmers have been forced to pay outrageous prices for anhydrous ammonia fertilizer this spring because of the cost of natural gas. Ten years ago we produced domestically nearly all of our fertilizer needs. Now we are dependent upon other countries for 55 percent of that fertilizer. Congress must act to develop our resources at home. We can take action today to develop in responsible ways our own domestic supplies of oil and natural gas. What I am saying is, you can do this and not harm the environment.

A bill I recently cosponsored, introduced by Senator McCONNELL, would take action to reduce gas prices. It would allow States to explore for oil or natural gas in the Outer Continental Shelf. It would allow Governors in coastal States to petition for a lifting of a moratorium within their State boundaries. The Pacific and Atlantic regions of the Outer Continental Shelf, which this bill would allow for leasing, hold an estimated 14 billion barrels of recoverable oil and 55 trillion cubic feet of natural gas. But a moratorium currently prohibits production in those very areas. The Gas Price Reduction Act would take sensible action to allow these resources to be developed.

It is time that we end the obstruction of reasonable, environmentally responsible development of domestic oil and gas resources.

Bottom line: I hope my colleagues will recognize the extreme burden American consumers are experiencing. It is past time to take action to increase our energy supply, increase our economic and national security, and develop the resources that God gave us.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

Mr. VITTER. Madam President, I rise to talk about the very serious energy situation. There is a crisis focused around gasoline prices that we face in our country. I want to start by complimenting the distinguished Senator from Iowa for doing the same, for focusing on this crucial priority that every American is facing, is struggling with in terms of dealing with the family budget. I certainly agree with my colleague, this is the No. 1 concern of every American I talk to. Literally everyone I talk to says this is the top priority. This is a true crisis. This isn't just hitting me in the pocketbook every day, every week, every month. This is threatening our future. This is threatening our economy.

Given that, there is an obvious question that those same Louisianans and Americans are also asking. The question is, why isn't Congress acting? They hear us talking and making speeches and squabbling back and forth, but the obvious question they are asking is, why isn't Congress acting on this crisis that all of us face every day, every week, every month, that threatens our families' futures, that threatens our economy?

I don't have a good answer. Congress should not only talk and make speeches and jabber about this, but Congress must come together in a bipartisan way and act. Congress must take the advice of the distinguished Senator from Iowa and not do either/or, this or that, no just this, no just that. We need to do all of the above. Our energy situation is so dire, we need to use less and find more right here at home. And we have the ability to do that. So, once again, why aren't we acting?

Unfortunately, right now this question could not be clearer because while Americans in every State of the Union face this challenge every time they go to the gas station, every time they look at their family budget, the Senate is doing something very different. The distinguished majority leader is planning to turn from the legislation on the Senate floor now regarding housing and next take up not energy, not gasoline prices, but a bill that would triple the level of foreign aid that we send overseas in terms of AIDS relief. AIDS is a very serious worldwide problem. But let me say two things. First, under President Bush's leadership, the United States has led the world in addressing that issue, particularly in Africa, in a very aggressive way. I support that. President Bush has led that, with others in the private sector such as Bono. But we are doing that.

The question I am bringing up is, is it really appropriate now at this moment to take up a bill to more than triple that foreign aid rather than taking up a bill to address energy and gasoline prices by using less and finding more right here at home?

I can tell you what the American people would say. Everyone in the State of Louisiana, everyone I know across the country would say: that is not a close call. That is not a close call. Global AIDS is a huge problem, and we have acted aggressively to help address it. The United States has led in that effort. But what is hurting us every day, every week, every month, every time we go to the gas station, every time we have ever more painful discussions at the family kitchen table about the budget, what is impacting us is gasoline prices and energy. They would say that is not a close call.

In this context, I urge the majority leader to turn to what is clearly the top priority of the American people. It is real simple. They elect us to come to the Senate, to come to the House and act together as grown-ups in a bipartisan way to solve real problems. It is also real simple: The biggest very real problem they face is gasoline prices and energy. Why aren't we acting? They are asking that over and over. Yes, we talk and speechify and jabber and often finger point, but why aren't we acting?

I believe the solution is simple. As soon as we finish the matter which we will hopefully wrap up today, the housing bill, we should turn to what is by far the top priority, worry, concern of

the American people. We should turn to legislation to directly address gasoline prices, the energy situation, by both using less at home and finding more right here at home to lessen our dependence on foreign sources.

Again, that is a pretty clear choice. What do we go to next? The distinguished majority leader's suggestion is a bill to more than triple the foreign aid we already send overseas for HIV/AIDS relief. Again, that is a serious issue and a serious problem. We have been addressing it in a serious way: \$15 billion for that program under President Bush's leadership. But the question is, what do we do next? Turn to a bill that would more than triple that or turn to a bill to address the top concern, bar none, of the American people, gasoline prices and energy? I would obviously suggest the latter.

There are lots of ideas around about what we need to do on the energy front. The first consensus we should reach is that we should do a whole lot of these ideas. It is not either/or, one side or the other. It is not just conserve or just drill. It is, as the distinguished Senator from Iowa said, all of the above. We need to use less and find more and produce more right here at home.

Many of us, well over 40 in this body, have come together around such a bill. That bill is S. 3202, the Gas Price Reduction Act. That bill is aimed to directly address this current gasoline price crisis and the current energy situation. It would do it in a broad-based way, not everything under the Sun. It is fairly focused, but it would do it in a broad-based way by both using less and finding more, producing more right here at home. It has four main components, each of which is important.

First of all, let me mention the component I worked very hard on. I drafted this component as a stand-alone bill, but the main outline of the provisions was also adopted in the broader bill; and that would be to open our vast, significant resources of oil and natural gas that lie in our ocean bottoms off the coasts of the United States.

When I explain this to most folks in Louisiana, they are stunned that we have major, significant untapped resources in our ocean bottoms well off our coasts, but Congress has acted in the past to take almost all that off the table. In fact, of all those oil and natural gas resources we have in our ocean bottoms off our coasts, Congress has said we cannot touch 85 percent of it.

Fifteen percent, yes. That is mostly in my part of the world, in the Gulf of Mexico, and mostly the western gulf. But for 85 percent, Congress has said: No. Can't touch that. Can't get that. Yes, it will lessen our dependence. Yes, we can do it in an environmentally sensitive way. Yes, we have new technology. Yes, we have lateral drilling, horizontal drilling, and the like, but you can't touch that. Eighty-five percent of that is off limits.

The first component of our bill, S. 3202, the Gas Price Reduction Act,

would say we can go after those resources that are 50 miles or more off our coasts if the host State involved wants us to do that, and if we give a fair revenue share of 37.5 percent to that host State to compensate that host State for any difficulty and involvement and partnership involved.

In so doing, that would be expanding on a very important precedent, a very important policy we set 2 years ago when we established that historic revenue sharing specifically—37.5 percent—in opening new areas of the gulf. So that is part 1 of the bill.

Part 2 of the bill turns to the enormous resources we have on land in the United States. It turns to States in the Western part of the United States, where there are enormous shale resources, and says: We will allow production of energy in those shale deposits. If you think it is maybe the wrong policy to put 85 percent of our resources offshore off limits, in the instance of Western shale, it is worse. Congress has put 100 percent of that energy off limits because of a bar, a moratorium, Congress has set saying: We cannot use any of that energy.

Once again, the American people are stunned. They do not get this. They face a real crisis in terms of energy. They know more supply, particularly here at home, can stabilize prices, can increase our independence, and yet a majority in Congress is saying: 100 percent of that is off limits. That does not make sense. So part 2 of this bill, S. 3202, the Gas Price Reduction Act, would allow exploration in those Western shale deposits.

Part 3 turns to the demand side because it is not either/or. It is not just one thing or just another. It is not drill, drill, drill, and do nothing else. But we also need to conserve and use new sources of energy. So title III of the bill would create major new incentives to push forward technology and bring it to market more effectively in terms of electric and plug-in cars.

That is a very exciting technological development that is progressing. But we can push it along. We can create tax and other incentives to hasten the development of larger batteries so these plug-in cars can be part of the answer in terms of our transportation issue, can lessen our use of gasoline, can lessen our reliance on dangerous foreign sources. The third part of the bill does that. It creates major incentives. It is a major push to the development of more plug-in, electric, and related technology cars that can lessen our demand.

Then, the last part of the bill, part 4 of S. 3202, the Gas Price Reduction Act, would look at this very worrisome issue of speculation. It would give new power, new authority to the agency that has authority and a role in the regulation of speculators. It would put more policemen on the beat, if you will, to make sure there is not inappropriate, out-of-control speculation that may be running the price up even more

than the normal forces of supply and demand.

So that is part 4 of the bill, addressing legitimate concerns about speculation, putting more cops on the beat, giving more authority to those regulatory bodies which are supposed to be looking after that issue.

These four components of this bill are not the only four good ideas out there. There are plenty more good ideas. There are plenty of other things we do need to do. I would like to open up ANWR, the Alaska National Wildlife Refuge. I would like to put additional incentives in place for fuel efficiency and conservation and new sources of energy. There are a lot of exciting possibilities in my own State of Louisiana for certain biofuels, including that produced from sugar, that produced from new crops with sorghum, and other very promising biofuels that do not have nearly the significant impact on food and commodity prices as ethanol does.

So we need to do more. These four parts of this bill are not the only four good ideas out there. But we need to have this debate in a grownup, bipartisan way. We need to come together with all the good ideas out there and present them in the best tradition of the Senate, which is open debate and open amendments, and then—and this is the most important part—and then we need to act. We need to stop simply speechifying, simply posturing, simply talking, and act.

