

fifth generation of fighters to challenge us. We find ourselves in a situation where we might be taking a backseat at a time when I think we can least afford it. This is not inexpensive to do this. Senator CHAMBLISS provided an offset in committee for the cost of continuing this program until 2014. That is an important consideration.

I respect the members of the committee who wrestle with these issues. I wished to share with my colleagues this information, and particularly what it means in a State such as mine that has an 80-year history of producing these terrific engines, and workers such as the two individuals I have introduced to you this evening, whose talents and abilities we will potentially lose as a result of this decision. It is one of great importance to our country, to our national security, and to the people who provide the wonderful skill sets that give us these remarkable engines.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia is recognized.

Mr. ISAKSON. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that I be recognized for up to 5 minutes and that Senator THUNE be recognized immediately thereafter.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. ISAKSON. Madam President, I rise to affirm everything the Senator from Connecticut said. He made an articulate, detailed case for the F-22, in opposition to the amendment. I commend him.

I wish to add three thoughts, three good reasons, for the F-22 and not to adopt the amendment: No. 1, when the U.S. Air Force wrote the RFP for the weapon system of the 21st century to replace three existing, aging aircraft, the F-22 met and exceeded every single part of the RFP. No. 2, for those who say the cost is some \$2,000 an hour more for maintenance, you have to quantify that. Look what you are buying. You are buying stealth technology that exists nowhere else in the world and the ability to deliver munitions and leave without ever having been seen. Most recently, in Alaska, the F-22, in a mock battle, destroyed 144 aircraft before it lost its first one.

Lastly, and most importantly, while it may not be the plane exactly for Afghanistan and Iraq today, what about North Korea? What about Iran? What about what happened to us in the Balkans in the late 1990s, when President Clinton deployed our air strength to put together what was a terrible situation? We must be prepared for whatever will come in the 21st century. If there is anything we have learned, you cannot underestimate what may come. I commend the Senator for his articulate statement and affirm everything he said in support of not adopting the amendment and to continue to purchase the F-22 beyond the 187 currently being capped—or asked to be capped at.

I commend the Senator for his remarks.

Mr. DODD. I thank the Senator. That number of 144, I suspect people won't believe that number, but that is a real number. Pilots don't always necessarily comment on these matters. I am told by those who have been interviewed, pilots who fly the F-22 use superlatives to describe that aircraft they have never used about any other aircraft, including the ability to reach the speed of Mach 1.5 in 90 seconds, the stealthy quality, the maneuverability, and the agility exceeds anything else that exists anywhere else in the world.

There is a generation coming along in nations with whom we have pretty good relationships, but we can never predict what is going to happen. We have seen what happened with the SU-27 and the MiG 29, where those are widely disseminated worldwide now. They pose a parity with the aircraft we have. We need to have that superior quality.

I thank my colleague.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MERKLEY). The Senator from Michigan.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I thank, first of all, my friend from South Dakota for yielding to me for just a moment. He was to be next recognized. This will take just a moment.

We have been attempting to work out a unanimous consent agreement so we could first vote tomorrow. That was not convenient for a number of Senators. We then tried to work out a unanimous consent agreement for first thing on Wednesday morning to vote on the Levin-McCain amendment. We have so far been unsuccessful in getting that agreement. We will continue to work tomorrow to see if we cannot get such an agreement. In the meantime, that is where it stands.

Again, I thank my friend from South Dakota for yielding.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period for the transaction of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for not more than 10 minutes each.

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

The Senator from Georgia.

TRIBUTE TO EMILY COX

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I wish to pause for a second and tell everybody in the Senate that on the 1st day of August of this coming month, in Waynesboro, GA, there is going to be birthday party for a 96-year-old lady, Emily Cox. She is not just another 96-year-old lady.

Emily Cox was the mother of Jackson Elliot Cox, my best friend in college. When he graduated from college, he left to join the U.S. Marine Corps, went through OCS, went to Vietnam,

and he died on behalf of his country. Miss Emily was saddened, obviously, by the tragedy, as was her husband Sidney.

When Alex Crumbley, myself, and Pierre Howard went to be at the wake and to wait for the body to return and to try to soothe Miss Emily, she soothed us for the loss of our best friend. Since that day, Miss Emily Cox has traveled our State on behalf of veterans, on behalf of the U.S. Marine Corps, and on behalf of our country. She is a living legend in Georgia for her sweetness, for her strength, for her love of country, and for her sacrifice.

While I will not be able to be in Waynesboro, GA, on August 1 to celebrate her 96th birthday, from the floor of the Senate, I send her my greetings and my thanks. She has been a rock for me, a rock for her community.

