

answer. Maybe somebody who put those two amendments on there to close everything up, maybe they would consider taking them off. I mean, if he says you can have an amendment, well, can we have an amendment by taking down your two amendments and then we will have our amendment? I am sure the answer would be no. Why wouldn't it be? Because they don't want you to offer an amendment, right? That must be it.

I yield the floor.

Thank you, Mr. President. I thank the Senator for giving me time.

MR. SESSIONS. Mr. President, do we have a time agreement now?

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. There is no time agreement in effect.

LIHEAP

MR. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I would just say what an honor it has been to serve with Senator DOMENICI. There is no more effective advocate, no more courageous Senator in terms of speaking the truth about complex matters in words that Americans can understand, and no stronger Senator in committing to a sound economic policy than Senator DOMENICI. We are going to miss him in this body, there is no doubt about it.

I wish to briefly share a few thoughts about the LIHEAP legislation that was offered.

First, I would note that the Democratic leadership has proposed two pieces of legislation at this point in time over the last few weeks that would deal with energy. One is speculation, which I am open to in seeing what we can do to tighten that up, but it produces not one barrel of energy. They also tried to move today a \$2.5 billion energy subsidy to subsidize the purchase of fuel oil for people in America, and they want to spend it. There is no money whatsoever to pay for it, so it is going to be treated as an emergency, adding to the debt this Nation already has. I would just suggest that if you are looking at sound energy policy, it seems to me that Senator ALEXANDER has it right: We should find more and use less.

I would suggest it is crystal clear that the LIHEAP legislation that is designed to use \$2.5 billion of the taxpayers' money—actually, money we don't have because we are already in debt—to subsidize the utilization of more energy—really some of the dirtiest energy we have in America; burning dirty fuel oil in private home furnaces—that is not consistent with a sound energy policy.

So I reject the LIHEAP bill first and foremost because it is unpaid for, it adds another \$2.5 billion to the national debt, and it is on top of an already \$2.5 billion LIHEAP piece of legislation. This is not good leadership from the Democratic side on matters important to America.

You remember the dispute we had over automobile gasoline. The prices

went up, and some suggested we should cut the tax. We said no, that is not good policy. Why would you want to encourage the utilization of more gasoline by cutting this tax? It is just not good policy.

We need to do something fundamental about energy. It is an even worse policy to tax the American people or add debt to our grandchildren to subsidize the utilization of some of the Nation's most dirty energy.

The very people from that area of the country—the Northeast primarily—are the ones who have consistently objected to the production of more energy. Time and time—I have been here 12 years, almost. I know where the votes have come from. The very people pushing for this subsidy to burn more dirty fuel oil are the people who had objected and successfully blocked attempts to produce more, cleaner energy in America, and it is not good.

We need to talk about this. We need to get serious about America's energy policy. I know my fine colleague, the great advocate from Vermont, tried to argue that this is a fair allocation of money and that it is not regionally biased in favor of Vermont or some of our Northeastern States, that it helps rural Southern States with air-conditioning. Well, I am just looking at the numbers in the bills. I have the numbers State by State right here. In Vermont, they have one Congressman. They got \$17 million. I guess that is less than—\$17 million under this program. Alabama, with seven Congressmen—seven times the population—got a total of \$18 million.

Look, this is a gimmick. It is a transfer of wealth to a certain group of people for political reasons, and we are going to send the debt to our grandchildren. It is not good policy.

We ought not to go to the LIHEAP bill because we need to be talking about how to produce more energy. If we produce more energy and we produce cleaner alternative energy sources, if we build nuclear plants that some of these same people have opposed, if we were building another 100 nuclear plants instead of the 100 we have—and we haven't built one in 30 years—if we had been building them the way France has, where 80 percent of their energy is from nuclear power, we wouldn't be in the crisis we are in today, but they blocked that. So I just protest a little bit. Count me as saying no on that question.

I see some of my other colleagues are here, and I yield the floor at this time.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee is recognized.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST— S. 3268

MR. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Alabama. The Senator from Oklahoma wishes to speak, but before that, I would like to make a unanimous consent request.

