

On page 161, after line 23, add the following:

SEC. 557. EXPANSION OF SUICIDE PREVENTION AND COMMUNITY HEALING AND RESPONSE TRAINING UNDER THE YELLOW RIBBON REINTEGRATION PROGRAM.

Section 582 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008 (Public Law 110-181; 10 U.S.C. 10101 note) is amended—

- (1) in subsection (h)—
 - (A) by striking paragraph (3); and
 - (B) by redesignating paragraphs (4) through (15) as paragraphs (3) through (14), respectively; and
- (2) by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(i) SUICIDE PREVENTION AND COMMUNITY HEALING AND RESPONSE PROGRAM.—

“(1) ESTABLISHMENT.—As part of the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program, the Office for Reintegration Programs shall establish a program to provide National Guard and Reserve members, their families, and their communities with training in suicide prevention and community healing and response to suicide.

“(2) DESIGN.—In establishing the program under paragraph (1), the Office for Reintegration Programs shall consult with—

“(A) persons that have experience and expertise with combining military and civilian intervention strategies that reduce risk and promote healing after a suicide attempt or suicide death for National Guard and Reserve members; and

“(B) the adjutant general of each State, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the District of Columbia, Guam, and the Virgin Islands.

“(3) OPERATION.—

“(A) SUICIDE PREVENTION TRAINING.—The Office for Reintegration Programs shall provide National Guard and Reserve members with training in suicide prevention. Such training shall include—

“(i) describing the warning signs for suicide and teaching effective strategies for prevention and intervention;

“(ii) examining the influence of military culture on risk and protective factors for suicide; and

“(iii) engaging in interactive case scenarios and role plays to practice effective intervention strategies.

“(B) COMMUNITY HEALING AND RESPONSE TRAINING.—The Office for Reintegration Programs shall provide the families and communities of National Guard and Reserve members with training in responses to suicide that promote individual and community healing. Such training shall include—

“(i) enhancing collaboration among community members and local service providers to create an integrated, coordinated community response to suicide;

“(ii) communicating best practices for preventing suicide, including safe messaging, appropriate memorial services, and media guidelines;

“(iii) addressing the impact of suicide on the military and the larger community, and the increased risk that can result; and

“(iv) managing resources to assist key community and military service providers in helping the families, friends, and fellow soldiers of a suicide victim through the processes of grieving and healing.

“(C) COLLABORATION WITH CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE.—The Office for Reintegration Programs, in consultation with the Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury, shall collect and analyze ‘lessons learned’ and suggestions from State National Guard and Reserve organizations with existing or developing sui-

cide prevention and community response programs.”.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. ALEXANDER. 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.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I assume the order is to begin the Republican 30 minutes of morning business. I would like to take the first 20 minutes and be informed when I have 1 minute left, and Senator GREGG will take the last 10 minutes. Then the Democratic time remaining will be reserved for the Democratic side when they want to use it.

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

Mr. ALEXANDER. Thank you, Mr. President.

HEALTH CARE REFORM COST

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, the President has expressed several times his concern about our Nation's debt. We Republicans have a great concern about the amount of debt being stacked up in this country.

President Obama's proposals will, over the next 10 years, add three times as much to the national debt, almost, as was spent during World War II, according to the Washington Post. The President has had a summit on entitlement spending, which is the principal cause of the debt. He has said we need to pay for programs as we go. If we spend a dollar, we should save a dollar or tax a dollar. More recently he has said that health care legislation has to be paid for.

Well, Mr. President, we are rushing down a road to pass a bill without knowing what it costs. I just left the work we are doing in the HELP Committee. The Finance Committee is working hard. We had a bipartisan breakfast of nearly 20 Senators this morning discussing how we could have a bipartisan result in health care this year.