Miss Emily, we love you, and happy birthday.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Dakota.

CAP-AND-TRADE LEGISLATION

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, this week we work on the Defense authorization bill. As a member of the Armed Services Committee, that is something in which I have a keen interest. Many of the discussions you heard already and we will hear throughout the course of the week will deal fundamentally with our Nation's national security interests, making sure we continue to fund our troops at the appropriate level; making sure, in terms of pay and benefits, recruiting and retaining the finest men and women in uniform in the world, that they have the very best of technology to use when it comes to doing their jobs. You already heard a discussion about some of those various technologies, platforms—the F-22s and F-35s. I am very interested in the next generation of bombers and the importance of having long-range strike capability so we are able to continue to penetrate some of the more sophisticated air defense systems that are being developed by our adversaries and potential adversaries around the world. It is a great debate to have. It is one we have annually. I look forward to engaging in some of the discussions on these very important and critical national security issues.

I wish to speak this evening to some of the things going on on the domestic front. I always believe if we do not get national security right, the rest is conversation, which is why this Defense authorization bill is so important. But when we do get past the Defense authorization bill, I think we have a couple of big, epic battles that are going to be waged in the Senate coming up perhaps this month; if not, I suggest certainly in the fall. One deals with a bill that passed the House a little over a week ago now, the cap-and-trade legislation. The other deals with the issue of health care reform, which is one-sixth of America's economy. We are

talking about an enormous amount of money that is spent in this country every single year on health care.

There is legislation that is moving through the House, and there are discussions in the Senate. The markup has been going on several days now in the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee in the Senate to report out a health care reform bill that at some point will come to the floor of the Senate and be debated. But these are huge issues of consequence for the American people.

I think the American people need to be engaged. What struck me about the debate that was held in the House of Representatives a couple of weeks ago—which, incidentally, the cap-and-trade legislation passed in the House of Representatives by a 219-to-212 margin. It was hurried through. It was done very quickly. It was a 1,200-some page bill. There was a 309-page amendment that was offered on the floor. I submit that very few, if any, Members of the House of Representatives had an opportunity to read the entire bill, let alone the amendment that was offered to it. It moved very quickly. And this has dramatic consequences for the American economy.

When you start talking about a cap-and-trade bill that will impose essentially what is a tax on carbon that supposedly is directed at polluters but ultimately is going to be paid by consumers in this country, it is very clear that this is going to drive up the cost of energy in this country, whether that is electricity, whether that is fuels, whether that is natural gas, home heating oil. All those things the American people use every single day in their daily lives, they are going to see the costs go up. You can talk about how much, and we have lots of varying estimates about what it would cost. The CBO recently came out with an estimate—and this was highly touted by proponents of the legislation—that it was only going to cost each household \$175 a year. CBO also said that in the year 2020, the average cost on a per-household basis would be considerably higher than that; that it would be \$890 per household in 2020, with the top quintile paying an average of \$1,380.

After some generous assumptions about the enormous government-run wealth redistribution scheme that would be conducted via auction and the free allowances, the CBO came back to this number of \$175 per household on average, with the middle quintile facing the highest net cost of \$340. However, the figure is only the budgetary cost per household, not a comprehensive economic analysis, and moreover it examines only 1 year of the program, a year that CBO optimistically assumes is relatively low cost and after the expensive transition years. As a result, CBO's estimate really only captures some of the cost of cap and trade, as the report acknowledges. But even at that, the CBO average estimate gross cost by 2020 is \$890 additional per

household per year in energy costs and with the top quintile paying an average of \$1,380.

What is interesting about that is that study did not take into consideration different regions of the country or different demographic groups, different sectors of the economy, different income brackets. All of those are issues that have not been contemplated fully to date and what some of these impacts would make.

I suggest there are going to be significant regional disparities because there are going to be certain areas of the country that are going to pay much more in additional power costs than other parts of the country. I think the transition is going to be particularly difficult for those areas of the country that are employed in industry, such as coal, or living in areas that produce coal or rely heavily on coal-fired power for their electricity generation, and the costs are going to be borne much more significantly by those areas of the country. So the regional differences are going to be especially dramatic when it comes to the electricity sector of the economy. I suggest places such as my home area of South Dakota and the upper Midwest are going to disproportionately pay way more of this burden than are other parts of the country.

