

promote the use of natural gas as a realistic alternative for the many Americans who were looking for price relief, which is about everybody. The bill I introduced was called the Drive America on Natural Gas Act.

A year later, I am encouraged to see that several Members on Capitol Hill have introduced similar bills promoting the use of natural gas and propane as transportation fuel. Last summer, I joined with Senator PRYOR to once again introduce a comprehensive bill to promote these fuels for America's drivers. Additionally, majority leader HARRY REID recently announced his firm support for natural gas vehicles and hopes to bring a standalone bill to the floor in the near future. I welcome the majority leader's support and encourage him to make this a priority for floor consideration.

One of the major components of my Drive America on Natural Gas Act addressed a desperate need to overhaul the EPA emissions certification process which effectively prohibits the ability of nearly all car owners the option to legally convert cars to bifuel operation. Bifuel is a car that can run on natural gas and via the flip of a switch go to gasoline. Now, why? With certification and emissions testing expenses ranging between \$50,000 and \$150,000 per conversion system type, the costs are prohibitive for the aftermarket conversion system manufacturers to produce these systems for more than just a handful of different vehicle models each year. These heavy costs are ultimately borne by the consumer. Due to the rigidity and the cost constraints of these regulations, the EPA has issued less than 300 certificates over the past 8 years—that is 300 certificates over the past 8 years.

This is a solution to the high price and the fluctuating price of automobile gas. Now, oftentimes the vehicle models eligible for conversion are only sold for a short period of time since the certification lasts less than a year before a conversion system manufacturer must decide it will rectify that particular system.

Today, I am pleased to join Senator WICKER, Congressman DAN BOREN from my State of Oklahoma, and Congressman HEATH SHULER to introduce bipartisan, bicameral legislation to simplify and streamline the EPA emission certification process for aftermarket conversion systems.

The Streamline Alternative Fuel Vehicle Conversions Act makes critical changes in five key ways so that vehicle conversions can become a commonplace option for all Americans:

First, our bill eliminates the need for subsequent yearly recertification systems that have already been certified. I might add that the EPA is a friend in this effort. They want these changes to take place as much as we do, but they are not able to do this right now. Under the current law, you have to get recertified, so we eliminate that problem.

Secondly, the legislation directs the EPA to establish criteria that would

cover several different yet similar makes and models under a single certification conformity.

Here is the problem. We have an organization in Tulsa that has a conversion system where they can actually change the fuel and refuel and they can change conversions into automobiles. The problem is, the way the law is today you have to get paid for this conversion each time. It might be the same engine that has already been converted before, but if it is in a different model, you have to convert it again. This is something we are going to be changing.

The third thing we change is to instruct the EPA to allow the submissions of previously tested data if a vehicle or the conversion system has not changed in a way which would affect compliance—very similar to the last problem, but nonetheless it is in the current law.

The fourth thing we would do is direct the EPA to promulgate regulations to help conversion system manufacturers comply with potentially different onboard diagnostics—which is called OBD—requirements and compatibility. Since 1996, these onboard diagnostics systems have been required in all light-duty cars and trucks to monitor engine and emission components.

Finally, we clarify the treatment of vehicles which are beyond their useful life as defined by the EPA. These older vehicles, typically those that are at least 10 years old and have at least 125,000 miles, are by default regulated under the Clean Air Act's tampering provision, causing regulatory uncertainty. Our legislation would allow the conversion of these vehicles as long as the conversion system manufacturer for the converter is able to demonstrate that the emissions would not degrade due to conversion.

Over the past several months, this legislation has been through numerous drafting reiterations with the assistance of the Natural Gas Vehicles of America, the National Propane Gas Association, and the Environmental Protection Agency. As I said before, they have been very helpful to us. I especially thank the EPA for their input and assistance in helping us craft a bill which will aid the agency in their efforts to streamline their compliance. They actually want to streamline. This is not normally the case.

I am also encouraged by EPA's internal efforts to reform the process, and I am pleased that our bill will complement and enhance their actions.

By simplifying this compliance process, the Streamline Alternative Fuel Vehicle Conversion Act will not only incentivize conversion system manufacturers to offer more systems for additional vehicle makes and models but will eventually reduce the cost of these conversion systems for interested car owners, perhaps by hundreds or even thousands of dollars.

Ultimately, the legislation will allow Americans to choose whether propane-

or natural-gas powered vehicles are right for their own individual and business needs while simultaneously preserving the country's stringent emission standards.

The promise of natural gas and propane as mainstream transportation fuels is achievable today—not 20 years from now or 25 years from now but today. It is something no one should be against. Stop and think about it. I know the price of gas is down to \$3. In my State of Oklahoma, it is down to around \$2 a gallon. But today's price for natural gas, a comparable gallon would be 90 cents, and that is one that would be stabilized. When we stop and think about the reserves that are out there in natural gas, what we can do and what is available for us today, it can only get better.

Hopefully, this bill will pass. I am very proud of the bipartisan support, the bicameral support. I encourage our colleagues to get involved in this very logical response to the high price of motor fuel.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. REID. Mr. President, are we now in a period of morning business?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Yes, we are.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2010—CONFERENCE REPORT

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of the conference report to accompany H.R. 2647, the Department of Defense Authorization Act.

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

The report will be stated.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The committee of conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 2647), to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2010 for military activities of the Department of Defense, to prescribe military personnel strengths for fiscal year 2010, and for other purposes, having met, have agreed that the House recede from its disagreement to the amendment of the Senate and agree to the same with an amendment and the Senate agree to the same, signed by a majority of the conferees on the part of both Houses.