But we cannot do it unless we know how much it costs. It affects 16 percent of our entire national budget. We do not have a bill yet. The HELP Committee may have one by the end of the week, in which Republicans have had almost no input. The Finance Committee is trying to develop a bipartisan bill, but they are not going to begin writing a bill until next week. Then it will take several weeks to know what it costs. We need to know, not just so we do not add to the debt, but so we can understand what the various options are and how much they cost.

We are talking about Medicare cuts and spending Grandma's Medicare money on somebody else. How much does that cost? We are talking about taxes on employers. How much does that cost? We are talking about adding to the debt. By exactly how much? We are talking about a surtax on incomes. We are talking about extensive increases in State costs in Medicaid.

So we want a health care bill. But we want something Americans can afford, and after we are through fixing health care, we want to make sure they have a government they can afford. We agree with the President. We cannot responsibly pass a bill on this floor until we know what it costs.

So why the rush? Let's do it right. We are talking about one of the most important pieces of legislation ever, and we are talking about trillions of dollars.

CLEAN ENERGY

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I delivered an address yesterday at the National Press Club about the Republican plan for clean energy. We call it a low-cost clean energy plan. It begins with the idea of building 100 new nuclear power plants in the next 20 years; electrifying half our cars and trucks in the next 20 years; exploring for natural gas, which is low carbon, and oil offshore—if we are going to continue to use oil, it might as well be our own—and then, finally, doubling our research and development budget, as President Obama has proposed, so we can have “mini Manhattan Projects” in renewable energy to try to reduce renewable energy technologies' costs and make them more reliable so they can contribute to our energy needs.

I would like to make a few remarks today on our low-cost plan for clean, renewable energy and compare it with what is coming over from the House, which is a high-cost plan.

Our country is at a critical point. The recession is the most severe in decades. Unemployment is nearing 10 percent. We have too much national debt. A gathering storm threatens the technological edge that has given Americans—only about 5 percent of the world's people—a remarkable standard of living that comes from producing 25 percent of the world's wealth. We remember last year's high oil prices. We know we are relying too much on other countries for energy. There is the unfinished job of cleaning our air, and, for many, the global warming of our planet is an urgent concern.

It is against this backdrop that for the first time ever legislation dealing broadly with climate change and energy is coming out of the House. We are working on the same subjects in the Senate. The decisions we make will affect our well-being for years to come.

The House has chosen the high-cost solution to clean energy and climate change. Its economy-wide cap-and-trade and renewable energy mandate is

a job-killing, \$100 billion-a-year national energy tax that will add a new utility bill to every American family budget.

Republican Senators offer a different approach, a low-cost plan for clean energy based upon four steps: 100 new nuclear plants in 20 years, electric cars for conservation, offshore exploration for natural gas and oil, and doubling energy research and development to make renewable energy cost competitive. The Republican plan will lower utility bills and create jobs and should put the United States within the goals of the Kyoto protocol on global warming by 2030. Our plan should not add to the Federal budget since ratepayers will pay for building the new nuclear plants. Federal loan financing for the first nuclear plants is designed not to cost the taxpayers money, and nuclear plants insure one another. Offshore exploration should produce revenues through royalties to pay for programs to encourage electric cars and trucks; and doubling energy research and development should cost about \$8 billion more per year, which is consistent with the President's budget proposals for 2009 and 2010.

So in furtherance of that Republican plan, I have offered my own blueprint as one Senator about how to build 100 nuclear power plants in the next 20 years, and I am looking for support on the Republican side and on the Democratic side, in and out of Congress. For those who are watching and listening, I would like to have your comments and suggestions at www.alexander.senate.gov.

This is a good time to stop and ask: Just what are we trying to accomplish with energy and climate change legislation? What kind of America do we want to create during the next 20 years?

