

It is little known that Bill has served on both sides of the aisle, working not only for Chairmen Cranston and Rockefeller, and now myself, but also working for Chairman Alan Simpson, my Republican colleague from Wyoming. In 1980, when the Democrats entered the minority, Bill remained a majority staff member under Chairman Simpson for 9 months before returning to Ranking Member Cranston's staff.

I congratulate Bill for his service and tell him that I am grateful for that, and to thank him for his 20 years of dedicated and faithful service to the Senate and to our Nation's veterans.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Missouri.

ENDING THE GAS PRICE CRISIS

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I am here today to point out what I believe everybody in this body knows, certainly everybody back in the heartland, where the occupant of the chair and I live: America is suffering a gas price crisis. I regret to tell the people back home that the Senate is in a crisis of its own.

It appears that Democrats are desperate to deny real gas price relief. They are apparently united behind the misguided policy of the presumptive Democratic nominee for President who says: Don't provide any new sources of supply. They are doing anything they can to block the one real solution to this gas price.

Opening new offshore drilling will bring suffering American families 18 billion barrels of new oil supplies. News of America's commitment to new supplies will drive prices down immediately. We saw with the suggestion that we would be opening offshore when the President lifted the Executive moratorium on offshore drilling, that the prices came down immediately \$10 and then came down roughly \$20 because the price of oil today is influenced by the long-term judgment of what the price will be in the future.

Airlines, trucking companies, and others have to go out in the futures market to buy the oil they need in the future. Those who bought futures contracts at \$90 turned out to be prescient. They saved money from the \$145 a barrel oil we see today. But right now there are too many hedgers, too many investors, and, yes, even some speculators, too many investors, including the Public Employee Retirement Systems of California, and of local governments that are saying: Hey, if we don't open oil supplies, we are going to see that \$145 a barrel oil go to \$175 and \$200 and \$250.

Regrettably, if the policy of the Democrats being acted on in the Senate today holds, we will see those oil prices going above \$200 a barrel and over \$5 at the gas pump. The Democrats, in lockstep with their Presidential nominee, are doing anything they can to block the one real solution: News of America's commitment to new

supplies and oil will drive down the prices immediately. New supplies, 10 years' worth in the case of offshore reserves, will drive prices lower for years to come.

Some may say it will take a long time to bring it on line. That is what President Clinton said in 1995 when he vetoed the authorization to open ANWR, which could have been producing a million barrels of oil a day. He said it wouldn't happen for 10 years. Well, it is now 13 years past that veto. We surely could use that additional million barrels of oil a day.

The Democratic leader, when it comes to lowering gas prices with new offshore supplies, says: "No, we can't." Actually, in the case of the Senate Democrats, it is "No, we won't," reflecting the views of their Presidential nominee.

Earlier this month, I tried to join with my colleagues to repeal the legislative moratorium preventing new offshore drilling off our Atlantic and Pacific coasts. With the high gas prices facing our families, it is time to end the offshore drilling ban included each year on the annual appropriations bill for the Department of the Interior.

Much to my surprise and regret, the Democratic leadership canceled the planned business meeting to consider and write the Interior appropriations bill. We thought we would succeed. We thought people would understand that bringing gas price relief to America's families by reversing the current ban on offshore drilling could meet the cry from our people back home to do something about the price of gas. But the Democratic leadership canceled the meeting to prevent the will of the people through their Senators from being heard.

Now we have confirmation. We have seen a statement from the Appropriations Committee that the Democrats thought they would lose the vote and fail in their attempt to keep new oil supplies from the American people. It came from the Appropriations Committee itself saying they did not want to see the offshore opened for drilling. That is not the way this body is supposed to work.

We disagree with a lot of things, but we at least ought to come to the floor and have a vote. Those who are for it and those who are against it, let them take their stand in public and let the people judge.

Now we are on the floor of the Senate trying to move to a bill supposedly on energy. We have asked for a debate and a vote on measures in addition to their measure on speculation, because speculation is a small part. What we need to do is get more supplies.

The plan of Republican Senators and our presumptive nominee for President, the Senator from Arizona, is to enact additional measures that will lower gas prices through additional supplies from offshore oil reserves, tap billions of barrels of oil in Rocky Mountain oil shale deposits, provide

clean nuclear-powered electricity that can drive our next generation of hybrid cars and trucks, and give financial help to jump-start our U.S. manufacturing supply base for hybrid car batteries to bring their prices down and put people in America to work.

