

Whereas premature birth is a leading cause of infant mortality and, according to the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies, costs the United States more than \$26,000,000,000 annually;

Whereas infant mortality can be substantially reduced through community-based services such as outreach, home visitation, case management, health education, and interconceptional care;

Whereas support for community-based programs to reduce infant mortality can result in lower future spending on medical interventions, special education, and other social services that may be needed for infants and children who are born with a low birth weight;

Whereas the Department of Health and Human Services, through the Office of Minority Health, has implemented the "A Healthy Baby Begins With You" campaign;

Whereas the Maternal and Child Health Bureau of the Health Resources and Services Administration has provided national leadership on the issue of infant mortality;

Whereas public awareness and education campaigns on infant mortality are held during the month of September each year; and

Whereas September 2010 has been designated as "National Infant Mortality Awareness Month": Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) supports the goals and ideals of National Infant Mortality Awareness Month 2010;

(2) supports efforts to educate people in the United States about infant mortality and the contributing factors to infant mortality;

(3) supports efforts to reduce infant deaths, low birth weight, pre-term births, and disparities in perinatal outcomes;

(4) recognizes the critical importance of including efforts to reduce infant mortality and the contributing factors to infant mortality as part of prevention and wellness strategies; and

(5) calls upon the people of the United States to observe National Infant Mortality Awareness Month with appropriate programs and activities.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. VOINOVICH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 20 minutes.

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

ENERGY AND NATIONAL SECURITY

Mr. VOINOVICH. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to support the Oil Spill Response Improvement Act of 2010. It is a bill that seeks to directly deal with one of the most serious issues facing our country today in the aftermath of the Deepwater Horizon incident and how the Federal Government responds to what will likely turn out to be one of the worst ecological disasters that have taken place off our Nation's shores.

The bill is a targeted piece of legislation that supports jobs in the gulf coast region, prevents our Nation from relying further on foreign nations for our energy needs, and protects the American taxpayer from being placed on the hook should, God forbid, a future incident ever occur. Specifically,

the bill gives the President the ability to raise caps on economic damages done by oil companies. It creates a Price-Anderson model where all entities operating in the gulf would share the risk, as we do with the 104 nuclear powerplants. I don't think the public is aware of the fact that they all have the same insurance policy, and if something were to go wrong with one nuclear powerplant, all the others' insurance would be called upon. So there is no question about liability; they just take care of the problem. We need to do the same thing in terms of these oil rigs.

The legislation maintains the integrity of the Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund. It provides States an additional funding system to be used to protect the ecosystem. It accelerates the lifting of the deepwater moratorium in the Gulf of Mexico. It creates a bipartisan spill commission with subpoena power to investigate causes of the Deepwater Horizon explosion. These are good ideas that I think will address the crisis at hand. They are good ideas that will help get people back to work in the gulf.

I know Senator REID has proposed an alternative piece of legislation. I understand that it maintains the current moratorium on deepwater drilling off the Outer Continental Shelf, creates a liability regime that will likely limit production in the Gulf of Mexico to only the largest of oil companies, and raises the Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund to pay for untested efficiency programs.

I welcome a robust debate, but looking at the schedule next week, my understanding is that the majority leader will likely fill the tree and not allow any amendments. So what we are probably going to see is a Republican-Democratic side-by-side taken care of in 1 day. To be candid, this is a much too serious issue to cram into 1 day with just side-by-side proposals. And I think that gives rise, for those watching what we are doing here in the Senate, to some feeling that what we are doing here is not genuine, is disingenuous and, quite frankly, if we do this next week, I think what it will do is further cause the public to think less of the institution of the Senate.

Regardless of whether you are a Republican or a Democrat, you ought to be concerned about the fact that since polling has been done regarding the approval of the Senate, the numbers today are the worst we have ever seen. So something is going on out there, and they are watching what we are doing and they are saying: These people seem to be more interested in partisan politics or who is going to win the next election in terms of how many new Senators or who is going to control the House of Representatives instead of really looking at the problems confronting our country. They are asking: Can't you people work together on a bipartisan basis to solve the problems we have? There is a fear and uncer-

tainty today in this country that I have never seen anything like, and I think all of us should be concerned about how the people in this country feel about what we are doing here.