A lot of this data, a lot of this information has yet to make it out into the hands of the American people. When the American people find out what is actually happening here in Washington with this cap-and-trade proposal, they get very exercised about it, as I think most Members of Congress found out during the Fourth of July holidays. They went out and traveled across their respective States. They heard, I suspect, what I did—that people are very upset about the notion that we are going to see energy costs go up significantly and they are going to be paying the bill. They have not, I don't think, determined at this point that there is any benefit they are going to derive from it.

The argument is going to be made by proponents of the legislation that this is going to be a good thing because we are going to see significant reductions in CO₂ emissions and therefore that is good for the global climate. Frankly, as we heard last week at the G-8 meeting, there are other countries around the world that do not have a real concern about doing anything quickly, and they have no intention of following the lead of the United States in that regard. As a consequence, we are not going to see anywhere close to the reductions that have been promised. So we have what is pretty clearly a minimal environmental benefit as a result of a gargantuan cost increase—tax, if you will—on the American economy in the form of higher energy costs.

I submit that the cap-and-trade legislation is going to have a profound impact on the economy, and it is something that should not be hurried

through. I hope the Senate, if and when it comes to the floor—frankly, I hope it doesn't because I don't think right now this is an issue that ought to be occupying the time of the Senate when we are trying to get the economy growing again. We are talking about with this cap-and-trade legislation actually putting a new tax on the American economy at a time when we ought to be trying to get small businesses invested again, reducing the overall tax and regulatory burden they face, and trying to create jobs and expand the economy, rather than putting a new crushing mandate, top-down, heavy-handed bureaucratic mandate, cap-and-trade program on top of an economy that is already struggling and, as we saw last week, unemployment rates now topping 9.5 percent, perhaps going higher before it is all said and done.

What is interesting to me is there does not seem to be any debate that this is going to raise energy costs. When people get into this argument, it is not a question of if, it is a question of how much.

There are even some on the House side—Representative JOHN DINGELL, for many years the chairman of the Energy and Commerce Committee in the House of Representatives, said:

Cap and trade is a tax and it's a great big one.

Representative CHARLIE RANGEL said:

Whether you call it a tax, every one agrees that it is going to increase the cost to the consumer.

I could go on and on. Secretary Geithner. The President himself, when he talked about this particular idea, indicated that costs would necessarily skyrocket. So there is no question but this is going to increase costs to the American consumer. At a time when we can least afford it and at a time when we are trying to get our economy on a pathway of recovery, we ought to be lessening the burden on Americans, not increasing it.

There is a better way. If we look at some of the alternatives that are out there, to me it makes more sense if you can incentivize a certain type of investment as opposed to trying to mandate some regulatory regime. That is a much better way of doing business.

If we want to do something legislatively when it comes to lowering the cost of energy in this country, we ought to focus on reducing emissions by lowering the cost of renewables, by aggressively investing in research and supporting an increased role for types of power that have not been used in this country. We are way underutilizing nuclear power. France gets 80 percent of its electricity from nuclear power. In the United States, we are about 20 percent. We can do better than that. There is no reason the United States cannot be a leader when it comes to clean green energy. One of the things we need to do is build more nuclear plants. That is one of the items on our agenda that we would like to see as part of an energy bill.

I also think there are things we can do in investing in non-carbon-emitting types of technology. I come from a part of the country where we have vast amounts of wind. Some people argue South Dakota is the Saudi Arabia of wind. If we can figure out a way to harness that wind energy, I think we are going to see an increase in economic activity in the upper Midwest. South Dakota would be a great place for that. I hope we can see more investment in wind. We need to make sure we are providing the necessary and appropriate incentives and policy incentives for investment in wind energy.

Solar is something, obviously, where we have a lot of room to grow. Conservation, carbon storage, infusion—all kinds of technologies that are carbon-free sources of energy. But I believe the way we get more of those is to incentivize investments in those areas. It seems to me that would be a much preferable outcome and, frankly, one in which we could get our global partners a lot more interested in and participating in. In fact, it has been suggested—Bjorn Lomborg suggested countries around the world devote a portion of their GDP to these types of non-carbon-emitting energy technologies in research and investing in those so that the burdens are shared equally. I would suggest every country might do it a little differently.

If I were going to put a plan together like that for South Dakota, I would make it very wind heavy. Other parts of the country might make it nuclear heavy. There are clean green renewable sources of energy available in this country, but trying to impose a heavy tax that will be paid by the American consumer ultimately, to me, seems like a wrongheaded approach, especially at a time when the economy is struggling.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

Mr. THUNE. I think that sort of segues into the other big issue, the big epic battles we are going to face in the Congress, and that is what to do to reform our health care system so that we can make the cost more affordable for American families and consumers. I don't think anybody argues that we don't need to reform our health care system; that there aren't things we can do better, more efficiently, more cost effectively.