So I believe we must turn to this top concern and priority of the American people next. I believe we should not move from this housing bill which we are on right now to a bill that would more than triple our foreign aid that currently goes overseas to combat the very serious problem of AIDS and HIV. But instead we should turn to the top priority of the American people: gasoline prices and energy.

With that in mind, I offer a very simple and straightforward unanimous consent request. It would say: Yes, this is the top priority of the American people, so we are going to turn to it, and we are going to have an open debate, and we are going to let amendments come to the floor, we are going to have an open process and actually have debate and votes on all those amendments, and then we are going to act because that is what the American people want.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 3202

So, Madam President, in that spirit, I ask unanimous consent that upon disposition of H.R. 3221, the housing legislation, the Senate immediately proceed to the consideration of calendar No. 854, which is S. 3202, the Gas Price Reduction Act, a bill to address record-high gas prices at the pump; and I further ask unanimous consent that there be 4 hours of general debate, equally divided, and upon the use of yielding back of that time, the Senate then proceed to consider amendments to the bill in a full and open amendment process, as is the tradition of the Senate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Madam President, on behalf of the Democratic leadership, who intends to bring a comprehensive bill to deal with gas prices to the floor, I have to object at this time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. VITTER. Madam President, reclaiming the floor and reclaiming my time, let me say that is very unfortunate. I am sure the American people are excited to hear that Congress might get to it someday. The problem is, they have been straining under these record-high prices for months and they have been looking at Congress and they have been seeing a lot of hot air and no action. Now what they see is the Senate taking up a bill to more than triple foreign aid that we send overseas for HIV/AIDS relief rather than taking up what is the most important challenge and crisis they face every day: High gasoline prices and our energy situation.

In my mind, nothing could underscore more clearly how out of touch the distinguished majority leader is from the concerns of the American people. We need to turn to this—not sometime, not in the future—we need to turn to this now. We need to recognize—not sometime in the future—that this is an issue. We need to recognize now that this is the top issue, bar none, of the American people, and we need to act.

With that, Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey is recognized.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Madam President, parliamentary inquiry: I understand we are in morning business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Senator, the Senate is considering a motion to disagree to two House amendments under cloture. But Senators have requested time to speak as in morning business.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Let me ask another parliamentary question: I am free to speak at this point without limitation?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator may speak for up to 1 hour on the question before the Senate or the Senator could request to speak as in morning business.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, I am going to speak on the motion, and that is the main purpose of my coming, but I do wish to say that, in fact, we will be having a gas price bill and dealing with those issues on the floor very soon. I know the Senate Democratic leadership intends to bring such a bill, but it will be a bill that is, hopefully, comprehensive in its nature and creates real opportunities to reduce gas prices and meet with the challenges.

One of the factors we have today that we could get going on already is the 68 million acres that the oil industry al-

ready has access to and is largely not drilling on. So before we ask for more, why don't they move on that which they already have to drill on?

Secondly—

Mr. VITTER. Madam President, will the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. MENENDEZ. Madam President, after I make my statement, I would be happy to.

Secondly, I think Americans would be shocked to know that a lot of the domestic production in the country is sold abroad. It is not used here at home. That is something we want to deal with as well, and that will be part of a comprehensive bill that will come forward.

Those are two items that could be dealt with immediately. I think it is critical, and one of those two does not even need a legislative response, although, unfortunately, it is going to have to get one because the industry is not pursuing 68 million acres they already have. So that is alarming.

I am glad to hear that some of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle finally agree that market speculation is a critical part of this issue. We have been at this for some time, and this is the first time we have heard that is a critical component. It is a big part of what many of the oil industry executives have testified to before Congress.

Finally, I would note it is interesting to me, we brought bills here on critical extenders in the area of making sure that renewable energy sources were incentivized and brought to the mass market concentration we need so we can break our dependency on oil, period, whether it would be foreign or domestic, and our colleagues on the other side of the aisle objected. So you cannot have it both ways.

I am happy to yield to the Senator for a question.

Mr. VITTER. Madam President, I thank the distinguished Senator. My only question, which I propose through the Chair to the distinguished Senator, is, I am excited to hear we might turn to all these issues sometime in the future. I would like to know what that timetable will be. Specifically, will the majority leader give us assurance that we will turn to this in a full way, in an open amendment process, before the August recess?

Mr. MENENDEZ. Madam President, reclaiming the floor, I will be happy to give my observation. I do not pretend to speak for the majority leader in this regard, but I do believe that, in fact, we will see such action before this recess is over, maybe as early as next week. So I am very hopeful, and believe very much so, that it is every intent of the majority to deal with this in very short shrift.

Mr. VITTER. Would the Senator yield for another question?

Mr. MENENDEZ. I would be happy to yield for one more question before I get to the focus of my statement.

Mr. VITTER. That would be the second part of my unanimous consent re-

quest which is very important for consideration of these issues, to involve a full, open amendment process on the floor of the Senate, rather than the distinguished majority leader doing what he has done every time in the recent past, which is filling up the tree and blocking amendments.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Reclaiming my time on the floor, let me simply say, it is always the majority leader's desire to have a full and open debate of the Senate. However, there are those of our colleagues who wish to use that full and open debate to pursue amendments that have nothing to do with reducing gas prices and dealing with our energy crisis or to be able to pursue a course that can bring conclusion to a bill and would give that type of relief to the American people but string it out and string it out on issues that are not relevant. That is when the majority leader has faced the necessity of moving in a different direction.

So I do have the expectation that we will have a good debate and, more importantly, we will have a good bill that will be comprehensive and that will give relief to the people, and I am happy to have answered my colleague's questions.

The main purpose for which I come to the floor as we debate the housing bill is to rise again to be a voice for those who have no voice in this housing crisis. Certainly, one of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle seems to not to hear the cries of children who are being, in one respect, punished through no actions of their own—2 million of them in this country.

I am not talking about homeowners, although I am certainly pleased that the bill we are considering today will have a powerful impact on our Nation's families. I am not talking about those on Wall Street, as they seem to be the first group the administration rushes to support. I am talking about our Nation's children.

I rise on behalf of nearly 2 million children who will be directly impacted by the mortgage crisis. These children are not only taking a huge hit as padlocks get put on their front doors, but now they are likely taking another hit, as my colleagues on the other side of the aisle threaten to block a critical amendment that could give them relief.

My amendment authorizes \$30 million in additional funding to the existing McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Program to support these children. By the way, these children didn't decide to go out and get a mortgage. They had no legal authority to make those decisions. They are the ones who get swept up in this process. They are, for all intents and purposes, the worst victims of this process.

As I said, an estimated 2 million children and young people, including 50,000 children in my home State of New Jersey, 20,000 in South Carolina, to mention one other State, and over half a million Latino children nationwide

will be directly impacted by the foreclosure crisis, placing them at risk of poor school performance, behavioral problems, and other challenges as well. What happens is they lose not only their home, they lose the school they go to. They get moved around. They don't have a home and they get moved from school to school. If you are a student—and it is not so long ago that I can't remember—and you get yanked in and out of school, in and out of school, your ability to perform is simply undercut dramatically.

In one school district in New Jersey, the number of homeless students doubled—doubled—this year, from 200 last year to 423 this school year, and that is only in one school district. The foreclosure crisis is clearly having an impact, and the time is now to stop any more schoolchildren from being affected.

An infusion of funds into the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Program will help to ensure that students who become homeless and are forced to move from their homes do not also have to leave their schools.

There are some who may be able to shrug this off as a small sacrifice. They are the victims of this process or they are the calamities or casualties of this process, but there is nothing small about the impact of changing schools during this type of crisis. These children are less likely to perform at grade level in math and reading, more likely to be held back, less likely to graduate. There are long-term consequences to what for some may seem a short-term crisis.

They are likely to have behavioral issues. One study found that kids forced to move frequently were 77 percent more likely to have behavior problems than their peers. Another study found they were 20 percent more likely to have violent behavior. Now, what is the cost going to be to us collectively in our society when that happens?

At the end of the day, these children are forced to say goodbye to not only their home they grew up in and have had to leave their friends behind, but they also have had to leave behind familiar schools and supportive teachers and return to a strange home at night where their lives are often turned upside down. All stability is gone. They are thrown into a riptide with no lifeline, while we sit here in Washington hoping they survive the storm. Hoping is not enough. We have to do more than hope for them; we have to give them a lifeline. This funding would actually help these children.

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Program provides homeless students with a variety of supports such as transportation to school, tutoring, and counseling.

Children are the voiceless victims of the foreclosure crisis. As we lower interest rates, as we support the home building industry, as we reform mortgage lending practices, several chil-

dren's organizations and education organizations have asked for this amendment as a modest way that our Nation can support the nearly 2 million children who are suffering the consequences of decisions made completely outside of their control.

The foreclosure crisis is damaging our economy, yes, but let us not forget the children are the real victims of this crisis, and—even worse—they are the silent victims. They can't speak up for themselves. They have no lobbyist here in Washington roaming the halls, advocating for them. It is not fair that these children get lost in the paperwork. They deserve our full support.

This amendment is cosponsored by several of our colleagues, including Senator MURRAY and Senator BROWN, and it has the full support of Senator KENNEDY. I wish to thank Senator ENZI, who worked with me on the language for this amendment to make it acceptable, and Senators DODD and SHELBY, the chair and the ranking member of the committee, who agreed to include it in their provision in the managers' amendment. Had I known that in fact we were going to have the objection of one of our colleagues to a bipartisan package, I would have sought an individual vote, but I am beyond that ability today.

In conclusion, USA Today, the Los Angeles Times, and the Chicago Tribune have all written about this critical issue, and a number of respected groups also support this amendment, including First Focus, the National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth, the National School Boards Association, and the National Education Association, to name a few.