Whether you are a Democrat or a Republican, environmental advocate, oil industry employee, I think all should agree that Congress needs to respond intelligently to the situation with action that balances environmental risks with our Nation's energy requirements.

Much of the responsibility for this spill should lie on the shoulders of a few bad actors in the private sector, and they are primarily with BP. I have to say, from my looking at this, there is gross negligence. It is amazing what they knew about and didn't do, and I think that will all come out, although I imagine there is going to be enough blame to go around once we have had a chance to step back and see just what happened.

I must also say that I think the decisions this administration has made, not only in reacting to the spill but also in its general attitude toward domestic oil and gas production, have been disastrous for the gulf region.

Last year, I sat down in my office with Secretary Ken Salazar to talk about domestic oil and gas production and our Nation's energy strategy. In that meeting, I conveyed to him that I have always believed one of the most pressing challenges America faces today is reducing our reliance on foreign sources of energy. I called it the second declaration of independence—finding more oil and using less. I told Secretary Salazar that I was concerned about the administration's actions that were limiting energy production in the United States.

He disagreed with me. Secretary Salazar said the Department was in the process of restructuring and undergoing a thorough review to ensure proper oversight of the oil and gas industry was being provided. He pointed out that the Department was moving forward with lease sales in the Atlantic and that, in his opinion, things were just fine. I took him at his word and waited but didn't see any change in the Department's attitude.

I sent a letter to the Secretary on April 19, 2010—April 19—reiterating my concern that his Department was ignoring its obligations to oversee domestic oil and gas development and focusing too much of its attention and resources on renewed efforts to promote renewable energy projects that make good photo-ops but would have little effect in meeting our Nation's long-term energy needs.

I expressed further concern that efforts to lease areas of the Outer Continental Shelf for oil and gas production were being restricted. For example, in November of 2009, the Department of the Interior acted to shorten the lease terms for a specific sale of leases in the Gulf of Mexico. The shortening of the lease terms will likely do nothing to guarantee more discoveries but, rather,

serve to increase risk as companies are rushed to complete production before the expiration of their lease.

Three months later, I have yet to receive an answer to my letter. And this is particularly disappointing to me because I consider Secretary Salazar—a former colleague—a friend, and I have always respected him.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the letter I sent to Secretary Salazar.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

UNITED STATES SENATE,
Washington, DC, April 29, 2010.

Hon. KEN SALAZAR,
Secretary, U.S. Department of the Interior,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SECRETARY SALAZAR: I believe one of the most pressing challenges America faces today is reducing our reliance on foreign energy sources and crafting a comprehensive national energy policy for the United States that makes use of every energy resource at our disposal. It is critical that we improve our energy security to increase our competitiveness in this growing global marketplace and improve our national security.

As the Secretary of the Interior, you play an instrumental role in implementing energy policy. And your department should be applauded for its work in managing the nearly 8,000 active onshore leases and the over 55,000 active offshore leases, for its successful lease sales in 2009, and for scheduling additional Federal oil and gas lease sales for 2010.

I am concerned however, by your comments that the Department of Interior is moving adequately to promote domestic production of oil and natural gas, and your efforts to “balance” the federal government’s procedures dealing with the leasing of federal lands for energy production. I know that you are sincere when you say that you are trying to find an approach to managing the nation’s natural resources that provides the protection necessary to ensure that we are not sacrificing irreplaceable natural treasures while allowing for the safe and responsible production needed to address future energy needs. But from what I have witnessed and from what I have gathered from accounts conveyed me, I am troubled that DOI is coming across as being more concerned with catering to the political whims of the environmental community.

