

Senate will proceed to a period for the transaction of morning business for 1 hour, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with the majority controlling the first half and the Republicans controlling the second half.

The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for as much time as I may consume in our allotted 30 minutes.

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

ENERGY LEGISLATION

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I wish to visit for just a few moments today the subject of energy policy.

Most of us spend all of our day having a better day because of energy and think very little about it. We get up in the morning, perhaps, and use an electric razor or an electric toothbrush. We go to the kitchen and have some coffee that was made by plugging the coffee maker in or turning on a stove. Then we get in a car, put a key in an ignition, start an engine, and off to work. We do all the while using all the energy available to us all day long, never thinking much about it.

We have a serious energy problem in this country in that a substantial amount of energy we use, particularly oil which comes from outside our country, including from some countries that do not like us very much. We are about 70 percent dependent on foreign countries for our oil, and, as I indicated, some of those countries are in some difficulty and turmoil. Yet we are unbelievably dependent on them to help supply our oil.

One of the propositions is, should we not produce more American energy? Should we not have more conservation in this country? Should we not have a plan that makes us less vulnerable and less dependent and improves our national security and our energy security? Of course, the answer to these questions is yes.

This is a big-old planet of ours, and we stick straws in the planet and suck oil out. Today, Tuesday, we will take out from the drilling rigs where we produced about 85 million barrels of oil from underground. One-fourth of it needs to be used in this country. The United States needs one-fourth of all the oil that is produced in the world today. As I said, 70 percent of that oil comes from outside of our country, and about 70 percent of the oil we use in this country is used in our transportation system.

We have a very serious dependency on oil. It makes us less secure nationally, and it creates all kinds of other issues. So the question is, What do we do about that problem? That is what I want to talk about for a few minutes, and I also want to talk about it in the context of some news reports that said recently that I and several others

somehow did not support climate change legislation. Let me make clear what my position is regarding acting on climate change legislation.

I have said on the floor of the Senate early this summer that I do not support cap and "trade." I do not have any interest in supporting legislation that will establish a trillion-dollar carbon trading securities market. This could benefit Wall Street, speculators and big investment banks who would be trading carbon on a Monday so we can determine how much energy prices are going to be on a Tuesday depending on how well that trading went on Monday. I have no interest in doing that type of activity. Not very long ago we saw what has happened to the price of gasoline and oil. For example, the price of oil went from about \$40 a barrel to \$147 a barrel in day trading in a little more than a year without any notion of supply or demand changes. How can you justify the runup on the price of oil from \$40 to \$147 a barrel over a number of months? I have already seen abuses of other markets. I have seen the markets with respect to derivatives and swaps and all of the exotic instruments that have been created in order to be traded on other markets. I have no interest in the carbon market "trade" portion of "cap and trade" and would not be intending to support that. There are other ways for us to have a lower carbon future.

I do believe there is something happening to our climate to which we should be very attentive to. I do believe a series of no-regret steps, at the very least, makes a lot of sense right now as we begin to address reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Let me say that while I have said I do not intend to be supportive of the cap-and-trade approach, especially with quotes around "trade," I think there are some things we can, will, and must do to address the issue of climate change and bring about a low carbon future. Having said that, my hope is that the legislation already passed through the Senate Energy Committee will be brought to the floor for a debate because it makes significant steps toward addressing energy and climate change policy. It will also reduce our dependence on foreign oil and increase our national and energy security. This is achieved for our country by producing more American energy and by incentivizing the kinds of things that can serve, save, and create other forms of energy as well.

Let me talk just for a bit about the bill passed by the Senate Energy Committee. Some people have said that we have to bring an energy bill to the floor and combine it with a climate change bill. I do not believe that should be done at this time. In my judgment, it would be much smarter to bring an energy bill to the floor which has already passed out of the committee with a bipartisan vote. It is called the American Clean Energy Leadership Act. We should bring that

bill to the floor, debate it, pass it, and get it to the President for his signature. That would do something very significant for our country's energy future. After that, we should then turn to address climate change legislation and how we create a low carbon future.

Here is what is in that legislation that I hope we will bring to the floor of the Senate first.

Renewable electricity standard. There is an old saying: If you don't care where you are going, you are never going to be lost. That is certainly true for a country and a congress. If you do not establish standards and say: Here is what we aspire to achieve, then you will never know whether you have met it. We should strive for a renewable electricity standard of 20 percent. The current bill's standard has 15 percent. When we get an energy bill to the floor, my hope would be we would have a 20-percent combined renewable electricity standard that says that we aspire to achieve this level of renewable energy as part of our country's electricity mix by 2021.