But now the Democratic leadership has gone back on this offer. They have reneged on this offer. It is like Lucy with the football. The American people, we feel like Charlie Brown and the football is lowering gas prices. They are offering to let Charlie Brown kick the football to get a vote on opening offshore oil reserves and see if he can score a goal for lower gas prices. But, wait, the leadership of the Democratic Party on this floor has yanked the oil supply football away, only to let the American people swing and miss. The Democratic leadership apparently instead wants to move the goalposts back to pay for new wind and solar incentives.

I support wind and solar incentives. The whole Senate voted for wind and solar incentives earlier this year, adopting an amendment by over 80 votes. How many times do you have to do that? But the Democrats yanked the football away as well. They added new taxes to that measure. I guess they figured something so popular would be a good opportunity to raise taxes. That seems to be the policy of their nominee for President.

I can tell you that the people of Missouri do not want higher taxes. They do not want us to make it harder to find and produce oil. More wind and solar power is not going to get gas prices down now or anytime in the future. Not a single trucker in Missouri will pay less for diesel because we pass a bill for wind power. Not a single Missouri family will suffer less pain at the pump because we pass a bill for solar power. Not a single farmer will pay less to run his tractors or less to send his produce to market.

The only real thing that will work to get gas prices down is fundamental—more oil supplies to scare away the speculators and meet the demand.

Missouri does not need more hot air from the Democrats. Energy summits where Washington politicians talk about how much they claim they care about families will not get the gas prices down. And yet, the Senator from Illinois, the Democratic presumptive nominee for President, was in Missouri, and he had a solution for the gas price crisis. He said we need to keep our tires fully inflated.

I agree with keeping our tires fully inflated. I am told by the studies of the Department of Transportation that can save 6 to 12 gallons of gasoline a year. So please keep your tires inflated. But suggestions to inflate our tires fully are not going to make a significant difference in the gas price.

America deserves more than Democratic hot air. Here it is hot air to inflate our tires. On the floor of the Senate, it is hot air to tell us everything

else but increasing supplies may have an impact.

America deserves real action with real solutions. We should not abandon the American people to this gas price crisis. We need to move back to the bill on speculation and include amendments that will bring real gas price relief.

I have an amendment, No. 5121, to open 18 million barrels of oil reserves off our Atlantic and Pacific coasts—10 years of new oil supplies for the American people.

My amendment would also authorize more than \$1 billion a year to jumpstart a U.S. manufacturing supply base for hybrid car and truck batteries. Funding would go to hybrid battery research and development, battery manufacturing equipment and capabilities, and re-equipping, expanding, and establishing U.S. domestic manufacturing facilities or hybrid vehicle batteries.

Why do we need it? We need it to get the supply of batteries. I have visited factories in Missouri where they are producing battery-powered cars, hybrid cars, such as the Ford Escape, the Claycomo plant. General Motors is working on these products. These are tremendous gas savers. We need to move to more plug-in vehicles.

In my hometown of New Mexico, MO, my good friend who sells modified golf carts is selling street-ready vehicles now, and they are popular. We can have full-size vehicles if we have the batteries to power them. But most of those batteries are being made in Asia, and American car manufacturers get second call. We need to have those batteries manufactured in America to supply our automobile industry.

This amendment would force gas prices down, find more oil and use less. The amendment would provide new oil supplies and new sources of oil conservation. But the Democratic leadership doing the will of the Senator from Illinois, the presumptive Democratic nominee, is blocking consideration of this amendment and all amendments.

As I said before, this is very disappointing to me, to the people of Missouri, and to the people of America. Missouri and America deserve more than half measures that will only produce a few days or months more of oil supplies. We deserve more than the Senate attempting to abandon them in the gas price crisis by moving on to other issues.

Missouri and America deserve real action now to lower gas prices. That means new offshore supplies to get prices down. That is the position the Republican Senators and the Republican Senator from Arizona, our nominee for President, are pushing for: new offshore oil supplies for American families, new offshore supplies for our farmers, new offshore supplies for our truckers. That is the only real hope for gas price relief.

I beg the Senate leadership to let us move now. Failure to do so will assure the American people that they will go

another month while we are out of session and have done nothing but talk hot air and suggest putting hot air into car tires.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Senator MARTINEZ, the Senator from Florida, Senator GREGG, the Senator from New Hampshire, and I be allowed to engage in a colloquy.

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

Mr. CORNYN. I thank the Chair.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Let me interrupt the Senator from Texas for a moment. There are less than 8 minutes remaining in morning business.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I was under the impression there was a longer period of time. May I ask what the order of business is following the expiration of morning business?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Thirty minutes of debate controlled by the minority on the motion to proceed to the Defense bill.

Mr. CORNYN. I thank the Chair.

