

Our amendment delays the effective date of that provision until tax years beginning after 2017.

Our amendment also increases penalties for taxpayers who fail to timely file partnership and S-corporation returns. These two provisions would allow Congress to provide additional incentives for home buyers and implement expanded NOL carryback relief for businesses. Both of these goals are big steps toward boosting our economy.

Our amendment, I believe, is the right approach. I urge my colleagues to support it. Let us respond to the concern that is foremost on Americans' minds, and that is jobs, that is the economy. Let us pass this legislation to help unemployed Americans and provide tax relief, and let us pass this legislation that will help Americans to get and keep good jobs.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

CAP-AND-TRADE

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I rise today to raise serious concerns with the cap-and-trade legislation which is currently in hearings in the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works.

The committee is holding its third hearing today on the bill that would presumably be coming to the floor of the Senate. One of the panels today is going to focus on the impact on transportation of the cap-and-trade bill. I think Members deserve to know the real costs and effects this bill will have on transportation. That is what I will talk about today.

Last week, Senator BOND and I unveiled a report that analyzed the fuel cost implications from the House bill that is making its way through the House. Our report forecasted a \$3.6 trillion gas tax on the American economy for the life of the program, which is 2015 through 2050.

At this time of economic uncertainty, with 15 million people out of work, just about every American is cutting back on spending. Do we really want to put a tax on energy and increase energy costs for families and small businesses at a time like this? I think the answer is obvious. The worst thing we could do to our struggling economy is to overburden it with new taxes and more regulations. But that is exactly what the cap-and-trade bill is doing, and that is exactly what is going through Congress right now.

This past weekend, we began to see what was in the Senate bill that is being proposed. It is even more stringent than the House bill. The legisla-

tion on the Senate side would impose a huge tax on business and levy a massive economic burden on all Americans.

For most Americans, gasoline is a mandatory expense, and raising the cost of it, of course, is going to strain working families, small businesses, farmers, ranchers, and our whole economy. Last year, when consumers experienced \$4 gasoline and \$5 diesel, it caused enormous hardships for Americans. Fortunately, those fuel prices were temporary. But under cap and trade, those high prices will be permanent—at least until 2050.

High fuel prices don't just impact our transportation expenses; we are actually hit twice because the gas tax raises the price of every good and service—groceries, clothes—that consumers must purchase in order to live.

Energy costs are, among our businesses, top operational expenses. Companies face a variety of energy expenses, ranging from heating and cooling their plants and facilities to powering equipment and lighting. In order for businesses to withstand this heavier tax burden and to remain viable, they will be forced to pass fuel costs on to consumers through higher prices.

Several industries will be more severely penalized by the gas tax than others.

Let's take trucking. The American trucking industry is a major target of the cap-and-trade gas tax. In 2007, 1.7 million drivers of tractor trailers logged 145 billion vehicle miles, consuming 28.5 billion gallons of fuel. That equates to an annual fuel cost per vehicle of \$34,560. That number will skyrocket under this cap-and-trade proposal that is going through Congress. When you consider that the average self-employed truckdriver earns only \$43,000 per year in net revenue, the gas tax represents an enormous new tax on working middle-class truckers.

Of course, truckers will not suffer those higher gas taxes alone. Their additional costs will be shared by every consumer in the increased price of everything they transport. At some point, nearly everything bought or sold must be shipped to a retailer. So the sweeping effect of the gas tax on every consumer, every person, every business—certainly the trucking industry but every other business—will harm our entire economy.

The pain doesn't stop with trucking. Our Nation's farmers and ranchers, who are tasked with producing high-quality goods for much of the world, will be irreparably harmed under the House's \$2 trillion tax on gasoline and \$1.3 trillion tax on diesel fuel. Gas and diesel fuel-powered equipment, ranging from tractors to combines to fertilizing systems, are the operational foundation of America's farms and ranches. Every extra penny they pay will be seen in the cost of goods and certainly the cost of food. Under the climate change legislation, they will face \$550 million in higher fuel costs in 2020.