The majority leader said we could offer amendments on energy that dealt

with gas prices. We said we hadn't heard that to be the case for the last 8 days, but we are eager to do that. So I would like to renew, once again, the unanimous consent request that would establish a way in which this Senate on Monday could take up \$4-a-gallon gasoline, with amendments on each side of the aisle and debate them with a limited time agreement and try to come to a result on both the issues of more supply and less demand.

I ask unanimous consent that the Senate consider the pending energy speculation measure in the following manner: that the bill be subject to energy-related amendments only; provided further that the amendments be considered in an alternating manner between the two sides of the aisle.

I further ask consent that the bill remain the pending business to the exclusion of all other business other than privileged matters or items that are agreed to jointly by the two leaders.

I further ask consent that the first seven amendments to be offered on this side of the aisle by the Republican leader or his designee be the following: Outer Continental Shelf exploration plus plug-in hybrid cars; No. 2, oil shale plus conservation; No. 3, Alaska energy production plus conservation; No. 4, the Gas Price Reduction Act; No. 5, the clean nuclear energy amendment; No. 6, the coal-to-liquid energy amendment for military aviation fuel, plus the conservation provisions in that amendment; and No. 7, LIHEAP.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. In my capacity as a Senator from Pennsylvania, I object.

MR. ALEXANDER. Thank you, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma is recognized.

SENATE PROCEDURE

MR. COBURN. Mr. President, I wanted to spend a few minutes. I have been a Senator for almost 4 years. I think my life experiences I bring to the body are somewhat different than a lot of others. I have some observations on what is happening to us. I hope the American people will pay attention because this week the Senate has failed—miserably failed. We just passed a housing bill that fixes only short-term problems and doesn't fix the long-term problems associated with housing and Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. We just did that because we are in a crisis. You have to do it. The Secretary of the Treasury came to the Presiding Officer's conference, he came to ours, and he talked about why this is important for them to have the flexibility to establish confidence in the mortgage markets. We had a great opportunity to not only address that confidence and make sure it was there so people have the proper expectations that they can get a mortgage—and a reasonable one—but we did other things that failed to fix the ultimate problem.

As you play out this bill, if you look at the negative long-run end of it, the

American taxpayers have the potential to be on the hook for \$3.9 trillion. There are some Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac reforms in there. This body has known for 15 years they needed to be there. We didn't do anything about putting those reforms in there until it became a crisis.

The point I am making is, why are we waiting for crises? Once the crises get here, why do we bend to the political wills of the short term rather than address the long-term structural problems that are out there?

So there is no question we have helped a lot of people with the bill we passed, but you have to ask the question, What is this going to do to everybody else who pays their mortgage and anybody who wants to get a mortgage in the future and continues to keep their commitments? What we have done is raise the interest rates. We have raised the cost on anybody who purchases a home in this country for the next 15 years.

What else have we done? We have put \$3.9 billion out in CDBG funds to buy homes that have already been foreclosed from the banks—from the banks—the very people who created part of this mess we just bailed out with \$3.9 billion of our grandchildren's money.

So here we go, we are saying we are fixing the problem, but we are working on it only when it is in crisis. Then, when we have the political momentum to do what is right and fix the long term and the short term, what do we do? We run because we are more interested in our political futures, in our political careers than we are the opportunities and potential employment opportunities and lifestyles for our children and grandchildren.

Just as my colleagues have been talking about energy, the Senator from Tennessee very well knows that the time to address the problems we are talking about right now in terms of more production was 15 years ago. Now the Senate sits stuck because we are worried about the political fallout of perhaps having amendments to drill where the oil is and that might not fit one political party's agenda. But I will tell you what, it fits the American people's agenda. So we have this debate and this division that is becoming partisan. It is all on the basis of how do we look good in November. I want to tell you, none of us look good to the American people, because we are not fixing the problems on a timely basis. We are not allowing the historical precedents of this body, which is debate and amendments, to mold and create legislation that adequately reflects the risks and problems that future generations are going to encounter.