Mr. President, we are going to have a vote on the motion to proceed to the Defense authorization bill. The distinguished occupant of the chair, myself, and Senator MARTINEZ all sit on the Armed Services Committee. We know how important this legislation is. I have every confidence that we will ultimately—at least I sure hope—get to and pass a Defense authorization bill.

I will point out that for the last 2 weeks, we have had a series of attempts by the majority to get us off the single most important issue facing the country today, and that is high energy prices, particularly high gasoline prices. My expectation is that this attempt, which will now make this No. 7 instead of 6, will fail as well because on this side of the aisle we believe we should not leave here, we should not adjourn for the August recess without addressing this pressing issue.

It touches everybody in the country, rich or poor, regardless of circumstances in life. It is also driving up the price of food and threatening inflation which is going to threaten our economy regardless of what we do on housing and the subprime mortgage crisis.

I ask the distinguished Senator from New Hampshire if he has some thoughts about what we ought to be doing between now and the time we adjourn for the August recess.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Texas. I wanted to join with him today in addressing this issue because at least in New Hampshire—and I suspect it is true in Texas, too, even though maybe in a different way—the No. 1 issue on the minds of the people is the cost of energy. They are concerned about it when they fill up their car with gasoline, but they are

even more concerned about it heading into the winter.

People in New Hampshire anticipate winters. We know it is coming. There is not much we can do about it. It is coming. We also know that 60 to 70 percent of the homes in New Hampshire—maybe more—are heated by oil. The price of oil that has to be put in the tanks in order to heat homes has doubled or tripled. A lot of families in New Hampshire, low-income families, but also moderate income families, are going to be extraordinarily stressed to try to meet that energy need and the price of that energy.

There are a lot of things that you can maybe do to change your lifestyle. You can maybe drive a little less. Maybe you can take a bus; not so much in New Hampshire because there are not a lot of city areas that have bus districts, although we do have some. But you can adjust your driving. You can downsize your car so you use less gasoline. But if you have a home and you have a family, there is nothing you can do about it. You have to heat that home. You have to stay warm in the winter when the temperature is at zero or even minus degrees and the wind chill is certainly at minus degrees. To do that takes a lot of energy and takes oil. So people are scared. They are scared about how they are going to heat their homes.

I believe my No. 1 responsibility as their representative in Washington is try to do something about bringing down the price of that energy. How do we do that? In my opinion, we do it by at least voting in the Senate on the issue of expanding our supply in the United States, with American energy, while also conserving more. Yet we have been blocked now. As the Senator from Texas points out, this will be the seventh time the Democratic Party and the Democratic leadership has tried to move the Congress and the Senate off the issue of trying to bring down oil prices, bring down gasoline prices by expanding American sources and American production by allowing us to drill offshore, by allowing us to use oil shale, by allowing us to expand nuclear power, by allowing us to put an effort into the development of electric cars, by doing a whole series of things.

Seven times now the Democratic leadership here has said, no, they do not want to hear about this. They want to talk about issues that are important, but they are nowhere near the importance, at least to my constituents, of what it costs them to fill up their gasoline tanks and what it is going to cost them to fill up their oil tanks this winter.

I cannot think of a higher priority as a Congress than to take up this Energy bill and have some votes on these very important issues of whether we open more drilling offshore, whether we use more oil shale, whether we expand our efforts to try to bring online nuclear powerplants, whether we continue our efforts to try to expand electric cars.

The Senator from Texas hit the nail on the head. We need to act on these issues, and we should stop this obfuscation which is occurring on the other side of the aisle on this issue. We should get to the essence of the issue, which is produce more American energy.

Mr. CORNYN. I appreciate the Senator from New Hampshire addressing that issue. I have always been amazed that those who say we ought to do something to help poor people who need help with their heating oil are the same folks who seem to be the most resistant to opening America's reserves of natural resources which would have the effect of bringing down oil prices for everybody. It seems to me that would be one of the most commonsense things we could do.

Mr. GREGG. The Senator makes a truly excellent point. If we want to address the fear low-income people have about the cost of their energy to heat their home, bring down the cost of energy. Address the systematic problem.

LIHEAP is an important program. It is a critical program for us in New England. But it is the bandaid. It is not going to the symptom. The symptom is the price of the energy, so that is why we need to vote on it.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. If the Senator will suspend, morning business is closed.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2009—MOTION TO PROCEED

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to S. 3001, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 732, S. 3001, a bill to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2009 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the time until 12:30 shall be divided in alternating 30-minute blocks of time, with Republicans controlling the first block.