This would be the first national standard in the history of this country. More than half the States have already taken action in this area, but we need a national standard that creates the goal of what we aspire to achieve. A strong, national renewable electricity standard is what I support. There is currently a national standard in this energy bill which we can bring to the floor. Having a standard drives additional production of renewable energy. It is one significant step towards addressing climate change. Wind energy, solar energy, biomass are the types of renewable energy that this country needs to increase. Through an RES, we can incentivize that additional production.

Turning to energy efficiency, the lowest hanging fruit by far in energy is about taking steps to make our buildings more efficient. The MacKenzie study shows many ways to reduce emissions. By far the least costly, most effective, way to address energy and greenhouse gas emissions is through efficiency improvements in our buildings, homes, equipment, appliances, and factories. All of these areas are dealt with in this energy legislation, promoting much greater movement toward achieving the conservation that comes from expanded energy efficiency programs.

Another thing that is in this bill is building an interstate highway system of transmission capability. We can produce a lot of new renewable energy, but if we do not move it from where it is produced to where it is needed. We need to move it to the load centers otherwise it will not have done much good.

My home State, North Dakota, is No. 1 in wind production. The folks at the Department of Energy call North Dakota the Saudi Arabia of wind. We are almost born leaning toward the northwest against that prevailing wind. We

have a lot of wind. The fact is we don't need wind power in our State. What we need to do is maximize the production of wind power and move it to the load centers. In order to do that, you need a national interstate highway of transmission capability. We are not able to build it now, but the energy legislation that passed the Senate Energy Committee will give us the opportunity to do that.

We have built 11,000 miles of natural gas pipeline in the last 9 years to send natural gas through pipes around this country. During the same period of time, we have built less than 660 miles of high-voltage interstate transmission lines. Why? Because with the current rules, it is very hard to build interstate transmission lines, you almost can't get it done.

So this legislation has a transmission piece I helped write that gives us the opportunity to say: We are going to maximize the development of renewable energy sources, such as wind energy from the heartland, and solar energy from the South and Southwest. This legislation would allow us to move it from these areas where the energy is produced and then move it to the load centers where it is needed, by way of an interstate highway system of transmission capability, which we do not now have. Building an interstate highway system of transmission lines would be a huge boost to this country's energy future and also a significant step toward reducing our greenhouse gas emissions. It would accomplish this by allowing the development of clean energy sources, such as wind energy, solar energy, biomass, and others.

The bill would also reduce our dependence on foreign oil by transforming our transportation system. We are headed toward plug-in vehicles. Electrifying the short-haul transportation system is the best way to reduce the role foreign oil plays in our economy. By electrifying our cars at the same time as we reduce the amount of carbon produced by electric generation, which I will talk about in a minute, we not only cut our dependence on foreign oil but we also reduce our greenhouse gas emissions. Plug-in hybrid vehicles, I think, are a bridge to the electric future integrating the electric motor with a gasoline engine. All this is trying to aspire a new direction for our country.

I wish to say the most abundant resource we have is coal, and the energy legislation passed by the Senate Energy Committee also addresses the use of coal. Some people have said: Well, it might not be used in the future, I disagree completely. It is our most abundant resource. In this bill, we facilitate a large-scale demonstration and deployment of carbon-capturing storage technology which will allow us to continue to use coal while also capturing the carbon and using it for other products or sequestering it. But we can continue to use our most abundant resource, and we facilitate those nec-

essary demonstration projects in this legislation.

This legislation will also be helpful to hydrogen and fuel cell technology in the future, which I am a strong supporter of. I believe hydrogen and fuel cell technology is another generation we need to work on with respect to the research. Finally, let me say I offered an amendment during the energy deliberations on this bill that opens the eastern Gulf of Mexico, including the Destin Dome in the Gulf of Mexico, for oil and gas development.

In other words, I believe we ought to do a lot of everything. We should be developing more, producing more including oil and natural gas. We should also find a way to produce coal in a manner that protects our environment, and we will. We should conserve more and save more. We should do all those things. But in the eastern Gulf of Mexico, there are about 3.8 billion barrels of oil and about 21 trillion cubic feet of natural gas. It makes no sense that we are so unbelievably and excessively dependent on foreign oil when we are not producing that which we have in our country. We should do all of that mindful of the environment; mindful of all the protections that are necessary. I understand that.