We are working on energy here, and the big cloud hanging over the room that nobody wants to talk about is carbon and global warming. Let's take a minute and say I am wrong and that global warming and carbon is a tremendous problem for this country. Ev-

erybody who believes that—and I don't dishonor their belief—knows if we started today doing everything we could do, it will take us 30 years to get off of carbon-based fuels. Everybody agrees with that. What are we going to do between now and the next 30 years? How are we going to address the problem?

This year, American taxpayers sent \$700 billion of their money—a large portion of it—to countries that would like to see us done in. We are going to continue to do that until such time as we have a cogent energy policy, regardless of global warming or carbon problems. It is at least going to take 30 years. So we ought to take that out of the realm and say: How do we quit giving away our fortune, our future, and our assets to other people? Even if we all agreed on global warming, we can all agree it will take a long time to transition away from carbon-based fuels. Why would we not have a debate on every possible way in which we can find more American energy, American resources, American security, and use less foreign resources?

I noted on the floor on Monday that our national security is at extreme risk today. There is a historical precedent. When the Egyptians took over the Suez Canal, the British and French had a great amount of debt. We owned most of it. We were adamantly opposed to them attacking Egypt to bring back the Suez Canal under their control. We didn't fire the first shot against the French and English. Do you know what we told them? We said: If you do this, we are going to put your debt onto the market. We will wreck your economy. We will create inflation and create a decreased standard of living. So you dare not do this. Do you know what. They knew it would happen and that we would do that. Consequently, a war was averted.

Think now, with China owning a trillion dollars of our debt, and another trillion dollars in the Middle East. What happens if they don't like our foreign policy and they decide to dump our debt onto the market? How much national security do we have?

So the debate about energy is not just about the \$2,400 that is killing every American family, which represents the amount of money they are paying additionally this year that they didn't have to pay last year for energy. It is making them make choices they have never had to make before, making them make sacrifices they have never had to make before; and it is because of us, because we failed them, because we didn't solve this problem 15 years ago. But it also puts at risk the security—not just financial but the national security and freedom and liberty for them, their children, and the generations that follow.

So the idea that we would not utilize every potential resource America has to solve this energy crisis, the fact we will not be allowed and are not allowed to have a true debate with true amend-

ments that bring that forth to the American public, says we are highly dysfunctional, and that it is all about the next election, and it is never about the good and long-term interests of the country.

That has to stop in this body. It has to stop. It doesn't matter if it is a Democrat or a Republican. It has to stop for future generations of this country. We need to quit worrying about whether we get reelected and start working on what is in the best long-term interests of this country.

Finally, I want to make a comment about this. The majority leader filed cloture on a motion to proceed to a bill he calls—I don't remember what it is called. It is 8 percent of the bills we have passed by unanimous consent, which he wrapped up into one bill, and on which he is not going to allow amendments. Again, it is the same procedure. We are going to grow the Government, create 36 new programs, and spend \$11.3 billion. We are going to do that without the ability to amend those bills.

Half of those bills, I agree, we ought to do. What I don't agree with—which is part of the problem in terms of our future—is we should not get rid of the waste in the rest of the Federal Government so we are able to pay to do good things. Documented by the GAO, the Congressional Research Service, the various inspectors general, and the Congressional Budget Office is that we have \$300 billion worth of waste or fraud in the Federal Government every year. Now we are going to put a bill on the floor that is going to grow the Government more, and not one of them attacks any of that waste.

That is wrong procedurally, but let me tell you what is really wrong with it. It ignores the very process every family in this country has to go through. If they want to do something new, they don't have the ability to charge it to somebody else. They have to make a discernible, very careful calculation about what their priorities are, and they have to decide what they are going to give up if they are going to do something new. It is amazing to me that this body is so averse to getting rid of waste. I understand it, and I know what it is about. Politicians are averse to offending anybody. What we better have is politicians who are willing to offend this generation so that the next two generations can inhabit and receive and welcome the liberty our Founders intended for us to have.