(The conference report is printed in the House proceedings of the RECORD of October 7, 2009.)

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. REID. I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The cloture motion having been

presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, hereby move to bring to a close debate on the Conference Report to accompany H.R. 2647, the Department of Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010.

Harry Reid, Ben Nelson, Benjamin L. Cardin, Byron L. Dorgan, Robert Menendez, Richard J. Durbin, Charles E. Schumer, Tom Harkin, Evan Bayh, Patrick J. Leahy, Jack Reed, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Roland W. Burris, Edward E. Kaufman, Paul G. Kirk, Jr., Barbara Boxer, Sheldon Whitehouse, Carl Levin.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum be waived.

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

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, with respect to the conference report accompanying H.R. 2647, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010, I certify that the information required by rule XLIV of the Standing Rules of the Senate related to congressionally directed spending items has been identified in the joint statement of managers accompanying the conference report and that the required information has been available on a publicly accessible congressional Web site for more than 48 hours.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF WILLIAM K. SESSIONS III TO BE CHAIR OF THE UNITED STATES SENTENCING COMMISSION

Mr. REID. I now ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 132, the nomination of William Sessions, to be chairman of the United States Sentencing Commission.

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

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Nomination of William K. Sessions III, of Vermont, to be Chair of the United States Sentencing Commission.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. REID. I now send a cloture motion to the desk.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of Rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of William K. Sessions, III, of Vermont, to be Chair of the United States Sentencing Commission.

Patrick J. Leahy, Thomas R. Carper, Byron L. Dorgan, Tom Udall, Benjamin L. Cardin, Roland W. Burris, Al Franken, Tom Harkin, Jon Tester, Charles E. Schumer, Mark Begich, Frank R. Lautenberg, Daniel K. Akaka, Sherrod Brown, Bernard Sanders, Richard J. Durbin, Jack Reed.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum be waived and the Senate now resume legislative session.

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

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senate will resume legislative session.

(At the request of Mr. REID, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.)

VOTE EXPLANATION

• Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, I was necessarily absent for the vote on the conference report to accompany Homeland Security Appropriations Act, 2010, H.R. 2892. If I were able to attend today's session, I would have voted yes on the conference report.

THE RYAN WHITE HIV/AIDS TREATMENT EXTENSION ACT OF 2009

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I rise today to express my great appreciation to Senators HARKIN, DODD, and COBURN for working in a bipartisan manner to reauthorize the Ryan White HIV/AIDS program. I am also thankful to all of the members on the HELP Committee for their efforts to ensure that we passed this bill in a timely manner so that individuals receiving care under the Ryan White program would not see an interruption in their services.

This bill continues policies that seek to accomplish the goal of ensuring that Ryan White funding follows the patient. The bill, which will pass by unanimous consent, updates funding formulas and requires more accurate and reliable data reporting from the States, which will ensure that funds are allocated to the areas with the greatest need. It encourages aggressive testing strategies and establishes a national HIV/AIDS testing goal of 5 million tests per year. The bill also provides more flexibility to allow grantees to spend funds effectively.

Over the years we have seen a dramatic change in the geographic location of the HIV/AIDS epidemic from northern, metropolitan areas, to southern—and in many instances—rural areas. Today, more persons living with AIDS reside in the South than in any other area of the country. Of the 26,347 new HIV cases, 51.2 percent were diagnosed in the 17 Southern States and of the top 20 metropolitan areas with the highest AIDS case rates, 14 were in the

South. Thanks to the bipartisan efforts of the HELP Committee this reauthorization will ensure that funding is distributed in an equitable manner, reaching individuals with the greatest need.

The Ryan White program provides care for millions of Americans in need of medical care. Unfortunately we have also seen abuses, where these funds are misspent and patients do not receive the care they need. As the ranking member of the HELP Committee, I will continue to work to prevent these abuses and guarantee that funding is distributed to legitimate organizations that provide real services. It is a travesty that so many millions of dollars have been wasted due to poor oversight and corruption.

As Congress continues to authorize and provide funding for services under the Ryan White program, we must also commit to conduct proper oversight, so that these dollars actually reach the patients who need assistance, rather than being pocketed by criminals.

I close by again expressing my great appreciation to my colleagues for their hours of hard work and dedication to extend the Ryan White HIV/AIDS program. I also thank the HIV/AIDS community for their tireless efforts to provide care to individuals with HIV/AIDS. Many Americans with HIV/AIDS will continue to receive access to vital care because of the compassion and dedication of HIV/AIDS organizations receiving Ryan White dollars. Finally, I also thank my staff members Greg Dean, Chuck Clapton and Hayden Rhudy, as well as the staff members of Senator HARKIN's office, Connie Gardner and Jenelle Krishnamoorthy, for their hard work on this important bill.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

REMEMBERING CAROL TOMLINSON-KEASEY

• Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the memory of Dr. Carol Tomlinson-Keasey, a committed educator and administrator and the founding chancellor of University of California, Merced. Dr. Tomlinson-Keasey passed away on October 10th from complications related to breast cancer. She was 66 years old.

Dr. Carol Tomlinson-Keasey was born in Washington, DC, on October 15, 1942. The daughter of an Army officer, she moved around frequently before graduating from a high school in France. Dr. Tomlinson-Keasey received a bachelor's degree in political science from Penn State University, a master's in psychology from Iowa State University, and a Ph.D. in developmental psychology from University of California, Berkeley.

In 1977, Dr. Tomlinson-Keasey became an associate professor of psychology at the University of California, Riverside. During her 15-year tenure at UC Riverside, she earned faculty and