ENERGY

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask if you would please notify us when 10 minutes remain in our time so the Senator from Georgia can take the floor. We would like to continue with the colloquy.

I know the Senator from Florida, Senator MARTINEZ, is here. I know offshore drilling has been somewhat controversial in his State. I would like him to address that. But I would also

like him to help us understand the bigger picture, and that is why the majority leader, who controls the agenda on the floor of the Senate, a Member of the other party, refuses to allow us to vote. I know Senator OBAMA has adamantly opposed any additional offshore exploration and production. One conclusion I guess you might draw is that the majority leader, by refusing an opportunity for Senators to vote, is somehow protecting the Presidential nominee, the presumptive Presidential nominee, from perhaps an embarrassing split in his own political party.

I wonder if the Senator has any comments.

Mr. MARTINEZ. I am happy to comment on the situation in Florida and also what I think is an observation you made accurately in the larger political climate. They are related. The State of Florida has jealously guarded its offshore resources because we have a tremendous tourism economy, as does Texas in some parts of the State. However, \$4 for a gallon of gas has caused a transformation in thinking. It has allowed us to see more clearly what is occurring. What is occurring to our Nation is not just that the people, the families, American families, are hurting at the pump when they go pump gas. Fortunately in Florida our winters are mild, but I understand the situation in New Hampshire and other cold States that is going to be coming up. This is hurting families. This is a problem to the American family, particularly those on fixed income, many of whom live in Florida.

The problem becomes more acute because this also merges into our national defense, into our security as a nation. When the Persian Gulf war took place, Alaska increased its production of oil, and at that time they were producing at a capacity of 2.1 million barrels a day. Today they are only producing 700,000 barrels a day because the supply of oil in Alaska is dwindling because we are not allowed to develop additional resources there.

What is occurring, essentially, is that the domestic supply of oil is ever decreasing, our percentage of dependence on foreign sources is ever increasing, while at the same time the price is going through the roof. It is a supply-and-demand problem that cries out for a solution.

What has occurred? My own transformation has been that while I was adamantly opposed to any form of drilling, my own Governor took a forward-thinking position and decided maybe the time had come for us to reconsider and think a little differently about it. We still want to protect our coastline. We still want to protect our beaches. But at the same time, we have to recognize a new reality. That new reality requires us to adapt to the current circumstances. We are transferring wealth to the extent of \$700 billion a year to foreign sources. It is unsustainable over a long period of time. America will be squandering its

wealth purely to satisfy our demand for oil.

Surely we have to do other things about renewables. We have to do all that. But at the end of the day, we have to do more on our own resources to produce more oil from America's soil.

What has occurred is, in fact, the presumptive nominee of the Democratic Party and the presumptive nominee of the Republican Party have taken divergent points of view. Senator MCCAIN, changing his position much as I have, has said: Times have changed. We have to drill in the offshore. Senator OBAMA remains stuck in the past. He is not for change. He is against change when it comes to taking care of America's oil resources. I believe what we are following is the dictates of higher powers. At the same time, the business of the Senate has ground to a halt. We have not been able to accomplish much because we have not been allowed to have the thorough debate we need to have on this very important issue.

When I hear from Floridians today, they want us to move the business of Government, but they most of all want us to solve this problem. They do not want us to put it aside. They know they are hurting.

They also realize, by the way, this is no panacea. We have no magic wand we can wave and lower prices tomorrow, but we can begin a trend that is going to trend in the downward direction if we begin to do something about opening America's resources to more drilling.

Mr. CORNYN. I appreciate the comments of the Senator from Florida. In the real world, when the facts change, people are free to change their mind.

Mr. MARTINEZ. That is right.

Mr. CORNYN. I think \$4 gasoline and \$140-plus for a barrel of oil have caused a lot of people to rethink their prior positions. Gasoline was \$2.33 when the Democrats took control of Congress in early 2007 but now is hovering around \$4 a gallon, and I think it is only reasonable that people will reassess their decisionmaking. Indeed, I think we have seen that happen with the American people, if you look at public opinion polls, shifting to overwhelming support for exploration and production from the Outer Continental Shelf.

I say to the Senator from New Hampshire, I know, as the Senator from Florida said, more oil is going to be a transitional step on our part because production globally is declining. Yet demand, especially from huge economies such as China and India, is going up. I know the Senator from New Hampshire is a big proponent of clean nuclear power. I wonder if he can comment on what he sees this transition looking like, in terms of starting with more American production but with conservation, with renewable energy, and developing nuclear power.

Mr. GREGG. The Senator from Texas has been one of the best advocates on the floor for balance, which is what we