So we are going to have \$11 billion on the floor sometime next week, and we are going to talk about subhuman primate transfer and the War of 1812 Commission, but we are not going to work to solve the energy problems of the people in this country. We are going to talk about doing things the CDC and the NIH already have the power to do, but it doesn't look good because we cannot have a press release or press conference and say we didn't do something for a lobbyist's special interest.

We are not going to create nuclear generation or go after the oil shale, and we are not going to go off the coast to find, in an environmentally friendly way, resources that will lessen that \$700 billion of our Treasury we ship out of the country every year. Instead, we are going to do things that politically look good. If you oppose them, you might politically look bad. But we are not going to address the real issues in front of the country, as a whole.

It is an amazement to me that when the figures were released, they reflected 9 percent of the people have confidence in the Senate. I wonder where those people are. If they are paying attention to this place, they could not have any confidence in it, because we are not addressing the real issues that are, in fact, impacting America today, American families today but, more importantly, national security today and tomorrow, and the wealth, health, and well-being of future generations.

When I heard the majority leader today say he had, in fact, made an offer to where we could offer amendments of any type on the Energy bill, I felt sorry for him, because what happened is he put himself in a hole because of politics. You see, there is a group of people in this country—and they are in the minority now—who don't think we ought to drill anywhere; that we should not explore on land or off land; that we should not use coal at all, even if we can do it cleanly; and that we should not expand wind or solar. And to address that political component, the majority leader has put himself in a box. He won't be hurt by it. He has the toughest job in this body, so my hat is off to him because it is difficult. Who is going to be hurt is every American. Every American. The stubborn resistance to not allow amendments to allow us to get rid of this \$700 billion we are paying out, to create a transformed platform where we can become at least somewhat more energy independent, that we, in fact, lower the risk for our national security through some increased energy independence, is a tragedy we will all pay a great deal for.

It is time for a rethink in this country. It is time for a rethink in this body. It is time for the partisanship to go out. It is time to think not about our next election, not about who is going to be President, not how you position a political party, but how in fact you do the work the American people need us to do to secure their future, and do it in a way that says I am willing to give up my Senate seat to do what is best for this country in the long run. Anything less than that from us is cowardice.

I will paraphrase Martin Luther King, when he talked about how people make decisions. He said vanity asks the question, "Is it popular?" Cowardice asks the question, "Is it expedient?" But conscience asks the question, "Is it right?"

We are asking the wrong questions in this body. We are putting the wrong questions before the American people. We need to get back to conscience—not expediency, not vanity, and not popularity. We need to be about the country's business. My great regret is we are about politicians' business and not about this country's business.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CARDIN). The Senator from Alabama is recognized.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I express my deep appreciation to Senator COBURN. I believe that is one of the most important speeches I have heard in the 12 years I have been in this Senate. We are going to have a test. This body will be tested in the days to come, it appears, because some Members who run the railroad are unhappy that one Member of this Senate—the hardest working Member of the Senate and one of the most intelligent Members of the Senate and one of the most principled Members of the Senate—has an odd view about legislation.

Senator COBURN believes we ought to read legislation and, if there is something wrong with it, before we pass it, we should try to fix it. He believes we are spending too much money—and we are.

I will note that, according to the conservative way of figuring debt, last year our deficit was \$177 billion. Already this year, we have done a \$150 billion stimulus package. We have done other things. The economy is slowing down. Our deficit this fiscal year, ending September 30, is likely to be \$450 billion, maybe \$500 billion. If you figure it another way, it can be another \$150 billion more.

So isn't it good that we have a Senator who will stand up here and fight to try to contain the recklessness we have ongoing in this body? He would actually read legislation and spot the weaknesses because I have watched him. I don't know how he possibly has the time to do all that he does. And it is for America.

One of the oddest things about this body I have observed—and I have been one, on occasion, to hold legislation also and object to certain parts in it. I am sure Senator COBURN has seen this. If you object to something because it adversely affects Oklahoma or Alabama or Tennessee, some special interest in your State, why, that is fine. That is quite acceptable. Every Senator has to protect their own special interest in their State. That is why you are here. But if you actually protest a piece of legislation because it is bad policy, because it does not further America's legitimate national interest, because it dumps wealth and debt on our grandchildren, then that is ridiculous. What is the matter? You are just a crank. You are just trying to slow down the machine. You are stopping the train.