We have an opportunity to do something for these children. I hear great speeches on the Senate floor about family and values and the value of families and the value of our children and how our children are, in fact, our No. 1 asset, and that is true as a nation. They are also our most vulnerable asset. Yet when it comes time to be able to help these children, the question is: Is Congress going to listen?

Our colleague on the other side of the aisle seems to not be listening to their challenges and their pleas. One Member is likely going to block this and other important amendments, and the result is that our children, once again, are going to be unheard and are going to be the victims of something they had no role in creating; something that, in fact, where they are going to find themselves not only homeless but also having the foundation of their educational opportunities completely disrupted in a way that will more likely create failure than success.

I hope my colleagues who talk about family values understand the important value of helping our children in this regard. We have to reconsider our priorities, and I, for one, don't intend to rest until these children receive our help and get our support.

With that, Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina is recognized.

Mr. DEMINT. Thank you, Madam President.

Legend has it that as Rome burned many years ago, the Emperor Nero stood on his balcony and fiddled. Now, we know he wasn't exactly fiddling because the fiddle was not invented until over 1,000 years later, but we do know that he became synonymous with people who don't get it, who don't get the urgency and the seriousness of the issues they are dealing with. If there has ever been an organization that fit that metaphor better than Nero himself, it is this Congress, because clearly Congress is fiddling while America is burning.

Americans are hurting. It is no exaggeration. We hear it talked about here on the floor, but all we do is talk about it. Gas prices are literally tearing families apart. Electric utilities have announced they will raise their rates by over 30 percent because of the increase in the cost of fuels. The speeches here on the floor of the Senate have tried to blame everyone but the people who are responsible. We try to blame big oil or speculators or Bush, when anyone—any thinking American who looks in—can conclude immediately that over the last 20 years this Congress has stopped the development of American energy and allowed us to be held hostage by other countries and has allowed prices to go up to the point that Americans are now being badly hurt.

What do we do when it becomes obvious that our lack of energy and our dependence on foreign oil is raising the prices to the point that Americans can no longer live; that \$700 billion a year is leaving our country, devaluing our dollars, and causing us to borrow more and more money as a nation? At a time of war, at a time of debt and economic downturn, what do we do? Well, I can hear the fiddling coming from the majority leader's office and the Democratic cloakroom. The fiddling is filling this place up because all we are doing is fiddling.

We are talking about climate change legislation that would add huge taxes to energy in America and run more jobs offshore. We have spent this week talking about how we are going to bail out the mortgage industry which made loans that they shouldn't have made for people buying homes that were more expensive than they could afford. We want to bail them out. We want to borrow over \$300 million from the future—from our kids and grandkids. We are doing this while people at home are hurting because of the cost of energy and gas prices.

Now, incredibly enough, the fiddling noise gets louder, because the majority leader wants to go to a foreign aid package. He wants to borrow \$50 billion more and send it to different parts of the world—with good reason, for good causes. Certainly HIV and AIDS in Africa and other parts of the world is a

distressing problem that we would love to help with as Americans if we could. However, at a time when Americans are hurting, when we are at war, when the economy is in downturn and our country is facing debts we have never seen before, should we borrow another \$50 billion and spend another week debating while we fiddle instead of doing something to increase the energy supply here in America?

It is time for us to act as a Congress. Americans expect us to act as a Congress to open up America's energy, to develop more supply as we develop alternatives and learn to use less. We cannot allow ourselves to be brought to our knees as a nation because we are so unwilling to do what anyone with common sense would tell us we need to do, and that is open our own energy supplies.

It is incredible, if you look at the last 20 years, that we have cut off nuclear generation and natural gas development, oil and gasoline, and now we are trying to blame someone else. Congress does not get it. Congress does not recognize the seriousness of what is going on. We want to change the subject, and that is what the majority leader is trying to do now—go to another subject and spend another week doing something else, giving away more American resources, selling off and borrowing on our future. It is time that we do something. I agree with the Senator from Louisiana and his unanimous consent request.

I advise the majority that I will make a unanimous consent request at this time. I am not sure if the Chair is ready to deal with this. Would the Parliamentarian advise me if I can make that request now?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair, in my capacity as a Senator from Minnesota, on behalf of leadership, objects to that.

Mr. DEMINT. Well, before we start fiddling, I have not made the request yet.

I ask unanimous consent that upon disposition of H.R. 3221, the housing legislation, the Senate immediately proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 854, which is S. 3202, the Gas Price Reduction Act, a bill to address record-high gas prices at the pump.

I further ask unanimous consent that there be 4 hours of general debate, equally divided; that upon the use or yielding back of time the Senate then proceed to consider amendments to the bill in a full and open amendment process, as is the tradition of the Senate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. As Senator MENENDEZ did, in my capacity as a Senator from Minnesota, on behalf of leadership, I object.

Mr. DEMINT. Obviously, I am disappointed that we are still unwilling to address a very basic energy bill that would open deep sea exploration in our country and would allow us to access oil shale in the middle of the United States to help create incentives for electric cars.

These are simple things that Americans know we need to do. We need to proceed to it immediately, and we need to stop fiddling. We don't need to spend another week talking about foreign aid when we have yet to help Americans who have elected us to support them in our own country.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire is recognized.

Mr. GREGG. Madam President, are we in morning business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate is considering the motion to disagree with the House amendment. Senators can request to speak as in morning business.

Mr. GREGG. I will speak on the bill. I wish to associate myself with the comments of the Senator from South Carolina. I am not sure why, when it is costing \$4.40 to put a gallon of gas in your car, when we are looking at a winter where energy prices may be as high as \$5 a gallon, which is going to just overwhelm and create a horrific situation in parts of the country like my own, where people's ability to survive depends on their ability to buy heating oil, why we would be moving to a bill which essentially, dramatically expands an AIDS program in Africa.

Now, the PETFAR Program has been a success, and I congratulate the administration for initiating it. We, as a people, are very compassionate. We have made a commitment to Africa and the nations there to help them with this terrible AIDS epidemic they are dealing with. There is no question but to take a hard look at this program and making some good decisions on improving it is appropriate. But certainly on our list of priorities it should not be above doing something substantive on the issue of how we increase supply in the area of energy in this country and how we energize more conservation in the area of energy in this country.

We, as a people, need to pursue a course of more production—American production—and more conservation. There is much this Congress can do to assist in this area. It needs to be done now because—at least in production—there is significant lead time. But the one thing we could do which would affect the price of oil and which would impact the speculation in the marketplace that is occurring today is to make it clear that we, as a government, are going to support initiatives that are reasonable, environmentally sound, and will produce significant amounts of new energy through production. That will have an immediate impact on those folks out there who are driving up the price of oil.

The price of oil is driven up as a result of people presuming that supply will be stagnant and will not expand and, therefore, demand, as it goes up, will increase price. If we can put in place policies which increase production, and therefore supply, and make an American product, we will do two

very good things: We will reduce the speculation in the price of oil and thus cause it to go down. Secondly, we will actually be producing American product and spending American dollars—hard-earned dollars—in America rather than sending them over to nations many of which don't like us to begin with.

So there are at least three major areas of production we should be pursuing and which we need legislation on to pursue. The first is drilling on the Outer Continental Shelf. We know we have years and years of supply in the Outer Continental Shelf. But it is locked up by legislation that was initiated by the other side of the aisle, which essentially took off limits almost all the new, available resources on the Outer Continental Shelf. What has been proposed and what is a reasonable approach is that States that believe they are willing to pursue drilling off of their shores—over the horizon, by the way, 50 miles out in most instances—following the example of Louisiana, for example, and Mississippi and Alabama which already do this, States such as Virginia, for example, which has said they may be willing to pursue these resources, that they be given the option to do that and not be told they cannot do it, which is what the law says now. That is reasonable. It will open a huge amount of potential supply of both oil and natural gas.

In addition, we know we have more oil reserves in oil shale in three States—Colorado, Wyoming, and Utah—than all of Saudi Arabia has. We have three times the amount of reserves Saudi Arabia has, and the oil shale can be recovered in an environmentally sound way, and the recovery doesn't require anything to happen at the surface. It is all done under the surface. The technology is there and it is viable and it is economically viable when oil exceeds \$70 a barrel or maybe \$60 a barrel. We know we can do it.

But we are stopped from doing it by rules and regulations put in place by the Congress and by the prior administration. We ought to revisit those. We ought to debate those on the floor of the Senate. We ought to be willing, in my opinion, to pursue programs that will, in an environmentally sound way, use that oil resource, which is so huge—huge—and which is American oil. We will be using American product rather than product that comes from nations that not only don't like us but, in some cases, want to do us harm.

Thirdly, we have the issue of nuclear power. France gets 80 percent of its energy from nuclear power. China is adding new nuclear powerplants all the time. We have not added a new nuclear powerplant since the late 1980s. Nuclear power is clean energy. People who are concerned about the environment—as many of us are, and I think most people are—and about the issue of global warming, nuclear power is an energy source that has no impact at all on global warming. It has no emissions.

We know how to make nuclear powerplants that are safe. Nobody has ever died in a nuclear accident in this country. More important, when you look at nuclear power as an energy source, it is American made, American produced, and it means that instead of having to buy product from overseas to produce our electrical energy, we can produce it here with American product, made in America through nuclear powerplants. We should be adding nuclear powerplants. We made some improvements in the regulatory process, but it still is an extraordinarily long process to bring on line nuclear powerplants.

In fact, in France, I think it takes something like less than 2 years to license and get a powerplant on line. In the United States, we are looking at 4½ years, or something like that, to license it, to get the plant under construction. It takes longer to construct them, obviously.