Despite all of this pain we are going to see on our truckers, on our family farmers, and on every business, what good will it do? If there is a good side, let's look at it. It is supposed to be to help our environment. But even the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator admits that unless China and India impose similar Draconian taxes and regulations, there will be no effect on world temperatures. So what is the purpose of this increase in taxes and increase in costs every American will bear? Well, there is no improvement because it is certainly common sense to know that if we do this unilaterally in the United States and put this tax on our refineries, on our exploration companies that are trying to produce more energy for our economy at a cheaper price and environmentally safely, and if others around the world don't do it—put more caps on and more regulations—and they are spewing into the world much heavier carbon emissions than the United States does now—if they don't change and we do, it will still come to our country. So there will not be any effect on the global environment.

Under the bills going through today, trillion-dollar figures have been discussed so nonchalantly in Washington that it seems as if they are losing their shock value. Americans must know that \$3.6 trillion in gas taxes is a real number, and it is going to have a real effect on every American.

We can improve the environment and we can improve the economy.

One of the things that is not being discussed, as we are talking about putting more taxes on the industries that produce energy, the bread-and-butter energy of our economy, what isn't being discussed is nuclear power. Nuclear power has been shown time and again, where it is in place, that it is inexpensive, efficient, and it is environmentally safe. There is no carbon emission from a nuclear powerplant.

So why does the House bill not even address nuclear? Why are we not talking, in this administration, about nuclear power, which can be clean energy, efficient energy, and which has been proven to also have fewer consequences than once thought because the amount of nuclear waste has now been lowered to a huge extent and can be safely kept? And if we continue our research, we will probably be able to reuse the nuclear waste and put it back into more nuclear power. Why aren't we pursuing nuclear instead of just putting more taxes and regulations on the bread-and-butter energy that is produced in our country?

We need to reject the cap-and-trade bills that are going through Congress right now. We need to focus on environmental policies that will make a difference in our environment, that might make a difference in our global environment. But certainly unilateral regulations and taxes just on America has been absolutely proven not to make a difference in the global economy if no

other country adopts these Draconian measures, which they have all said they are not going to do.

While I stand ready to support clean energy technology, nuclear power, I could not possibly support a bill that is going to wreck our economy in a very precarious time and that will send jobs away from America at a time when we know we need to increase jobs in America. It will be sending American jobs overseas where it is easier to do business and where regulation is more stable.

Mr. President, what are we doing? What are we doing talking about more taxes and more regulations that will not impact the global environment? I hope that as these bills are vetted in committee, we will stop and say: Let's do something rational. Let's promote clean energy. Let's promote nuclear power. Let's don't hold back those who would be willing to make that investment and take that chance.

We should not pass cap and trade, which will tax and regulate our energy industry and it will not help the environment. That is a lose-lose proposition. I hope Congress and the majority in Congress will see that this is the wrong way and stop the cap-and-trade bill.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

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

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak in morning business for 15 minutes.

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

HEALTH CARE REFORM

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I rise to speak again about the issue that is the topic of the day for us in the Congress—independent of the question of Afghanistan and Iraq, which is our No. 1 concern—and that is the question of health care.

Today, the Speaker of the House and the Democratic leadership and membership of the House unveiled their plan. It is 2,000 pages long. They made the representation that, in some way, it wasn't going to increase the deficit. This is a bill that is going to cost between \$1 trillion and \$2 trillion over 10 years. The idea that it is not going to increase the deficit is so unbelievable just on its face that it doesn't even pass the laugh test. If you believe that, then maybe the Speaker of the House should sell you a bridge in Brooklyn—or even in Oakland, for that matter. That one doesn't work, by the way. The simple fact is, when you increase the size of the government by \$1 trillion or \$2 trillion, as this bill proposes to do by massively creating a massive new entitlement called a government-forced insurance plan, there is no way you are going to be able to cut Medicare enough, as it is proposed in this bill, or raise taxes enough, as it is proposed in this bill, to meet the cost of that pro-

gram. There is no way it is going to happen. So to claim that this won't add one dime to the deficit, as the President claimed he would not do when he spoke to the Congress, is just not believable.