I am telling you, this is a big deal that is coming up. This body is famous

for unlimited debate. On a number of pieces of legislation they will ask the question—the majority leader and others frequently ask a question, and this is what they say: I ask unanimous consent that this piece of legislation pass—maybe 100, 200, 500 pages—without an amendment, without any debate, and we go straight to a vote and just pass it.

How many Members of this body actually read it? Very few, if any. Senator COBURN tries to read them. He tries to analyze them. He does the right thing that every Senator should do. If he sees something that needs to be debated or corrected, he objects because he is not ready to consent. Isn't that fundamentally it? He is not prepared to consent because he thinks there is something bad in it for America. He is one of the most principled people I know in committing to what is best for America—not just Oklahoma but for America.

So the majority leader has gotten his back up. He just wants all these bills to go through, and he doesn't want to have them brought up.

Senator COBURN has repeatedly improved pieces of legislation. I hope if we proceed with this debate—and I don't know if Senator COBURN possibly has time—but I would like to see brought out on the floor of this Senate some of the corrections and improvements to hundreds of pieces of legislation that he has achieved by standing up and saying: I am not going to consent until you fix this problem. You know it is bad, go on and agree to it. And frequently they will agree. They will say politics made us do it. We really didn't favor that anyway, TOM. But maybe if it is the only way we can pass it, we will just do it and do the right thing. So legislation is improved time and time and time again as a result of his work.

I know with regard to this African AIDS piece of legislation, I met with a group from Africa—a grandmother whose daughter died from AIDS and who had her grandchild with her who has AIDS—and they objected to several different things in that bill. They said they would rather have no bill than if we pass it the way it was originally written.

Senator COBURN—Dr. COBURN—understands this, and he put his foot down. He made them improve that bill before he would agree to have it come up for a vote or support it, which he did eventually.

I am just saying the good government crowd is being spun around, and many in the media are being spun around that good government is on the side of those who don't like people who put holds on legislation. I would say it is crystal clear that anybody who loves this country, who worries about reckless spending, who wants integrity in government should be on the side of a Senator who will stand up and read the legislation, who is prepared to come to the floor and debate the problems he

sees in it, and who will offer amendments to make it better. That is what a Senator ought to do.

That is what this Senate should be. It will be a dark day, it will be a day of shame in this Senate if we cobble all these pieces of legislation together and ram it through without any opportunity to amend it. That is what the plan is, as I understand it, to just cobble up 36 pieces of legislation that people have concerns about and just file for cloture, shut off debate, and pass them all. That is not good policy. It will be a dark day for this Senate.

I am so proud I had the opportunity to be here and hear Senator COBURN's speech. He is doing the right thing for this country. I am proud of him and I will be supporting him and I think a lot of others will too.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I would like to thank the Senator for his remarks. I stayed also to hear Senator COBURN, and I am glad I did. It was an important speech for this body in a whole variety of ways.

The Senator from Alabama spoke about one of the ways, but another way is that he reminded us that we are here not to advance our own political interests. I don't think most of us feel as if we are. We come here from a variety of different directions. For most of us, it is an accident we are here. We don't take ourselves all that seriously. We know it is just a set of circumstances that put us here, and we work hard. I think most of us get up every day hoping by the end of the day that we will think of something constructive to do that will help the country. But the functioning of the Senate has failed us in our ability to do that.

I have tried to put my finger on it over the last 6 years. I am not sure I have all the answers. I came here 40 years ago, with Howard Baker, in 1967. I was very young, just out of law school, and I watched things. It is never very easy—in a big complex country like this—to resolve things, and so many of the tougher issues get thrown here. We are supposed to have big issues and fierce debates and big arguments and differences of opinion. That is what we are for. But the tradition has always been that when they come here, we not only bring them up and discuss them, but we resolve them; that we come to some conclusion. That is a part of what Senator COBURN says as well.