So there are things we can do in this area. Those are the areas of production we should be aggressively looking at. They are controversial, and they should not be at a time when oil is at \$140 a barrel and gasoline is costing us \$4.50 a gallon and home heating oil is costing as much as \$4.85 a gallon. At a time like this, we should be looking at those resources that can be produced in the United States and that will take the pressure off of our economy.

One of the big problems with the price of oil and energy and gasoline, beyond the fact that it is stretching the average American's budget, people are legitimately worried and fearful about what will happen to them this winter. One of the other consequences of the price is that we are taking a huge amount of American capital, hundreds of billions of dollars' worth a year, and instead of retaining it in the United States where it can be used and reinvested and produce jobs, it is being sent overseas on a daily basis. Some of it is coming back through investments in our bonds, but we are then paying interest to foreign governments and foreign individuals.

It would be much smarter of us to try to reduce our dependence on foreign oil by increasing domestic production. We need to aggressively pursue programs of conservation and renewables also. That is why the Ensign-Cantwell bill on extending renewable tax credits is so important. I am sorry we have not been able to get to that and it has been blocked. That should be passed. Clearly, conservation needs to be aggressively pushed.

So we should be producing more, and we should be using less. What we should be producing more of is American product. I think next week, rather than debating whether we should expand a foreign aid program by three times—the program was initially a \$15 billion program, and it is proposed to take it up to \$50 billion—rather than debating that, an authorization bill, we should be focusing on what America really needs to have done today, which is address the energy needs.

I understand the Senator from Texas may make a unanimous consent request here. If he does, I certainly hope it will be accepted. It is reasonable that we should be pursuing and addressing those in the Senate—how we are going to produce more and use less. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas is recognized.

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, I want to say to the Senator from New Hampshire that I agree with virtually every word he said about the urgency of this issue. Frankly, I do not understand why next week, as reported, if it is true, we intend to turn to a foreign aid package of \$50 billion, which is authorization for new spending which is not offset in any way—in other words, our children and grandchildren will end up paying the price—instead of dealing with what is the most urgent problem facing the country, which is the impact of high gasoline and high energy prices.

The Senator from New Jersey, Mr. MENENDEZ, said it was the majority leader's intention to bring an energy bill to the floor sometime before we break in August. I hope that is true. It is welcome news if that is, in fact, the case, and I would love to have the majority leader reassure us that is his intention.

I do not think it is responsible for Congress to adjourn for the August recess, I do not think it is responsible for us to go home having not done anything to help the American people with the pain they are feeling at the pump which, of course, is rippling through our economy in hundreds of ways, not the least of which is driving up the cost of food because of the increased energy consumption for our farmers to grow it, harvest it, and then get it to markets. It is hard for me to think of an issue that is more urgent in terms of our economy.

The housing bill which is on the floor today and which has been on the floor for a while is an important piece of legislation. But I tell you, Madam President, I believe if we are successful in dealing with the subprime loan crisis and housing crisis, the economic impact of high energy costs may well dwarf the impact of that on our economy and the ripple effect, as I say, that it will have.

I hope the Energy bill the distinguished Senator from New Jersey, Mr. MENENDEZ, mentioned that the majority leader plans to bring to the floor includes something other than what our friends on the other side of the aisle have proposed previously when it comes to so-called Energy bills, things such as windfall profits taxes, which has been tried before and found to actually diminish domestic production in this country in a time when we ought to be encouraging more production so we rely less on imported energy from places such as the Middle East.

Then there is this idea which I can only characterize as crazy of suing OPEC, the Organization of Petroleum

Exporting Countries, not the least of which I wonder where in the world you are going to find a court that somehow is going to accept jurisdiction of an antitrust claim against sovereign foreign nations and what the impact would be in terms of waiving of our sovereign immunity to allow suits to go forward in those other countries. I think it would have a dramatic impact on our international relationships. But assuming you could do it, what would you ask the judge? What kind of relief would you ask the judge to award if, in fact, we could have a lawsuit against the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries? The only one I can think of is ask the judge to order them to turn the spigot open wider, which does nothing to diminish our dependency, which does everything to increase our dependence.

The fact is, if you talk to any impartial observer, you will find out there is rising demand for the oil that is being produced globally in countries such as China and India, with more than a billion people each. They are buying cars, they are consuming gasoline, and they are using more and more oil. The problem really is multifaceted but primarily driven by increased global demand because other countries want the kind of prosperity we have come to enjoy by making a claim to 20 percent of the oil being produced globally, using 20 percent of it right here in the United States.

I agree with the Senator from New Hampshire, who says we need a multipronged approach. We need to become less wasteful and more efficient and conserve energy because it makes sense to do so. It is the responsible thing to do. But then we need to deal with more than just the demand side. We need to deal with more supply.

It has been interesting to me to see polling that has been done over the last few months which has demonstrated a pretty dramatic change in attitude of the American people. It is one thing to say we don't want to explore and produce oil from the submerged lands along the coastline of the United States or to go onto the western lands where the oil shale lies or to go to Alaska, to the Arctic, where Alaskans overwhelmingly want to allow production. It is one thing to say we are not going to do that when gasoline is at \$2 a gallon. It is another to say we are not going to do that when gasoline is at \$4.11 a gallon, which it is on national average today.

Of course, there is really no indication whatsoever that prices are going to continue to go anywhere but up because demand is going to continue to go up and prices are going to continue to go up if supply remains static. That is good old supply and demand.

We do need, particularly as we transition to different types of alternative energy, particularly when it comes to transportation, things such as coal-to-liquid technology that has been used by the U.S. Air Force to make jet fuel

to fly our B-1 bombers and B-52s. We know the technology exists, so why aren't we doing more of it? We need to be doing more of that, to find alternatives to dependency on oil.

We also need to be doing more when it comes to electricity generation because ultimately we are going to be driving around in a different fashion in the years to come than we are today, perhaps in vehicles such as plug-in hybrid cars, which are going to be introduced by many of the major car manufacturers come 2010, where you literally will have a battery in a car you can plug into an outlet at night and drive that car the next day. Again, the electricity is going to have to come from somewhere. Right now, it comes from nuclear, natural gas, and coal.

We know the pollution concerns about burning coal. So I agree with the Senator from New Hampshire, we are going to have to increase the use of nuclear power in order to get that electricity production up as our economy continues to grow.

The consequences of Congress's inaction—and it is not just a passive inaction; it is actually the fact that Congress has imposed a ban since the early eighties on about 85 percent of our domestic energy supply in America. On the oil shale out West, there was legislation slipped into a bill just last year that banned the development of that shale out in the West that could produce a huge volume of oil.

This is perhaps the most urgent issue confronting our economy, confronting our national security, and affecting working families in the State of Texas and around the United States. The fact that Congress would even dream of taking its August recess without addressing this issue and allowing for an opportunity for an appropriate debate and offering amendments and then voting on those amendments to me is unthinkable. So I hope the majority leader will not allow us to adjourn for the month of August before we address this issue in a realistic way. I do think there is some basis for a bipartisan compromise.

I see the distinguished Democratic whip on the floor. I read—I trust these comments were reported accurately—that he said he was not opposed to domestic production. That is positive. I see the Gang of 14 who met previously on judicial nominations. Now we have a Gang of 10—5 Democrats, 5 Republicans—trying to come together in a bipartisan way and come up with a common ground and consensus when it comes to national energy policy.

But I tell you, it would be a terrible mistake for us just to deal with one aspect of this issue and to pretend like we have actually done something. For example, the issue of speculation on the commodities futures markets—there is a growing consensus on both sides of the aisle that we need to deal with this issue, but we need to be careful about it as well. Certainly, more transparency in the way this commod-

ities futures trading system works is important. We need more cops on the street. We need more regulators to investigate to make sure there are not abuses of the commodities futures trading system.

If we are not careful, if we overreach, we could force some of that activity to other countries. I know that is not what we would want to do, is have an unintended impact of driving those jobs elsewhere.

I am more optimistic than I have been in a while about the willingness of Congress to enter into some sort of bipartisan discussion, debate, and vote, and actually do something that will get Congress out of the way and make the Federal Government part of the solution and not part of the problem when it comes to imposing moratoria and bans on production of about 85 percent of America's natural resources.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. WHITEHOUSE). The assistant majority leader.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

TRIBUTE TO JOSEPH DUNN

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, the late Senator Paul Simon was my closest friend in politics. He was my boss for several years, and he is the reason I am in the Senate today.

Paul Simon used to like to tell the story about Meriwether Lewis, half of the fabled exploration team of Lewis and Clark. In the story—a true story—Meriwether Lewis returns to his hometown after helping lead the historic journey of the uncharted West to the Pacific coast. At a dinner in his honor, Meriwether Lewis tells the people of his hometown:

Patriotism is not words, it's work. It's what we do.

Paul Simon believed that, and he surrounded himself with others who shared that belief. Patriotism is not words, it is works.

For Joseph Dunn, that was the creed of his political faith. Most people in the Senate have not heard of Joe Dunn, but if you care about social and economic justice and the survival of small towns, small businesses, and family farms, you would have liked him. If you live in southern Illinois, there is a good chance your life is better today because of Joe Dunn.

Joe was the quintessential smalltown American. He loved his family, his church, and his community. For 15 years, he, too, worked for Paul Simon in the House, then in the Senate. For most of that time, he was Senator Simon's downstate director in Illinois.

When Senator Simon retired in 1996, Joe took a salary cut to work for the ICCS, the Illinois Coalition of Community Services. It is a nonprofit organization whose motto is "helping communities help themselves." Two years later, Joe became its director.

ICCS works with people in struggling communities in southern Illinois,

mostly small farm belt and coal belt towns that have been losing jobs and residents for a long time. ICCS helps residents in those towns identify their community's specific challenges and strengths and work together for a better future.