So I offered the amendment that opens the eastern gulf with a 45-mile buffer zone. I did not offer this amendment, but I will when we get it to the floor. This amendment will allow our oil companies to compete for production capability in the Cuban waters. The country of Cuba is interested now in producing and leasing oil and gas. The Spanish are there, the Canadians are there, India is there, and China is interested, but our companies are prohibited because of an unbelievable 50-year moratorium, against the country of Cuba. A 50-year embargo, which is almost farcical in terms of its failure.

We are told it is okay for everybody else to go there. We are told there are a million barrels a day in those waters after the production. There is no one in the world that is better at the kind of ultra or unconventional deepwater drilling than America. We have done the research. We have done the work to understand that we drill better than anybody else in the world. Yet we are told our companies are not able to compete for leasing in those Cuban waters. This embargo makes no sense at all.

As I said previously, I happen to think we should do a lot of everything and do it well. Whether it is conservation or other related issues—producing more, conserving more—and increasing the use of renewable sources of energy, we will step, in a giant way, toward addressing climate change. It is exactly what we should do.

We are told: Well, you have to bring Waxman-Markey or you have to do this or that. What we have to do, it seems to me, is to be smart. The smart thing, in my judgment, would be to take the legislation the Senate Energy Com-

mittee has passed, which does all the things I have described. It would contribute, in a very positive way towards reducing our greenhouse gas emissions and increasing our national and energy security by making us less dependent on foreign oil and making us more dependent on American-produced energy.

I mean, why would we not want to have a much greater focus on American energy produced in this country? Why would we not want to have a much more significant focus on developing national aspirations for what we want to do with renewable energy? It is this old case of we kind of walk around and say: Well, whatever happens, happens. Well, the fact is we can't consign our future to that.

I have spoken about, I guess a dozen times on the floor, that my first car, as a very young boy, was one my father found in a grainery in an old abandoned farm in North Dakota. I bought it from the guy who put it in that grainery for \$25. It was a 1924 Model T Ford, completely rusty, with no wires or seat covers. All it was was a bunch of metal and a bunch of rust. As a young boy, I lovingly restored that old Model T. What I discovered, when I got it all done and running, was that you put gasoline in that Model T the same way you do in 2009 cars. Everything else has changed except that. Cars are computerized today, but you still pull up to a gas tank, take the cap off, and put gas in that 1924 Model T, as you do with a brand spanking new Ford. That hasn't changed, but it must. It so describes how mired we are in our previous energy policies. We can't get out of the rut.

The Energy bill we passed in the Energy Committee gets us out of this rut, it makes us more secure, it strengthens our country, and it makes us less dependent on others for our energy sources. Particularly those who don't like us very much.

One final point. Several years ago, there was a blackout on the east coast. Just like that, all the electricity was gone. At that moment, almost everyone understood what energy meant to them, and we understood its connection to our daily lives. It is unbelievable. So the question of reliability of energy for our country. Where do we get it? How do we use it? What does it cost? What does it mean for our climate? These are all important, interesting, and in some cases difficult questions. We have addressed most of those questions in an energy bill Senator BINGAMAN and I and many others had a role in writing.

I hope very much, after the debate on health care legislation, as people start thinking and talking about energy and climate change, consideration will exist for bringing a good energy bill to the floor that is a significant step in the right direction toward climate change first. Then at some later point, bringing a climate change bill to the floor. Because I think they are related but separate. I think it would be much

smarter to get the value and the success of an energy bill that has been passed by the committee and ready to be dealt with by the Senate at some point very soon.

I yield the floor, and 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 the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak in morning business.

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

STEP BY STEP REFORM

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I believe it is time for us in Congress to admit that we do not do "comprehensive" well, and that the era of the 1,000-page bill is over.

Look at immigration in 2007. Some of the best Senators here worked day and night trying to deal with that issue—Senator Kennedy, Senator KYL, Senator MCCAIN, Senator Martinez, and many others. They worked and they got 34 votes at first, not the 60 they hoped. Then finally they got 46 votes, 14 votes shy of the votes needed to pass a comprehensive immigration bill.

Or look at the economy-wide cap and trade as a way of dealing with climate change and clean energy. Senator MCCAIN and Senator LIEBERMAN worked on a bill 2 or 3 years ago. Last year the Warner-Lieberman version of the bill got 48 votes and it needed 60 votes.

Earlier this year we had 66 or 67 Senators, including two dozen Democrats, who voted to say don't put the economy-wide cap and trade through the so-called reconciliation process, the budget process which would take only 50 votes to pass.