We are not able to do that when the structure of the Senate keeps us for 9 days, as an example, from dealing with the single most important issue facing our country—high gas prices.

Senator COBURN spoke about another equally important issue to our country—our fiscal condition in the country. So we need to think about what we need to do to change the structure of our Senate. I know many on the other side must feel the same way. I served

with some of them when we were Governors and we were of different parties. I know they are well intentioned. We have our private conversations. We all express to each other our disappointment that we are not able to focus on a major issue and show respect for our opinions and then come to a result. We must do that.

Our country faces many serious challenges. The fiscal condition of our country has to be dealt with in the next 6 years. It has to be dealt with. The challenge of energy independence has to be dealt with. Our health care system has to be dealt with. We can't do that with a dysfunctional Senate. We simply can't do that. So we need to dedicate ourselves to working across party lines and to putting the country first and partisan considerations second.

I think most of us would rather do that. But there are a few here who prevent that, and perhaps we just need to overcome it. Maybe we are spending all our spare time in too many partisan meetings. Maybe we need to spend more together.

But I stayed to listen to Senator COBURN because I respect him. There are very few Senators who are more valuable in our Senate than he. He is obviously here not for some partisan purpose. He has a sense of purpose about our country and about our Senate. I commend him for it, and I am glad I had the privilege of hearing him speak this afternoon.

I thank the Chair.

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, 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. HATCH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

The Senator from Utah is recognized.

LIHEAP

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I have been watching the debate over the intervening time this week and, frankly, I am appalled that we cannot address energy prices at this time, because we cannot get together from a bipartisan standpoint.

Today the Senate voted on a motion to proceed to S. 3186, a bill to provide funding for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program, or what is commonly referred to as LIHEAP. I have a long history of supporting the LIHEAP program and have voted for almost every increase in the program that has been proposed in Congress. But today's vote is different. It is not a vote about making sure our low-income citizens have the heating and cooling assistance they need, because they already do under the existing program. There is \$100 million still left in the program. Most of that money was

for heating last winter, but we had that much left over.

So what is the emergency here? On top of the existing surplus in the program, the program will also be fully funded for the coming winter when we pass a continuing resolution which will keep all the Government programs running at the level they were funded at last year. So let's not pretend the LIHEAP program is not in place or that it will not be funded for the coming year.

As you well know, each year the Congress appropriates the Government funding needs through 13 appropriations bills. Each bill is handled by separate subcommittees of the full Senate Committee on Appropriations. I applaud the Appropriations Committee and its subcommittees because they have done a good job of preparing and marking up their various appropriation bills.

But there is one problem. Our majority leader has announced we will not be passing any of these bills this year. Instead, we will be passing a continuing resolution that I referred to. Why this announcement? Why can't we pass any appropriations bills this year? There is still plenty of time. I can tell you that Republicans have many amendments prepared for those bills that would allow our Nation to produce more domestic oil. But the anti-oil extremists calling the shots in the Democratic Party cannot allow votes on finding more oil because they know those votes would succeed. That is what this is all about here. That is why we have had a very difficult time and have had to vote against cloture.

If we could do what is normally done in this great legislative body, and that is bring up our amendments and vote them up or down or move to table them if they want to, we could get this matter over in a very short period of time. But our friends on the other side know it would be a considerably different bill than the Band-Aid bill they have had on the floor, the speculation bill.

We need a comprehensive approach to it and, as Members on both sides, we need to vote on these important amendments.

Unfortunately for the Democratic Party, the poor are beginning to wake up that the liberals who they have always looked to are behind the war on the poor. By the "war on the poor," I refer to the movement by the extremists to close off every good domestic oil resource, which is the direct cause of the high energy prices we Americans face. We have heard of the \$700 billion we are spending overseas when we have oil right here in America that would alleviate this type of expenditure and keep the money home.

Democrats have begun to recognize the position they are in and are trying to have it both ways with today's vote.

Earlier this month a group of protesters came to Capitol Hill, calling on Congress to stop the war on the poor—some of that is obscured by signs, by