As a friend wrote:

Joe believed there was no community without assets, no individual devoid of talents. He spent his life working in partnership with these communities and individuals, taking advantage of their assets and talents. He was a kind, sweet, thoughtful, passionate man.

Last Friday, on the Fourth of July, Joe Dunn's caring heart stopped. He suffered a fatal heart attack while he was exercising at home. Joe was 55 years old. Joe learned the meaning of patriotism from his mother Johanna and his father Ben, a World War II POW and survivor of the Bataan Death March.

Joe learned about community growing up in Gorham, a small town in the Mississippi River Bottoms of southern Illinois bordering on the Shawnee National Forest. This is how Joe described his hometown last year:

The median household income of Gorham is a mere \$22,750. Kids have to be transported at least 12 miles to school. Most residents who work must travel an average 34 miles to their jobs. But in spite of this and the fact that you cannot buy either a loaf of bread or a gallon of gas there, Gorham remains.

Joe went on to say it is not unique.

The isolation that poverty has brought to Gorham affects many, many other small communities in Illinois.

Joe asked:

What can residents in such towns do to combat their isolation? They must organize . . . and be willing to work very hard to keep their sense of community intact. . . . [T]hey must also organize and join with the voices of others to let our legislators and other decisionmakers know that [residents of small towns] have the same human rights as residents of more prosperous and affluent Illinois communities.

Joe Dunn was committed to the notion that America should be a land of opportunity for all, not just for some, and he spent his life working to improve the lives of others. He worked tirelessly to better the lives of people living in poverty by changing public policy and providing creative community solutions.

Like Paul Simon, Joe believed government could be a force for good. At Eastern Illinois University, where Joe earned a degree in political science in 1975, he was the student senate speaker. He was a political natural. He knew how to build and use political power. But he used his political and organizing skills to serve others, never himself.

He brought joy wherever he went. His laughter was warm, his humor was quick but never mean. Joe always had a smile on his face.

Joe was born with a condition that left him with a pronounced limp, but he was so full of energy that you quickly forgot he had any physical limitations, and he had so much faith in the

ability of everyday people to change their lives so the people with whom ICCS were working forgot about their supposed limitations.

Under his leadership, ICCS helped dozens of communities create community development programs, neighborhood cleanup and rehabilitation programs, community policing programs, and volunteer community libraries. Joe helped establish afterschool programs and school and summer lunch programs that fed tens of thousands of young people in my State. He helped create new partnerships between community and faith-based groups, and new bridges between generations.

Before joining Senator Simon's staff, Joe worked for the Illinois Farmers Union-CETA, and he coordinated summer youth programs in four southern Illinois counties. He was a member of the Governor's Rural Affairs Council, the Illinois Poverty Summit Steering Committee, the Illinois Collaboration on Youth and the Service Learning Task Force of the Illinois State Board of Education and the Steering Committee of the Alliance of Communities for Faith and Justice.

Through these programs, and the people he inspired, Joe's work will live on.

Days before he died, Joe sent some friends an e-mail that ended with these words:

By the way, happy 4th of July, and remember that one of the most patriotic things we can do is strengthen our communities.

He was a profoundly good man who made life better for many people and a great friend of mine. I can't tell you how many times we worked together on projects in communities around our State. We had this common political heritage in Paul Simon. It rubbed off, I hope, on me but certainly on Joe Dunn. I knew Joe was going to live up to those values, those Simon values that inspired so many of us over the years.

What a tragedy it was to learn of his passing on the Fourth of July. When Kappy Scates in my downstate office contacted us, it was hard to believe. Joe was too young, too alive, too necessary. But now he is gone.

In closing, I wish to extend my deep condolences to Joe's family, especially his wife Tempa; their daughters Abby and Katie, and the two grandchildren Joe loved so much, as well as his many friends. Joe Dunn has left his legacy in my State of Illinois. His caring heart may have stopped on the Fourth of July, but his caring for the people of my State will not end.

REPUBLICAN FILIBUSTERS

Mr. President, I listened a minute ago to the Senator from Texas talking about energy, and I thought to myself: Doesn't he remember that a few weeks ago we brought energy bills to the floor and we asked him and the Republicans to join us in a bipartisan effort to deal with the gasoline prices in this country? Is he suffering from political amnesia? Has he forgotten that we tried unsuccessfully over and over to get a

bipartisan group of Senators to start the debate he is begging for today?

I took a look at some of these rollcall votes to try to remember who was on which side when it came to bringing up the issues, and here we have, for example, a vote on June 10 of this year—June 10, not that long ago, less than a month ago—and we were trying to bring up the basic tax credits for energy development in this country—something that is about to expire and that we want to make sure will go forward. Unfortunately, we were stopped. On these tax extender votes of June 10, 2008, we needed 60 votes to go forward. We had 50 votes.

I looked to see what Republicans joined us in this effort. There were three. The Senator from Tennessee, Senator CORKER, Senator SMITH of Oregon, and Senator SNOWE of Maine, which led to a total of 50. We needed 60. The Senator from Texas, unfortunately, voted against starting that debate.

So he comes to the floor today and says that we surely can't leave for the August recess until we start a bipartisan debate. Sadly, on June 10, he voted against a bipartisan debate on tax extenders.

But that wasn't the only time that day he voted against a debate on energy policy. I don't wish to single him out, but he came to the floor and made the speech, and I will make it clear that many others joined him. We brought up a bill that wasn't just an extension of tax incentives so companies could start building more wind turbines and research into renewable and sustainable sources of energy. It went further. In fact, I think it was a very balanced and proactive effort to bring down gasoline prices and to try to take control of an element that is not only hurting families and businesses but our economy. We came forward with the Consumer-First Energy bill, and we said we want to debate this on a bipartisan basis.

Here is what it said. First, we are going to roll back the \$17 billion in tax subsidies that we are giving the oil companies. Listen, they are turning in and reporting the biggest profits in their history. They don't need subsidies from Federal taxpayers. We could put that money to better use. What if we gave consumers across America a helping hand in paying for gasoline? What if we gave independent truckdrivers several thousand dollars to defray the expenses they are running into trying to fuel their rigs and make a living? I would rather put \$17 billion in that kind of tax relief than in tax relief to ExxonMobil. But that is what we are doing. So the bill said, let's change that.

The bill also said we were going to impose a 25-percent windfall profit tax on these oil companies to let them know the sky is not the limit when it comes to profit taking. There is a point where the Federal Government will take that money back for consumers,

for investment in renewable and sustainable fuels.

We also wanted to suspend oil shipments to the Strategic Petroleum Reserve for the rest of the year. Why do we keep buying this expensive oil, taking it off the market and sinking it in the ground, making it more expensive for our economy? It doesn't make sense.

We also had a provision to protect consumers from price gouging. I am afraid that is going on here. This bill gave the President the authority to declare an energy emergency and set aside excessive price increases.

We also set limitations on oil market price speculation. Most people understand that is part of the issue. We had it in our bill.

We had a clear message to OPEC by allowing enforcement actions against companies that collude to set the price of oil and natural gas.

Well, that was the bill. Those were the provisions. They could have made a difference. But in order to get that bill to the floor and to start debating it, we needed 60 votes. That is what the Senate requires, 60 votes. So we called it for consideration on June 10, 2008, and we had 51 votes. The following 6 Republicans joined 45 Democrats. COLEMAN, COLLINS, GRASSLEY, SMITH, SNOWE, and WARNER. The Senator who was just on the floor, who says we shouldn't go home in August without debating a bipartisan measure, voted not to debate a bipartisan measure on June 10, 2008.

We tried again on June 17. We believe it is important. We tried to bring up these tax extenders again to encourage the kind of investment that is necessary. Well, unfortunately, again we couldn't get 60 votes. We had 52. Republicans voting with Democrats: COLEMAN, COLLINS, CORKER, SMITH, and SNOWE. Sadly, the Senator who spoke on the floor was not among those voting to go forward on June 17. On three separate occasions he refused to vote to start the debate on this energy issue, and now he is complaining that we should be starting the debate on the energy issue.

Well, I hope he will reconsider his previous votes, and I hope he will join us in a bipartisan effort to go forward. But I must say that if we are going forward on this bill and others, then the policy and strategy of the Republican Senators has to change. This chart shows we have had 82 Republican filibusters so far in this session of Congress.

Now, people say: Is that a lot? How many do you expect? In the history of this Senate, there have never been more than 57 filibusters in a 2-year period. So far, in a little over a year, we have had 82 Republican filibusters. What is a filibuster? A filibuster is using the Senate rules to stop the debate on a bill, to stop the debate on an amendment or a nomination. Any Senator can stand and do that, and then you have to wait 30 hours and see if you can get 60 votes together to overcome that Senator's filibuster.

Well, we have 51 Democratic votes. When you do your Senate math, you find out we need nine Republicans to join us to move forward on anything. Eighty-two times the Republican Senators have stopped debate on issue after issue. On the three separate occasions that I have made reference to, when the Democratic majority of 51 tried to get 9 Republican Senators to join us in a bipartisan debate to bring down gasoline prices, to talk about investment in renewable and sustainable fuels, they refused. They give us just a few Senators. Coincidentally, most of them are up for reelection. They give us a few, but never enough to reach 60. That has been their strategy. That is the Republican strategy, the strategy of opposition to debate and moving forward.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, will the Senator from Illinois yield for a question?

Mr. DURBIN. I will be happy to yield to the Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. I appreciate the Senator yielding. I have been listening over the last hour, as we have heard our colleagues from the other side come and excoriate us for not allowing them to bring a bill to the floor on energy and assailing the Senators on this side for prohibiting them from doing that.