Some have argued that unlike the attention being paid to renewable energy projects, government action that would promote increased domestic oil and natural gas production is getting neglected. I am of the opinion that there is no silver bullet when it comes to meeting future energy needs. We are going to need a wide portfolio of energy options that include different sets of technologies and solutions. As such, no particular energy option should receive preferential treatment on the basis of its constituencies. But neither should the domestic production of a reliable and abundant energy source, such as oil, natural gas, or coal, be curtailed for the same reasons.

I was encouraged by the President’s announcement to consider expanding oil and gas production on the U.S. Outer Continental Shelf. This is a good first step, but there are still large areas both in Pacific and Atlantic that would remain off-limits to exploration. Further, much of the Eastern Gulf of Mexico remains under a congressional moratorium until 2022.

While steps are being taken to expand domestic offshore oil and gas production, I must tell you I have concerns that as DOI

works to schedule lease sales in the select areas that have been released from moratoria, progress could very easily be stalled completely by external roadblocks such as lawsuits from the environmental community. This is a strategy that groups have successfully utilized to halt the construction of coal fired power plants. I hope the Administration and with your leadership at DOI will follow through with this proposal and expand our domestic oil and gas resources.

Additionally, your department is taking unilateral action that could be construed as making more difficult for oil gas production to take place domestically. For example, last November DOI acted to shorten the lease terms of an upcoming Central Gulf of Mexico lease sale. Industry argues that the shortening of the lease terms does nothing to guarantee more discoveries but rather takes away from companies the flexibility necessary to operate in an extremely challenging and risky environment.

I continue to value our friendship and will work with you as we both seek to achieve energy security, the creation of jobs, and the rebuilding of our economy. I am optimistic that we can bridge any differences as we strive to make the United States more energy independent from oil rich foreign countries who do not share our interests.

Sincerely,

GEORGE V. VOINOVICH,
United States Senator.

Mr. VOINOVICH. Meanwhile, the Gulf of Mexico is now under a revised moratorium on deepwater offshore drilling imposed by President Obama and the Department of Interior. This moratorium jeopardizes 30 percent of this Nation’s domestic oil production and 13 percent of our natural gas production.

There are 33 drilling platforms currently idle in the Gulf of Mexico. That doesn’t sound like a large number, but keep in mind that these rigs are really the size of factories. Each platform supports as many as 1,400 direct and indirect jobs, which means that as many as 46,200 jobs could be lost in the short term because of this moratorium. As these are good-paying jobs, this could amount to as much as \$10 million in lost wages per month, per platform.

Further, the moratorium threatens the livelihood of more than 300,000 oil and gas workers in the region. The loss of revenue will be in the billions. A 6-month moratorium could result in a \$147 billion loss in local, State, and Federal revenue over the next 10 years. Oil and gas production in the Gulf of Mexico is a significant revenue stream for the Federal Government. A moratorium on production that lasts 6 months could cost the Federal Government between \$120 million and \$150 million in lost royalties and a \$300 million to \$500 million decline in government revenue in just 2011. That is next year.

This is sure to have a devastating effect on our Nation’s long-term national security. I have said over and over that Americans are hurting from our addiction to oil. I am not sure they fully realize the extent to which our national security, and indeed our very way of life, is threatened—threatened—by our reliance on foreign oil.

Every year, we send billions of dollars overseas for oil and pad the coffers

of many nations that do not have our best interests at heart, such as Venezuela, whose leader has threatened to cut off his oil exports. Today, over 80 percent of the world’s oil reserves are in the hands of governments and their respective national oil companies, and 16 of the world’s 20 largest oil companies are state owned. Russia has proven it has no qualms about using energy as a weapon. In Venezuela, Hugo Chavez has forcefully consolidated the nation’s vast oil reserves under the control of their state-owned oil company. He frequently uses the company as political leverage in his region.