Well, first, we should want to see an America running on energy that is clean, cheap, reliable, and abundant. In order to produce nearly 25 percent of the world's wealth, we consume about 25 percent of the world's energy. We should want an America in which we create hundreds of thousands of green jobs, but not at the expense of destroying tens of millions of red, white, and blue jobs. In other words, it doesn't make any sense to put people to work in the renewable energy sector if we are throwing them out of work in manufacturing and high tech. That is what will happen if these new technologies raise the price of electricity and send manufacturing and other energy-intensive industries overseas, searching for cheap energy. We want clean, new, energy-efficient cars, but we want them built in Michigan and Ohio and Tennessee and not in Japan and Mexico.

We should want an America capable of producing enough of our own energy so we can't be held hostage by some other country.

We should want an America in which we are the unquestioned leader in cutting-edge, job-creating scientific research.

We should want an America producing less carbon. I don't think we ought to be throwing 29 billion tons of carbon dioxide into the environment every year, so that means less reliance on fossil fuels.

We want an America with cleaner air where smog and soot in Los Angeles and in the Great Smoky Mountains are a thing of the past and where our children are less likely to suffer asthma attacks brought on by breathing pollutants.

Finally, we should want an America in which we are not creating "energy sprawl" by occupying vast tracts of farmlands, deserts, and mountaintops with energy installations that ruin the scenic landscapes. The great American outdoors is a revered part of the American character. We have spent a century preserving it. There is no need to destroy the environment in the name of saving the environment.

None of these goals are met by the House-passed Waxman-Markey bill. What started out as an effort to address global warming by reducing carbon emissions has ended up as a contraption of taxes and mandates that will impose a huge and unnecessary burden on the economy. Renewable energies such as wind and solar and biomass are intriguing and promising as a supplement to America's energy requirements. Yet the Waxman-Markey bill proves once again that one of the government's biggest mistakes can be taking a good idea and expanding it until it doesn't work anymore.

Trying to expand these forms of renewable energy to the point where they become our prime source of energy has huge costs and obvious flaws. What is worse, it creates what some conservationists call "the renewable energy sprawl," where we are asked to sacrifice the American landscape and overwhelm fragile ecosystems with thousands of massive energy machines in an effort to take care of our energy needs.

For example, one big solar power plant in the western desert where they line up mirrors to focus the Sun's rays and which spreads across more than 30 square miles—that is more than 5 miles on each side—produces just the same 1,000 megawatts you can get from a single coal or nuclear plant that sits on 1 square mile. And to generate the same 1,000 megawatts with wind, you need 270 square miles of 50-story turbines. Generating 20 percent of our Nation's electricity from wind would cover an area the size of West Virginia.

To those of us in the Southeast where the wind blows less than 20 percent of the time, they say "use biomass," which is burning wood products, sort of a controlled bonfire. That is a good idea. It might reduce forest fires and conserve resources, but let's not expect too much. We would need a forest a lot larger than the Great Smoky Mountains National Park to feed a 1,000-megawatt biomass plant on a sustained basis. And think of all of the energy

used and the carbon produced by the hundreds of trucks it will take every day to haul the stuff to that one plant.

Already we are beginning to see the problems. Boone Pickens, who said that wind turbines are "too ugly," in his words, to put on his own ranch, last week postponed what was to be America's largest wind farm because of the difficulty of building transmission lines from West Texas to population centers. And the Sacramento Municipal Utility District pulled out of another huge project to bring wind energy in from the Sierra Nevada for the same reason. According to the Wall Street Journal, California officials are worried that the State's renewable mandates have created "a high risk to the state economy . . . and that the state may be short on power by 2011 if problems continue to pile up."

Add to that a point that many forget: Wind and solar energy is only available about a third of the time because today it can't be stored—you use it or you lose it. Solar's great advantage is that the Sun shines during peak usage hours, while the wind often blows at night when there is plenty of unused electricity. But with either, if you want to be sure your lights turn on or that your factory opens its doors when you go to work, you still need other power plants to back it up.