That was astonishing to me because, as the Senator from Illinois knows, I have been coming to the Senate week after week and saying how much I pay for gas when I go home. It is now up to \$4.45 a gallon that I paid last Sunday. I have been a part of this majority that has tried to bring a bill to the floor to deal with renewable energy, to try to deal with the issue of speculation, and to try to deal with a number of issues. How many times now have we been blocked from bringing an energy bill to the floor to deal with these gas prices?

Mr. DURBIN. In the last 6 weeks, we have been blocked three different times by the Republicans, who refuse to give us the necessary 60 votes to bring the bill to the floor—something they are now complaining about. Some of the Senators complaining the loudest voted against having a bipartisan debate on an energy bill.

I guess they think the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD is written in disappearing ink; that we don't have a permanent record here of their votes. We do. We know where they have been. We know how they have voted.

I wish to say something else for the Senator from Washington, and I am sure she will agree. They come and argue that the Democrats are against domestic exploration for oil. That is not true. I don't know of a single Democrat, I don't know of a single Senator who is against domestic exploration and production of oil. In fact, as the Senator from Washington knows, we have 68 million federally owned acres that we lease to the oil companies for exploration and production of oil and gas.

Mrs. MURRAY. Well, Mr. President, if the Senator will once again yield, didn't we do a bill several years ago to actually add 8 million acres to that, to allow more drilling?

Mr. DURBIN. Yes. So we had the 68 million, and we added the 8 million just a year ago—in the Caribbean, if I am not mistaken—in offshore drilling. So there is this pool of opportunity for the oil and gas companies. They must be opportunities because they are paying us, the Federal Government, a lease. They believe there could be oil and gas there. But when you ask the question: Well, how much are they drilling of that 68 million, it turns out about a fourth of it. A fourth of it.

So you have some 34 million acres offshore of Federal land available to the oil companies, and they could be drilling it right now.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, if the Senator will continue to yield, if I am not incorrect, I believe that 68 million doesn't include the additional millions of acres off the shore of Alaska that they also are allowed to drill in and that they currently aren't drilling in.

Mr. DURBIN. That is right. I don't know the exact number in Alaska, but there are a significant number of acres, millions of acres available off Alaska where they can be drilling.

So I would say to the Senator from Washington, if they have so many millions of acres available for drilling, why is it that they are making the argument that they don't have any opportunities here for drilling and exploration? I think it is, frankly, because they have no other answer.

What it boils down to is that for 8 years we have had two oilmen at the highest levels of Government in America. When you do the math, 8 years, divided by two oilmen, equals \$4 gas. That is what we are paying.

I wish to thank Senator WHITEHOUSE for inspiring me. I helped him with the mathematical equation on this, but it was his inspiration that led to that last statement. I would say that is part of the problem. Any President looking at the mess in our economy and the hardship imposed on American families and businesses would have called the oil executives in a long time ago. Not this President. He used to be in the same fraternity. He was in the oil business. Many of them believe this is the way it works; this is the market at work.

If this is the market at work, we better take a look at the market because it is destroying America's economy—cutting back on airlines, reducing the number of flights, reducing the number of employees. All that tells me is that we need some leadership. Leadership will not be served by Senators coming to the floor, who voted to maintain filibusters, and then beg us to start a debate. That is what it is all about. They had their chance and they didn't join us.

I would say at this point, before I yield the floor, we need to tackle this issue. There is no more important issue

facing America today. We need exploration. We need to have investment in new opportunities. We need to be aggressive. We need to move right now.

We need, for example, to move to a point where we are not putting oil into SPR, the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, but actually taking it out and selling it and the proceeds will be used to not only bring down the price of oil in that sale but the proceeds are used to help American consumers, families, and business get through this energy crisis we face as a nation. We have to stop this indefensible subsidy of American oil companies at a time when they are reporting the highest profits in history. Put that money back into the economy for the right investments. We need a windfall profits tax to stop what is going on there, excessive profit-taking at the expense of the people who get up and go to work every day, and stop the price gouging and speculation that is leading to higher prices for oil and gasoline. This is the kind of initiative we need.

That was included in the bill on June 10 which the Senator from Texas voted not to take up and not debate. I want to take it up. I am ready to do that at any time the Senator from Texas wishes.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington is recognized.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Illinois for coming and highlighting the number of times we have tried to bring a bill to the floor to deal with the very critical energy crisis that is in front of us. There is no doubt this is harming Americans today. For our friends at home and for all of us, when we have to pay \$4.45 a gallon, as I did last weekend, that means we will not have as much money to spend on other things. We are hearing about people who are cutting back at the grocery stores, not being able to even go to work because they cannot afford the price to put the fuel into their car to be able to go to work. This has a huge impact. It has an impact on our schools and our communities, that are trying to get their schoolbuses ready for the fall and wondering how they are ever going to be able to budget for that. It is affecting our truckdrivers in tremendous ways as they try to get their goods to market. It is affecting every single American family, every single business, every single community, every single government agency.

It is an issue that we on this side of the aisle believe we have a responsibility to address. We have tried to bring a bill to the floor, not once, not twice, but three times, and have faced a filibuster from the other side.

We are going to keep working and keep trying to get to a point where we can finally address this. I think all of us recognize there are two oil men in the White House and it is going to take an election for us to get to the long-term issues we need to address in this

Nation. But there are things we can do today. We want to do them today. As Democrats we are going to keep working because America deserves it.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. SALAZAR. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to again urge my colleagues to join in the leadership of Senator DODD and his efforts to address one of the crises of economics we have going on in America today and that is the housing crisis which is causing so much pain all across America, in each of our respective States. It is causing pain to those who own their homes and are losing their homes, but it is also causing pain to so many homeowners across America whose dream of home ownership is being torn asunder as they are seeing their home value decline in unprecedented ways. I think it is incumbent upon this Congress to take action to move forward to try to create an environment that puts together this cornerstone of our economy which has been so crumbled by all of the difficulties it has had over the last several years.

In my home State of Colorado, we have seen a very significant increase in the number of foreclosures. In 2007 in Colorado, as you can see on this chart, approximately 1 per 45 households—1 per 45 households—filed foreclosure. That is the equivalent to nearly 40,000 foreclosures that were filed across my State of Colorado. That is up nearly 200 percent in a 5-year time period. If you look back at the years 2003 and 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, we see what is happening: The number of foreclosures is rising at an extraordinary level. That rise in foreclosure levels is not something we can say is over. We can't say this is an economic phenomenon we have been through and that we have already gotten to the end and, therefore, the times ahead of us are rosy. We are facing some difficult times ahead of us as we deal with the housing crisis.

This next chart is a projection of where we see ourselves going in Colorado. This is information provided by the Center for Responsible Lending, which indicates that in the year 2008 and the year 2009, as the adjustable rate mortgages continue to adjust upward, we are going to see additional foreclosures in the State of Colorado. It is expected that this year, 2008, and into 2009, we are going to have almost 50,000 additional foreclosures. So if we have an additional 50,000 foreclosures in the State of Colorado, what is the consequence to others?

First, there is a consequence, of course, to those who lose their homes. There are some from whom I have

heard, including people who are in their 60s, who are not able to continue to make the payment on their homes and who end up in their later years of life essentially losing their dream of home ownership because they cannot afford the higher rates, the higher payment rates that come about through adjustment of the ARMs. So it definitely affects those people who have to go through foreclosure in huge, significant, and very painful ways. But it also affects others, because it is surrounding homes in the neighborhoods that are affected by the decline in home values. In my State alone, it is estimated that about 750,000 homes will have declining values over the next several years. That is almost half of the housing stock within the State of Colorado. So we have a lot of pain going on with respect to what is happening in the home world.

There are many people who have seen these signs, I am sure, as people have driven through their neighborhoods throughout the State of Colorado. We see these kinds of signs. They are commonplace. We see them in counties such as Adam County, Denver, Conejos County; we see them in Pueblo County and all over the place where people have had a hard time selling their homes. We see these signs that say "Price Reduced" time and time again. That is, in fact, something which is commonplace.

It is also true that there are things that can be done to help us address this issue. This is a sign from our foreclosure hotline in Colorado. That foreclosure hotline has been set up as our central source for people who are having a problem with respect to staying in their homes to be able to make a telephone call to try to see whether they can get some assistance to be able to stay in their home. We have had more than 29,000 Coloradans call this foreclosure hotline over the last several months. The foreclosure hotline in Colorado has been able to provide major assistance to the people of the State of Colorado who call in for assistance. About 80 percent of the people who call the foreclosure hotline end up creating some kind of negotiation with their lender that ultimately allows them to stay in their home. That is good for the homeowner because they can stay in their home, and it is good for the lender as well because they don't go through the things they have to go through with the costs incurred in foreclosing on a home, restoring the home, and selling the home.

Senator DODD and his committee have been working on trying to address one of the most significant pains affecting the people in America today—and rest assured, there is pain in America. This dream of our economic engine is somewhat teetering. When we look at what is happening with the high rise in the cost of gas, and we see what is happening with the high cost of health care, and all the rest of the costs that are economic pocketbook issues affect-

ing America, they are saying why isn't our Government helping in terms of addressing some of the fundamental issues at stake here?

The housing legislation, which has been crafted and worked on by Senator DODD and others, is an effort to try to address this housing crisis. I hope we are able to move forward with that legislation very soon, because we need to start restoring confidence on the part of the American people that we can address some of these critical issues facing us in America at this time.

This is not a Republican or Democratic or Independent issue. The issue of home ownership and the issue of having a strong housing market, a strong housing construction industry, that is an American issue, an American challenge we all face. So we need to come together to push this legislation and get it done and get it to the President for his signature as soon as possible.