I certainly would not for a minute suggest—as some have suggested about Republicans—that Republicans in the Senate don't want to do anything. We all believe we need to do something. We all believe there is much that can be done that will help improve coverage and lower costs for people in this country. But it can be done in a way that doesn't turn everything over—the keys of the health care system—to the Federal Government.

Much of what we are seeing right now in terms of the plans that are moving through the Congress is that

the House of Representatives will pass a bill, perhaps first, which will come over to the Senate. What is being debated—at least at the committee level in the Senate—consists of what they call a public plan option which, in effect, is a government plan. It is a—I would characterize it—government takeover of the health care system in this country because when the government goes into competition with the private sector, I think it will be very difficult for the private sector to compete.

There are many, obviously, already competing plans out there. In fact, George Will noted there are 1,300 entities offering health care plans in this country. Another one isn't going to change that. But the larger problem we have when the Federal Government gets into competition with private business is that the Federal Government becomes not a competitor but a predator. I think the government plan is not going to compete with the private market, but rather it will destroy the private market. A lot of studies bear that out.

If you look at the independent estimates—and in fact the Lewin Group studied this very carefully—they suggest that nearly 6 out of 10 Americans with private coverage, or about 118 million Americans, would lose their current health care coverage and be forced into a government-run health care plan. In fact, John Shields of the Lewin Group said:

If we created this public plan which is priced so much lower than private insurance, that will draw a lot of people in. Then you will wake up one morning and say: Wow, there is only one payer.

Essentially, what would happen, Mr. President, in my view, is we would see the private companies that are offering insurance, or small businesses that are offering coverage to their employees who would say: I can't compete with the Federal Government. I am just going to have all my employees move over into the government-run program. So that essentially, by default, we would see this government takeover of our health care system, and the government plan would become the plan in the country. Eventually, over time, I would argue, it would evolve into a single-payer system.

We are talking about one-sixth of the American economy. Certainly there are shortcomings in our current way of doing things. When we spend 17 percent or one-sixth of our entire GDP on health care, the assumption is that we are not spending enough money on health care. It is probably that we are not spending it wisely enough or not spending it smarter. We have lots of ideas about how to spend smarter that don't involve putting another \$1 trillion or \$2 trillion in tax burden on Americans in order to pay for this new system or, perhaps even worse yet, borrowing it from future generations, which is what we have been doing routinely around here for the past several

months to fund many of these new initiatives. But those are both bad solutions.

A \$1 trillion tax or upwards of that, depending on which estimate we look at, up to \$2 trillion in additional cost for the plan that is being proposed by Democrats in the House and the Senate—we have to finance it somehow. It is going to be paid for. It is either going to be paid for in the form of higher taxes on the American economy or borrowing from future generations, neither of which, in my view, is an option we ought to pursue.

On the other hand, we ought to look at how we can make the current system—the 17 percent of our economy or the \$2.5 trillion we spend annually on health care—more efficient and more effective. How can we emphasize wellness? How can we emphasize prevention? How can we allow individuals and small businesses to join larger groups to get the benefit of group purchasing power and buying in volume? How can we create competition by allowing people to buy across State lines? How do we get the cost of defensive medicine down by reforming our medical malpractice laws so the doctors aren't in fear of being sued or in fear of liability, overutilizing and therefore practicing defensive medicine, which has been suggested by the Health and Human Services Department in a study they did in 2003.

If we put it in today's dollars, it suggests we could save about \$180 billion a year in health care costs by doing something about medical malpractice reform.

So these are all things that we are for. We have lots of ideas about how to improve health care in this country or improve at least the delivery of health care and drive down the cost of health care but do it in a way that doesn't impede upon that important relationship between a physician and a patient; in a way that prevents the government from imposing itself into that situation and the government then making a decision about which procedures are going to be covered, how much is going to be paid for each procedure, and essentially becoming the decider when it comes to health care in this country.

We think the decisions that are made with respect to people's health care ought to be made by patients, by providers, and not having the government dictating and getting in the way of that basic fundamental relationship.

The CBO has said about the Kennedy-Dodd bill, which is the only one we know of right now that is moving its way through the committee process and that is currently being marked up, the government plan was not projected to have premiums lower than those charged by private insurance plans. But how, then, is the government going to offer any benefit?

The government plan is going to be, in my view, redundant to what is already out there unless it comes in and tries to undercut private insurance,