With the rise in national oil companies around the world and the apparent weaponization of the globe’s energy resources, U.S. domestic oil production has been on a decline. We now import nearly 60 percent of our oil, and as a consequence we are sending billions of dollars overseas and putting our faith in the hands of regimes that do not have our best interests at heart. For example, in 2007, we spent \$327 billion to import crude oil and refined petroleum products. In 2008, the amount we shipped overseas spiked to more than \$700 billion. In other words, we take American money and send it overseas. And 55 percent of that money, or nearly \$400 billion, went to oil-exporting OPEC nations. Today, oil amounts for over half our trade deficit.

Our dependence on foreign oil is even made more troubling when you consider our Nation’s financial situation. The national debt stands at \$13.3 trillion—more than double the \$5.6 trillion that existed when I came to the Senate in 1999. By the end of 2010, the national debt is expected to have grown to over \$14 trillion. Last year, we borrowed \$1.4 trillion.

The best way I can explain the soup we are in is that last year, for every dollar the Federal Government spent, we borrowed 41 cents. Most people, when I tell them that, just can’t believe it. But that is the situation. This year, we are going to borrow \$1.5 trillion or another year where we will borrow 41 or 42 cents for every dollar we spend. Over half the privately owned national debt is being held by foreign creditors, mostly foreign central banks. In fact, foreign creditors have provided more than 60 percent of the private funds the U.S. Treasury has borrowed since 2001, according to the Department of Treasury.

Who are the creditors? According to the Treasury Department, the three largest foreign holders of U.S. debt are China, Japan, and the OPEC nations.

These concerns led me to introduce the National Energy Security Act last year with Senator BYRON DORGAN. The bill expands development of domestic oil and natural gas by streamlining the inventory and permitting of the most promising areas of the Outer Continental Shelf. By the way, the group that is supporting this is a group of former admirals and generals who basically said we have to do something; because of the fact of too much reliance

on foreign oil we are in terrible shape. We are on thin ice, in terms of our national security.

In addition, the bill provides \$50 billion in Federal loan guarantee authority for low-carbon electricity, including nuclear and advanced coal. It promotes the electrification of the transportation fleet to reduce dependence on foreign oil, supports building the crucial infrastructure necessary to create a robust, reliable national grid, and strengthens electricity transmission, including giving FERC the power to site transmission lines.

Americans today demand action and they demand we come together in a bipartisan fashion to solve not only this crisis in the gulf but our larger energy crisis. For 10 years, I have been a member of the Environment and Public Works Committee and for 10 years I have tried to coax Congress into harmonizing our energy, our economy, and our environment. Congress has refused and now the chickens have come home to roost and we are paying the price because we were not able to get together.

I believe the best message we can send the world is that we get it. We must demonstrate that we can safely and responsibly produce oil off our shores, while also promising ourselves that we are going to use less by undertaking a renewed effort to make the United States of America the most oil-independent nation in the world. I envision an America 10 years from now where we can have enough oil to take care of our needs. I imagine an America that is the least reliant country in the world on oil, an America where our economy is not threatened by our reliance on foreign energy sources. It will be an America that has created hundreds of thousands of jobs through responsible development of our Nation's resources and through the creation of new industries in the field of alternative energy.

Wouldn't it be great for our children and grandchildren to one day celebrate the time America put aside its differences and came together to announce what I refer to as a second "Declaration of Independence"—to find more and use less? I believe, with this attitude, we can rekindle the American spirit of self-reliance, innovation, and creativity to usher in a new era of prosperity.

The first step is to pass the Oil Spill Improvement Act to get people back to work in the gulf and to give the Department of Interior the tools it needs to provide proper oversight of the oil and gas industry. Second, Congress needs to do its job—make the passing of a comprehensive energy bill a priority and provide certainty as to how our Nation will supply energy to its economy in the future.

I reiterate and call upon my colleagues, the majority leader, the minority leader, for us next week to put out the Republican proposal and the Democratic proposal, and to have back-to-back votes will do nothing but in-

crease the cynicism that is out there among the American people about what we are doing in the Senate. Next week, we should finish the small business bill—get on with that. We ought to get on with consideration of the Kagan nomination by the President and we should come together and say let's get serious, let's work during the August break to see if we cannot come together on a compromise between the two back-to-back bills so maybe when we get back in September we can have something we can all agree on and get passed and reassure the American people we are serious about dealing with their problems and maybe even give consideration—I know this would be difficult—to look at what many of us have suggested, to look at the bill that JEFF BINGAMAN and the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee put together on a bipartisan basis.