For those who will try to create obstruction along the way to have us continue to not be able to get to this are doing a disservice to the American people. We need to address this housing crisis. Senator DODD and those who have worked on this legislation for a long time are giving us that opportunity. I hope before the end of the day we will be able to take a significant step toward creating the remedy that will provide some relief to those suffering from this housing crisis in America today.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut is recognized.

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I will speak on another matter, if I may, but first I thank my colleague from Colorado for his kind comments about the efforts we made on the housing bill. I thank him for his observations about his own State and what is going on there with the people in the western part of our country.

This issue is a national problem. I think there are occasions when people assume this is a localized issue in a few spots in the Nation. Unfortunately, we have all learned, painfully, with more and more news that comes out that this problem is in every State; in some, it is far more pronounced. In my State, we have had about 15,000 foreclosures, and another 12,000 are anticipated this year—in a State of 3 million people. Home values have come down.

I appreciate the Senator's comments about what is going on and his appreciation of what we are trying to do with this bill. Every single day, between 8,000 and 9,000 people file for foreclosure. In the month of June, 250,000 people moved into that category. Those are the numbers. As I said this morning, those are families—a mother, father, and maybe children—who have to find alternative living conditions because they are about to lose their homes. Think about that on an individual basis, what it means, and the fact that we have had to take so

long on this bill that could have been, frankly, passed a week or more ago. Colleagues on both sides of the political aisle have expressed strong support for our efforts. A handful of people here have slowed this down and done everything in their power to derail this effort.

This morning's vote of 84 to 12 once again indicates the strong desire by most of us here to get something done on this issue. I thank my colleague for his generous comments and help in this effort.

Mr. SALAZAR. I thank the Senator. The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut is recognized.

(The remarks of Mr. DODD and Mr. LEVIN pertaining to the introduction of S. 3252 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. LEVIN. I yield the floor. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

ENERGY CRISIS

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I have noticed that late this afternoon a number of speakers have come to the floor of the Senate decrying the fact that there is not oil drilling here or there or elsewhere and suggesting that they and they alone have the answer to our energy problems. I wish to respond by saying this issue of drilling for oil is an important issue. I, along with my colleagues, Senator BINGAMAN, Senator DOMENICI, and Senator Talent, introduced the bill in the Senate that opened what is called Lease 181 in the Gulf of Mexico. That is now law. We now have companies exploring for oil and gas in Lease 181 in the Gulf of Mexico. Why? Because I think it makes sense to do that. If you take a look at the oil reserves in Outer Continental Shelf, in the Gulf of Mexico, off the west coast, and off Alaska, by far the majority of the available reserves are in the Gulf of Mexico.

But having said all that, we are already drilling in a lot of areas—including in North Dakota. I asked the U.S. Geological Survey to do an assessment of oil resources in what is called the Bakken Shale formation in North Dakota. I asked them to perform the assessment about 2 years ago. They completed their report a couple months ago, and they estimated that there is 3.6 to 4.3 billion barrels of recoverable oil using today's technology in eastern Montana and western North Dakota. So now we have nearly 80 drilling rigs drilling in western North Dakota. I don't know how many are in Montana, but there is a substantial amount of drilling activity, which I strongly support.

This is the largest assessment of recoverable oil ever made in the lower 48

States. Let me say that again. The U.S. Geological Survey just completed its assessment that there is up to 4.3 billion barrels of recoverable oil using today's technology and we have oil companies there drilling and I support it. We are drilling in this country, in North Dakota, eastern Montana, and we have other oilfields. This happens to be a brand new one, the biggest assessment ever made in the lower 48. It is exciting, in my judgment.

As I indicated, we have activity happening now in Lease 181 in the Gulf because we opened that. Off of Cuba, it is estimated that there is a half million barrels a day that is available for leasing by the Cubans. Many countries have leases there—Spain is there, Canada is there, India is there, and Venezuela is there. They are very interested. But our companies can't secure the leases because the Bush administration says, no, we can't drill in Cuban waters. We have this embargo with respect to Cuba. So there is a half million barrels that our oil companies can't produce.

I say to my colleagues: You want to drill? Let's allow our companies to go access some of that off the coast of Cuba. China wants to be there, and India wants to be there, but we can't be there.

The fact is we need to do a lot of things and do a lot of things well if we are going to address this energy issue. Now, the price of oil is bouncing around at \$140, \$144 a barrel. My understanding is that in the last 4 or 5 minutes of trading today, it went up, I was told, \$4 or \$5 a barrel. There is unbelievable, relentless, in my judgment reckless, speculation going on in the oil futures market. Now, it wouldn't matter so much if these were future markets dealing with something that wasn't so essential to the economic well-being of our country, but our country desperately needs oil. We run on oil. The fact is we use a prodigious amount of it.

I have described before, on many occasions, the way this works. We have a substantial amount of oil halfway around the world under the sands. That is where there is a lot of the oil. The largest reserve is in Saudi Arabia, second and third is either Iran or Iraq, depending on how you count reserves in those two countries. So the largest reserve is in Saudi Arabia, then Iran and Iraq. But where is the largest demand? Well, here in the United States.

We suck out 86 million barrels a day from this planet. Of that 86 million barrels of oil we suck out from these little straws called drilling rigs and pumps, we use one-fourth of it here in this spot on the planet called the United States of America. We are big users of energy.

So what do we do to address this issue when oil prices spike like Roman candles to \$140 a barrel, and it does enormous damage to our country, to our economy, and injures farmers, families, truckers, and airlines? What do

we do? We do a lot of everything, it seems to me.

I described that we are drilling exciting new wells in our region of the country. We are going to be drilling in Lease 181 in the Gulf of Mexico. But in addition to drilling, we need to do a lot more. We need substantial, aggressive conservation. We need significant efficiency and conservation. Everything we use throughout the day—if we turn a switch, push a button, dial a knob, turn a key—everything we do all day long has to do with energy. We get up in the morning and we want light, in the closet, in the bedroom. We use our finger to flip a switch, not understanding, of course, so much—because we take it for granted—that is energy. Perhaps we use an electric razor, then heat a pot of coffee, then put a key in the ignition of a vehicle. Every one of those actions is using energy, and we never give it a second thought.

Now, all the things we have—yes, including air-conditioners and refrigerators—can be made much, much, much more efficient. We are getting rid of the incandescent light bulb. It will not be long until you will never see another one because we can find ways to produce light for all our manufacturing facilities and our homes all across this country with 80 percent less electricity than we now use. So we need to engage in conservation, efficiency, and then renewables.

Now, renewables represent something our country ought to say to the world: Here is where we are headed. Yes, we are going to drill some and do all these things. We are going to conserve and develop more efficient methods of using all this electricity. But it is also the case that renewables represent a significant opportunity. Renewables, with respect to wind energy and solar and biomass and biofuels.

You know what we have done for renewables? Well, in 1992, the Congress put in place something called the production tax credit—a tax incentive for renewables. But it was short term and not very deep. So we have extended it five times, short term. By the way, the production tax credit will expire at the end of this year. We have extended it five times, and we let it expire three times. So anybody interested in investing in renewables will take a look at this country and say: You don't have much of a commitment to renewables. Look what you have done, stutter, start, stop. That is not a commitment.

Here is what we did for oil. In 1916, we put in place tax incentives—big, juicy, fat tax incentives—and we said: We want you to go look for oil and gas. If you find them, good for you because that is good for our country, and you get big tax incentives. We put the incentives in place in 1916 and they have stayed forever. What did we do for renewables? Well, in 1992 we gave them a tax credit, which has gone through the phases of start, stop, start, stop, expire. That is a pathetic, anemic response by a country that acts like it doesn't care very much.

I have introduced legislation in this Congress that says: You know what, we ought to put in place a production tax credit for renewables for 10 years. We ought to say to the world: Here is where we are headed, and you can count on it. Here is what we believe in, and you can count on it. This country is making a significant concerted effort for renewable energy, to be less dependent on the Saudis, the Kuwaitis, the Venezuelans, and others. That is what our country has a responsibility to do.

So we need to do a lot of things. At the moment, however, I wish to concentrate on not the myriad of things we must do and do well, but I wish to talk about the urgent need to do something that addresses this spike, this unbelievable spike in oil prices and, therefore, gasoline prices that has happened in the last 12 to 14 months.

There is nothing in the supply and demand of oil that justifies this kind of a price spike. Nothing. In fact, if anything, demand is down. Today's newspaper describes that we are using 2 percent less gasoline here in this country. The first 4 of 5 months in this country we had increased inventory of crude oil stocks. Inventory is up, demand is down. What happens to price? It goes straight up. Why? Because there is excess speculation in the futures market.

Those futures markets were designed for a specific purpose and that was to allow producers and consumers to hedge risk of a physical product—perfectly legitimate and an important thing to do. It has now, in my judgment, been taken over by excess speculation. Franklin Delano Roosevelt warned about that in 1936, when he signed the legislation that created this market.

Now we have unbelievable speculation in this market. The new pension funds and others that have come into this marketplace in a few short years have spiked from investing somewhere around \$13 billion to \$260 billion. Are the people flooding into this marketplace wanting to hold a 5-gallon can of oil? No, these interests never want to touch oil. They never want to own oil. They want to do what Will Rogers talked about 80 years ago: They want to buy what they will never get from people who never had it and make money on both sides. And then walk around with a permanent grin, walking into the bank with our money to make their deposits. Yes, the OPEC countries do that and so do these speculators as they have driven up the prices. The problem is it injures this country's economy.

It is devastating, for example, to various industries—the trucking industry, the airline industry, and farming to have such high oil prices. It's also devastating to ordinary consumers, trying to figure out how on Earth do I scrape up the money to fill my gas tank to be able to drive back and forth to work. How do I do that?