Is this really the picture of America we want to see 20 years from now? There is a much better option. We should take another long, hard look at nuclear power. It is already our best source for large amounts of cheap, reliable, clean energy. It provides only 20 percent of our Nation's electricity but 70 percent of our carbon-free, pollution-free electricity. It is already far and away our best defense against global warming. So why not build 100 new nuclear plants in the next 20 years? American utilities built 100 reactors between 1970 and 1990 with their own (ratepayers') money. Why can't we do that again? Other countries are already forging ahead of us. France gets 80 percent of its electricity from 50 reactors, and it has among the cheapest electricity rates and the lowest carbon emissions in Europe. Japan is building reactors from start to finish in 4 years. China is planning 60 new reactors. Russia is selling its nuclear technology all over the world. We are helping India get ready to build nuclear plants. President Obama has even said Iran has the right to use nuclear power for energy. Yet we haven't built a new nuclear plant in 30 years, and we invented the technology. Why don't we get back in the game?

There seem to be a couple of main things holding us back: first, a failure to appreciate just how different nuclear is from other technologies, how its tremendous energy density translates into a vanishingly small environmental footprint, and second, an exaggerated fear of nuclear technology.

Many have forgotten that nuclear power plants were the result of President Eisenhower's "Atoms For Peace"

program. The idea was to take perhaps the greatest invention of the last century and use it to provide low-cost energy to reduce poverty around the world.

There is also a misconception that nuclear plants are uninsurable and can't exist without a big Federal subsidy. There is a Federal insurance program for nuclear plants called Price-Anderson, but it has never paid a dime of insurance. Today, the way it works is every one of the 104 nuclear plants in the country can be assessed \$100 million in damages for an accident at another reactor. So that is another factor adding to safety consciousness.

Most reactors have revenue of \$2 million a day, which pays for the \$5 billion construction loans and still makes possible low rates for consumers. For example, when the Tennessee Valley Authority restarted its Brown's Ferry Unit 1 reactor 2 years ago, TVA thought it would take 10 years to pay off the \$1.8 billion construction debt. It took 3 years. When oil prices were skyrocketing, Connecticut proposed putting a windfall profits tax on the state's two reactors because they were making so much money.

Nuclear power is the obvious first step to a policy of clean and low-cost energy. One hundred new plants in 20 years would double U.S. nuclear production, making it about 40 percent of all electricity production. Add 10 percent for Sun and wind and other renewable sources. Add another 10 percent for hydroelectric, maybe 5 percent for natural gas, and we begin to have a cheap, as well as a clean, energy policy.

Step two is to electrify half our cars and trucks. According to estimates by Brookings Institution scholars, there is so much unused electricity at night that we can also do this in 20 years without building one new power plant if we plug in vehicles while we sleep. This is the fastest way to reduce dependence on foreign oil, keep fuel prices low, and reduce the one-third of carbon that comes from gasoline engines.

Step three is to explore offshore for natural gas—it is low carbon—and oil—using less, but using our own.

The final step is to double funding for energy research and development and launch mini Manhattan Projects such as the one we had in World War II, this time to meet seven grand energy challenges: improving batteries for plug-in vehicles; making solar power cost-competitive with fossil fuels; making carbon capture a reality for coal-burning plants; safely recycling used nuclear fuel; making advanced biofuels—crops we don't eat—cost-competitive with gasoline; making more buildings green buildings; and providing energy from fusion.

We can't wait any longer to start building our future of clean, reliable, and affordable energy. The time has come for action. We must open our minds to the possibilities and potential of nuclear power. We have a clear

choice between a high-cost clean energy plan coming from the House—one that is filled with taxes and mandates and a new utility bill for every American family, one that will drive jobs overseas searching for cheap energy—or we can enact our own cheap and clean energy policy and lower utility bills and keep jobs here and produce food here at a price that is low so Americans can afford to buy it.

This is the sensible way to go: nuclear power, electric cars, exploration offshore, and doubling research and development. This policy of cheap and clean energy will help family budgets and create jobs. It will also prove to be the fastest way to increase American energy independence, clean our air, and reduce global warming.