Perhaps we could look at a bill Senator ROCKEFELLER and I have worked on for over a year that deals with capturing and sequestering carbon; to look at a title that deals with nuclear energy that I worked with with Senator LIEBERMAN and others—and get something done. It may not be satisfactory to a lot of the environmental groups, but at least we would move the ball down the field this year so people know we are serious about becoming less reliant on foreign sources of energy and also that we are genuinely concerned about reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

As I said, I have been around here, this is the 12th year on Environment and Public Works. For years, we wanted to do something about NO_x, SO_x, and carbon, bring down the caps. The environmental groups said: No, we won't agree with that, we have to include greenhouse gas emissions, so we did nothing.

I will never forget the Secretary of State, when she was a Senator from New York, and she wanted a compromise on emissions because the Adirondack Council and the folks from the Smoky Mountains agreed if we did the Ps, reduce SO_x, NO_x, and mercury, we could move along, and then the environmental groups came along and they gave her the "Villain of the Month Award." Hillary Clinton gets the "Villain of the Month Award" because she is trying to work on a compromise to move us down the road.

We have some time left. I know it is going to be difficult because we have the backdrop of the election facing us. I hope once that is over we have a robust lameduck session so we can deal with some of the things that are on the minds of the American people and, hopefully, perhaps this Commission that you and I wanted to see done on the floor of the Senate, that the President finally had to do through Executive action, could come back here with some positive suggestions on how we can deal with our debt and these budgets that are not going to be balanced as far as the eye can see.

I yield the floor.

TRIBUTE TO ELIZABETH GORE, CHIEF OF STAFF

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, for the past 10 years I have had the privilege of working with Elizabeth Gore, the chief of staff of my U.S. Senate office.

Today, as Elizabeth leaves her job to pursue other career opportunities, I want to pay tribute to her extraordinary work. Elizabeth Gore has made important contributions not only to the effective management of my Senate office, but also to the creation of good public policy for our country.

Elizabeth joined my staff 10 years ago following a career that included work in both the U.S. House of Representatives and for the White House. She possesses that wide range of skills that is always necessary for success. She is smart, tough, honest, and has demonstrated an uncanny sense of good judgment.

I know the American people view the U.S. Senate through the lives of those of us who are elected to serve here. But, frankly, every U.S. Senator will admit that a substantial amount of the credit for their accomplishments in the Senate belong to some very talented staff. That has been especially true of Elizabeth in my office. She has directed a complicated set of issues in an office full of activity with great skill.

The term "regular hours" would not fit any job description in most Senate offices. Long hours, family sacrifices, and devotion to getting the job done describes everything about the commitment Elizabeth made to me, my staff, and the people of North Dakota over the past decade.

I know Elizabeth will now add another chapter to what is already an illustrious career and others will discover the joy of working with her.

I join all of my staff members in saying thank you to Elizabeth Gore for having spent the past decade working in my office. All of us owe her a great debt of gratitude.

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON INTERNATIONAL VISITORS

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, I wish to speak to a resolution honoring the National Council for International Visitors, NCIV, on the occasion of its 50th anniversary. The United States has the responsibility of protecting its citizens by ensuring peace, and I believe that citizen diplomacy as practiced by the NCIV is a crucial tool to achieving that end.

With the goal of promoting "excellence in civilian diplomacy," the NCIV promotes the idea that individual citizens have the right and responsibility to promote peaceful and cooperative foreign relations. NCIV champions the belief that "citizen diplomacy has the power to shape American perceptions of foreign cultures and international perceptions of the United States, effectively shattering stereotypes, illuminating differences, underscoring