Now, I think we have a responsibility to address this excess speculation.

When markets are broken, we have a responsibility to address it. I have often said I taught economics ever so briefly in college. I taught a little economics, and I kid people by saying I was able to overcome that experience. Economics is psychology pumped up with a little helium. People think: Well, we know this produces that, there is an action and a reaction—supply and demand. We all understand that. The problem is, at the moment, if you take a look at this country, its economy, and what the psychology of the American people is as they look at what is happening in this country, there is a pretty good reason to be very concerned about the future and a pretty good reason to believe we need action that is urgent, important action that actually has some grip and some teeth.

We have been through a subprime loan scandal. The credit markets were frozen. The fact is we had an orgy of greed in these credit markets and a lot of problems still exist. In fact, some of the resets on some of these bad mortgages are still in front of us. So take a look at that kind of a credit crisis and the subprime loan scandal and then combine that with the issue of the deficits, dramatic Federal budget deficits because we are fighting a war the President will not pay for. He says everything we use for this war, I want to borrow, and he has borrowed almost three-quarters of a trillion dollars for it. He refuses to pay for it. I will send the soldiers to war, and I ask the American people to go shopping, he says.

The subprime loan scandal, unbelievable fiscal policy recklessness, a trade policy out of balance over \$700 billion a year. You can't do that. Then, on top of that, the price of oil going to \$144, and we think this economy is able to withstand that? This is a resilient economy, the American people are resilient people, but they expect and demand appropriate action by this Congress.

Now, we have people who view themselves as a set of human brake pads. Their only role in life is to come to the floor of the Senate and say: Oh, no, no, no. You can't do that. We are going to dig in our heels and prevent anyone from doing anything. That is not public policy we should be proud of. We are trying very hard to construct some public policy in all these areas that give us a chance to move forward. I know there are reasons for some to object to certain activities. But we have seen, in the last 5 or 6 months, a steady stream of people coming to this floor and saying: My goal is to stop anything from happening. Meanwhile, all these issues pile up in a way I think is a danger to this country's future and a danger to our economy. It is starting with this issue of energy, as I began the discussion today.

We have a responsibility in the short term, and I know the majority leader and others believe it as well.

We have a responsibility to at least tackle excess speculation and the re-

lentless dangerous speculation of this commodity futures market that is driving up the price of oil and injuring this country's economy.

I have introduced legislation to do that. I hope to talk about it tomorrow. Some others have also introduced legislation. We ought to take the best of the legislation that exists and move forward to address this country's problems.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 2731

Mr. REID. Mr. President, we have worked very hard tonight trying to come up with an agreement to move forward. We have been close, but close doesn't count on Senate business. We have a most important bill we are working on, which is the global AIDS bill. It is a bill that the President supports. We have been in touch with his people during the week. There are no requests of Democrats to offer amendments. We have been working with the distinguished Republican assistant leader, Senator KYL. There has been a proposed 13 amendments, as I recall. We have agreed to seven of those amendments. The others, at this stage, we have been unable to work on. We have tried to work on ways of not having Senators come tomorrow and vote and wind up at the same place on Monday. But there has been a Senator—or two—on the Republican side who, I assume, wants to show that he has a lot of power as a Senator. Any one Senator has a lot of power. So at this stage, it appears that one Senator is going to require all Senators to come to vote tomorrow at 5:21 in the afternoon. That is when time runs out on the housing legislation. And following that, which will complete the housing legislation, we will send it back to the House. Following that, we will automatically have a vote on PEPFAR, the global AIDS bill.

What we wanted to do is avoid those votes and come in Monday, and we would wind up at the same place. But we were not able to get agreement. So we will do directly what we could have done indirectly, but we would have wound up the same way.

First, I appreciate everyone's patience. The Presiding Officer has spent a lot of time here. Senator DODD, who is chairman of the committee, has been here because it is a housing piece of legislation. We have had a number of conversations with Senator SHELBY. The staff has been tremendous. We have had staff working on trying to resolve these amendments. I really appreciate Senator DURBIN, my friend and assistant leader, who has been here throughout the night.

I ask unanimous consent that the cloture vote on the motion to proceed to S. 2731, the global AIDS bill, occur on Monday, July 14, at 5:30, p.m., with the hour prior to the cloture vote equally divided and controlled between the leaders or their designees; that if cloture is invoked, all postcloture time be yielded back, the motion to proceed be agreed to, the motion to reconsider be laid on the table, and the Senate proceed to consideration of the bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, I do object on behalf of Senator DEMINT. Let me make a very brief statement.

The distinguished majority leader is correct. It is almost 11:30 this evening, and we have been working since about 3 o'clock this afternoon to try to reach agreement on how to proceed with this very important bill. We have made a lot of progress. A lot of Members have been willing to make concessions to try to limit the number of amendments that would be considered so this bill could be completed sometime next week. But we haven't worked out everything. Unfortunately, because everything hasn't been worked out at this late hour tonight, it wasn't possible for us, one of our Members, to agree to this particular request. The majority leader is correct about how we will have to proceed as a result.

It is my strong hope that because this is a very important piece of legislation—Members have different views about aspects of it—an agreement could be reached by which an appropriate number of amendments could be considered and debated and voted on next week and the bill finally disposed of at a point next week. There is a fairly constructive way to do this, and then there is a way to do it that isn't as constructive.

So I appreciate the effort the majority leader and others have put into this tonight. It would be my hope that in that same spirit, we can continue to talk about this tomorrow and hopefully reach an agreement we would be able to proceed with in order to complete the bill sometime next week.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, there was an objection, I understand, by my friend.

There has been tremendous work on this bill for months and months. The principal workers on this bill have been the chairman of the committee, Senator BIDEN, and the ranking member, Senator LUGAR. They have worked on this for months. I have, for more than a month, had statements made to me: Give us another day, another day. That has been going on for a long time. We are in a situation here where we ran out of days, and we had to move forward. Senator LUGAR and Senator BIDEN have accepted numerous amendments from Members wanting to make this bill better. I am confident they did make the bill better. But the fact is—I want everyone to understand—the

work on this bill did not start tonight. Senators LUGAR and BIDEN thought all the work had been done on it.

So we are where we are. Senators have a right to suggest changes to a bill, even though we have spent a lot of time on it.

I say to my friend, the distinguished Republican whip, we are anxious to finish this bill. I personally think it is good legislation. I think it is something we as a country need to do. But also understand that we have been willing to accept on this piece of legislation any germane amendments that relate to this bill. We have even agreed tonight to work on some things that are not, but we have agreed to do that in an effort to move this forward. I hope over the weekend, perhaps even tomorrow before we leave, maybe something can be done. If not, maybe Monday we can do something. Otherwise, we find ourselves in this position. Monday we are on the bill. We would at that time, of course, have to file cloture on the bill itself.

Now, I think we could constructively use some time. If there are Senators who want to change this legislation and do it in a germane fashion, we should spend that 30 hours—actually the 2 days it would take for cloture to ripen—on trying to improve the bill. We would be happy to do that. We would even be willing to consider, as my friend knows, the junior Senator from Arizona, amendments, as we have talked about tonight, that may not be technically germane. I hope we can do that.

But as we have seen in this Presidential election year, we have two of our Senators running for President, and it makes it extremely difficult to legislate in a way that we perhaps would like to. But that is the process in which we find ourselves. So hopefully something will work out well during the night or, if not, maybe tomorrow or, if not, over the weekend. I hope we could spend our week constructively disposing of this legislation the President wants.

We will finish the legislation very likely, one way or another, next week. I cannot imagine the President's own party would stop this bill from passing. But we have been surprised in the past. So we will do what we can to help the President. This is a bill I believe in. The vast majority of the Democrats—in fact, I do not know of a Democrat who does not like the bill. But we hope there would be some reasonableness on the other side to try to help the President's program also.

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, might I make a point of clarification?

Mr. REID. Sure.

Mr. KYL. I think the majority leader will agree with this. When the majority leader speaks of accepting amendments, it is not a matter of accepting an amendment to the bill.

Mr. REID. No. To debate and vote on them.

Mr. KYL. But rather agreeing to allow an amendment to be offered, debated and voted on.

Mr. REID. That is right. I am sorry I did not make that clear.

Mr. KYL. No, No. I knew the Senator would want to be clear on that. There are some nonrelevant or nongermane amendments that have been proposed. It is certainly understandable that the majority would not want to have those amendments considered as a part of the debate. For those amendments, however, that are relevant to the subject matter at hand, that is what most of the discussion has been about, and we are hoping at the end of the day an arrangement can be agreed to where those amendments could be considered by the Senate, debated, voted upon, maybe rejected, but at least the Members would have had an opportunity to vote on the amendments, and, as I said before, and, as the majority leader said, to conclude the bill then sometime next week.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

Mr. REID. So Mr. President, I have asked the first consent, which was that we have no votes until Monday. That was objected to.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. REID. So, Mr. President, now I ask unanimous consent that on Friday, after all the postcloture time has expired on the motion to disagree—that time occurring at 5:21 p.m.—the Senate proceed to vote on the motion to disagree to the amendment of the House adding a new title and inserting a new section to the amendment of the Senate to H.R. 3221; that upon disposition of that motion, the Senate then proceed to vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed to S. 2731, the global AIDS bill; that if cloture is invoked, then all postcloture time be deemed expired, and on Monday, July 14, following a period of morning business, the motion to proceed be agreed to, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table; that the Senate then proceed to the consideration of S. 2731; that if cloture is not invoked, then a motion to reconsider the vote by which cloture was not invoked be considered to have been entered.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The assistant majority whip.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period of morning business.

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

RECOGNIZING UNIVISION NOTICIAS

15

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the efforts of Noticias 15,