I hope those listening will let me know their thoughts about our blueprint for 100 nuclear power plants in the next 20 years. The way to do that is to visit www.alexander.senate.gov.

I thank the Chair, and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. GILLIBRAND). The Senator from New Hampshire.

NATIONAL DEBT

Mr. GREGG. Madam President, yesterday was not a great day for our Nation. For the first time in our history, the deficit of this Nation passed \$1 trillion—\$1 trillion. That is a number I do not think anybody ever expected to see as a deficit for our country.

To try to put it in perspective, as a percentage of our GDP, that is about 13 percent. We have not had that size deficit since we were in World War II. The implications of that deficit are staggering for us as a nation but, more importantly, it represents a clear and present danger to our children and our children's children and to this Nation's fiscal solvency.

Remember, we are not through the fiscal year yet. It is estimated that this deficit will continue up for the rest of the year. It is estimated that \$1.8 trillion will be the deficit we will be facing in 2010, and over \$1 trillion the next year. These are numbers which are so huge they are incomprehensible—incomprehensible to myself and to most Americans. But they translate into a very significant problem, which is that we will be passing on to our children, as a result of all this debt, a nation which they cannot afford.

What is the cause of this debt? What is causing this massive expansion in deficits? Primarily it is spending. It is not that we are a nation that is undertaxed. It is that we are a nation that is simply spending too much.

My colleague on the other side of the aisle, the chairman of the Budget Committee, Mr. CONRAD, is fond of saying the debt is the threat. He is absolutely right because that is the threat to this Nation.

It is important to put in context, though, that this is not a momentary

event. We are not running up these deficits just today. But as we look into the outyears under the Obama budget, the deficits go up astronomically for as far as the eye can see, leading to debt which is unsustainable.

Over the next 10 years, the average deficit of this Nation will be \$1 trillion. Again, let's try to put that in context. That is about 4 to 5 percent of our gross national product every year.

If you were in Europe and you wanted to get into the European Union, which is a legitimate group of industrialized nations, they have rules for how fiscally solvent you must be as a nation. One of their rules says your deficit cannot exceed 3 percent of your gross national product. Yet under President Obama and his proposed budget, our deficit will average 4.5 percent to 5 percent of our gross national product for the next 10 years, over \$1 trillion a year.

To what does this lead? It leads to massive expansion of debt, as this chart shows, a debt which will be 85 percent of our GDP. What does that mean, 85 percent of our GDP? The public debt of a nation is the debt held by other people, specifically Americans and other countries, primarily, in our case, China. They are the biggest holder of our debt. Historically, whether a country or individuals are willing to buy the debt of a nation depends on whether that nation is seen as being able to pay off that debt, that there is a reasonable likelihood of that, or whether the Nation has the strength to pay off that debt.

There are rules of thumb here too. Again, in order to get into the European Union, you have to have a ratio of less than 60 percent public debt to your nation's debt, to your nation's GNP, gross national product.

Yesterday, under this proposal, under this administration, as we are seeing in action as we passed the \$1 trillion debt line yesterday, that public debt goes well past 65 percent very quickly within the next 2 years, and then it continues to head up to 80 percent. In other words, our public debt will be so high we would be considered so irresponsible as a nation fiscally that the European nations, which are industrialized countries, under their rules would not be able to allow us into the European Union. Not that we wish to seek entry, but clearly that is a standard at which we should look.

If you look at it historically, our public debt—and what most economists agree is reasonable—has been between 30 and 40 percent of gross national product. That is a manageable public debt. But when you double that debt as a percent of GDP, you are putting us on a path, a spiraling path downward into fiscal insolvency and a nation which cannot sustain its own debt.

To try to address this in another way, President Obama's proposals for spending will more than double the debt in the next 5 years and triple it in the next 10 years. In fact, if you take