Under this administration, we have seen a massive expansion in the debt of this Nation. They represent constantly that they just inherited this from the Bush administration. Yes, a fair amount of it did come over from the prior administration, but the budget they sent here, which has a trillion-dollar deficit every year for the next 10 years, isn't the Bush budget, it is their budget. The budget they sent over here, which raises the debt in this country from 40 percent of GDP to 80 percent, isn't the Bush budget, it is the Obama and Democratic budget.

The representation was that we would go out and spend almost \$1 trillion—\$800 billion—on a stimulus package, and that would create jobs. What it created was debt for our children.

The numbers are starting to come in now. It was represented in New Hampshire specifically, this administration said there would be 16,000 jobs created in New Hampshire by the stimulus package. Since the stimulus package has passed, we have lost 12,000 jobs in our State, and \$400 million has been spent in New Hampshire. The administration argues \$400 million created 3,000 jobs. They have to use some pretty creative accounting to get to those 3,000 jobs. Even if we give them the benefit of the doubt, that is over \$130,000 that it has cost Americans per job.

Did we have that money to spend? No. We sent the bill for that package to our children. We put it on their backs. In fact, almost 50 percent of that stimulus package is going to be spent after this recession is long over. It is going to be spent after the year 2011.

Chairman Bernanke, head of the Federal Reserve, said the recession was over. He said that about 2 weeks ago. Granted, the pain and suffering and the difficult economic times certainly are not over, and we do need to be concerned about that. But in 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, even in 2019, there will still be money being spent under that stimulus package, and all of it will have been borrowed, borrowed from our children, and they will have to pay it back.

Then we had the Cash for Clunkers Program which was allegedly going to be this great stimulus initiative. That has been looked at by an entirely independent group, edmunds.com, which is an automobile site on the Web. They tell you a car's value and give you an independent assessment of its qualities, pluses, and minuses. They took a look at that program. They said there were 690,000 vehicles sold during the Cash for Clunkers period. But they concluded—they are not conservative, they are not liberal, they are not moderate. They are just a professional group of people looking at what happens in the area of automobiles. They

concluded that only 125,000 of those cars would not have actually been purchased or sold by the dealer were the Cash for Clunkers Program not in place. In other words, the vast majority of cars would have been sold; they would have been bought under Edmunds' estimates.

So we spent about \$3 billion to buy 125,000 cars. That works out to \$24,000 per car. Who did that bill go to? That is going to our kids too.

Just in the last 2 weeks—well, almost every week around here we hear proposals to spend money and not pay for it. A week ago, somebody suggested from the administration that we should spend \$14.5 billion by sending \$250 to every Social Security recipient. Why did that come about? That came about because people were starting to realize senior citizens were getting a little upset with the fact that under the health care proposals that have been coming forward from the Finance Committee, from the Labor Committee, now from the House, that under these proposals Medicare was going to be significantly reduced. Seniors were going to lose their Medicare benefits so that a brandnew entitlement could be created which had nothing to do with seniors and be partially paid for with these reductions in Medicare payments.

In fact, if you are on Medicare Advantage, under the Finance Committee bill, you can forget it. That program is gone. There are a lot of seniors in this country who have Medicare Advantage. They like it. They think it is a good way to get health care. But the majority of the Medicare cuts come out of Medicare Advantage. Basically, they are wiping out that insurance benefit. Talk about losing your insurance. The President says nobody is going to lose their insurance today who has it; nobody is going to lose it.

Right on the face of it, when Medicare Advantage gets wiped out, every senior who has that is going to lose it. They are going to be moved over to the standard Medicare. And for what? To pay for a new program, a new entitlement program that has nothing to do with seniors and has nothing to do with making the Medicare system more solvent.

If we are going to reduce Medicare payments, and there are adjustments we need to make in the Medicare system, it should go toward making that system solvent. Why is that? Because the system is insolvent.

It is inconceivable that the White House would suggest that we should add \$14.5 billion of new spending to the Social Security Program, which is also going to be insolvent in a few years, because seniors were upset and they were realizing what was going to happen to them under Medicare. They wanted to sort of give them some walking-around money, the old Chicago way—walking-around money. If we give people money, maybe they will not be upset by things.