Then, add to that, health care is in the ditch. The President has said there can't be any deficit added by the health care bill, so that kills deader than a doornail the House health care bill which has been worked on by several committees over there. It kills deader than a doornail the Senate health care bill because both add to the debt in the next 10 years and, according to the Congressional Budget Office and others who have reviewed it, add to the debt in the 10 years after that. So the President said he won't sign a bill with any deficit, the House bill is deader than a doornail, the Senate bill is deader than a doornail, and we still have unresolved problems even if you fix the debt problem.

We have the President saying he is going to take the savings out of Medicare to pay for the bill. Many of us be-

lieve that any Medicare savings ought to be spent on Medicare. We ought not take money from Grandma's Medicare and spend it on anybody other than Grandma, because the program is about to go broke in 2017. The Democratic as well as the Republican Governors are worried about what the Governor of Tennessee called "the mother of unfunded mandates," when these bills say we are going to expand Medicaid and we might pay for it a few years in Washington but after that we are going to shift it to the States with hundreds of millions of dollars of new State taxes. Employers are worrying about raising taxes in a recession. Older Americans, seniors, are worried about whether some government official is going to say you can't have your hip replaced because you are 70 years old. If debt hasn't killed the Senate and the House bills, all these other issues are still out there.

I propose we take a page from a famous little book which was widely passed out in Iowa and New Hampshire in 1995 and 1996. It is called Lamar Alexander's "Little Plaid Book." I used it when I ran for President of the United States. Obviously not enough people read it for me to be successful. It has lots of good instructions about rules, lessons, and reminders about running for office and making a difference, whether you are President of the United States or president of your senior class. Here is rule 259:

Keep in mind that enough small steps in the right direction will still get you where you want to go.

Mr. President:

Keep in mind that enough small steps in the right direction will still get you where you want to go.

I think we should take that advice. I think it is plainly obvious that we in Congress have been biting off more than we can chew—on immigration, on health care, and on other issues. We have been producing 1,000-page bills which, in truth, most Members of Congress have not even read and in which voters have no confidence, and out of which will come unintended consequences and results that are bad for our country. The worst consequence is that the ambition of ours is so large, to solve these problems, that it inevitably adds to the debt—the national debt, the Government's debt, our taxpayer debt—at a time when we are adding \$9 trillion to the debt in just 10 years and everyone is worried about how we are going to pay that back; and at a time, fairly or unfairly, when the American people are saying the new administration, it seems, has a new Washington takeover every other day: taking over banks, taking over insurance companies, taking over student loans—nobody asked them to take over student loans, they are just going to take them all over, all 15 million student loans are going to be run out of the U.S. Department of Education—taking over your farm ponds, maybe taking over health care, taking over car companies,

maybe taking over climate change by having a czar in the Environmental Protection Administration wave a magic wand and impose it on the country.

The American people see 32 so-called czars who are unaccountable and it looks like a runaway Federal Government with no checks and balances.

Senator BYRD, the senior Democrat, has warned about the consequences of these unaccountable czars. Senator HUTCHISON, Senator COLLINS—senior Republicans—have warned about that as well.

Instead of thousand-page bills that do not succeed and in which the people of this country have no confidence, I suggest we change course, we follow rule 259 in the "Little Plaid Book," and we begin to work on major issues facing our country, step by step, to re-earn the trust of the American people, to begin to solve the big challenges of this country. We bite off what we can swallow. We make sure we get it right and after we have taken the first steps then we can take another series of steps until we eventually resolve the problem. A few steps in the right direction is a good way to get where you want to go.

How would this work in practice? Let's take health care. Instead of a trillion-dollar thousand-page comprehensive health care government-run plan, as a first step we might allow small business pooling to reduce health care costs, increase accessibility for small business owners, unions, associations and their workers, members and families. This bill has been here for 4 years. It is ready to pass. There are actually competing bills. But the estimates are it would add a million workers that small businesses could afford to cover by insurance. That is a good step in the right direction.

We might reform medical malpractice laws so runaway junk lawsuits don't continue to drive up the cost of health care. In Tennessee, there are 60 counties where there are not any OB/GYN doctors. That means mothers in those 60 counties of Tennessee have to drive a long way, they have to drive to Memphis, maybe 60 miles, to get the prenatal health care to have their babies. The President mentioned the other night some steps about junk runaway lawsuits, so there is a second small step we could take that could make a big difference about cost.

Third, we could allow individual Americans the ability to purchase health care across State lines as they can with car insurance today. We can probably agree on that here and it would probably make a difference. I used to be a Governor so I have an aversion to not respecting State lines, but in this case we may need to do this because the cost of health insurance could come down if we did it and cost is what we are focused on.

No. 4, we could ensure that Americans who currently qualify for existing programs such as Medicaid and the