

of total U.S. oil production and 13 percent of natural gas production. By failing to take full advantage of that resource, we are putting our energy security on the line.

Mr. President, 400,000 jobs across the gulf coast are tied to the offshore energy industry. Nearly a year after issuing its moratorium and months since the moratorium was lifted, the Department of the Interior last week approved its first, its one and only, deepwater permit—one in a year. It's one and one only. There are thousands of idled leases, people sitting in the Gulf of Mexico idle that should be able to be at least exploring to determine if it is worth drilling. Yet the gulf is facing a permitorium.

My constituents know the pain of this "permitorium." One unfortunate case is the Houston-based Seahawk Drilling Company. Seahawk Drilling used to be the second largest shallow water drilling contractor in the United States. It provided high-paying jobs to men and women in Texas and across the Gulf of Mexico. I say "used to" because in February bureaucratic delays in shallow water permitting forced Seahawk Drilling to declare bankruptcy. They could not continue to have the costs associated with their employment levels, and with their company being there without the opportunity to drill and produce and keep their employee base. They declared bankruptcy. It destroyed 1,000 high-paying Texas jobs.

I received a letter describing the pain and distress the company felt when it had to inform the dedicated Seahawk employees they no longer had a job. According to the letter, on the day Seahawk was forced to sell its assets and lay off workers, the chief operating officer had to "fight back the emotions of the day. He took a deep breath and he left the conference room for a room full of Seahawk employees to tell them that their company was bankrupt."

These are real people with real families who lost real jobs—American jobs—and it could have been prevented.

Since the moratorium was enacted, at least 13 rigs—deepwater and shallow water—have departed the Gulf of Mexico, taking with them good American jobs, and, furthermore, putting us in the position of having to import now from the foreign countries where these rigs have gone, not only taking away American jobs but forcing us to be even more dependent on foreign imports for our energy needs.

Offshore energy production is expected to decrease by 13 percent in 2011, due to the slow pace of permitting. This is unacceptable, and we must do something that is productive.

Yesterday, Senator LANDRIEU and I introduced the LEASE Act, the Lease Extension and Secure Energy Act of 2011. All our bill does is extend the offshore leases that are impacted by the moratorium and the lack of permitting for 1 year.

The LEASE Act returns to lessees the lease time taken from them during

the moratorium. This will increase domestic energy production and protect some American jobs—those that have not already left. Despite being unable to explore for energy resources, the leaseholders are continuing to pay the expenses, as time ticks away on their lease.

The LEASE Act will prevent leases from running out, and it gives the lessees the certainty they deserve that they will have the full amount of the lease for which they have paid bonus payments to secure.

In 2009, the industry accounted for \$70 billion in economic value and provided \$20 billion in revenue to Federal, State, and local governments through royalties, bonuses, and tax collections.

I hope our bill will be noncontroversial. It would seem to me that anyone would agree that if you paid for a 10-year lease, and you have the expenses of exploring to see if that lease has potential, before you drill to see if the lease has potential, you would have the full 10 years, and not 9 years because you have not been able to use the year we have had the moratorium and the lack of permitting.

There has been another suggestion by the administration that perhaps we should be proposing energy taxes—up to \$90 billion over the next 10 years. The President suggested that in his State of the Union message. Much of the taxes that would go on the oil and gas industry for expenses—that any industry, any business can write off, but would single out the oil and gas industry not to be able to expense their exploration and drilling costs—what would happen? If the prices go up, of course, who is going to pay those high prices? The families and businesses that are having to fill their cars with gasoline.

In fact, the administration, through the EPA, is trying to bring more expenses to the refining industry by purporting to regulate greenhouse gas emissions. The administration is also adding to the refiners by saying they should not get the manufacturing tax credit.

We have been trying to encourage manufacturing in America because we want manufacturing jobs in America, and so many of those have gone overseas. But the administration proposes to tax refiners who are manufacturing the gasoline from the oil and add more expense to the product, which is gasoline, and, oh, by the way, take away the capability for these refiners to have the same treatment as any other manufacturer in our country.

Raising taxes on our domestic oil and energy industry is wrong, particularly at this time. We need to assure that we are not going to drive our energy jobs overseas. Yet what the administration is doing is counterintuitive if we all agree we want to keep the jobs in America.

So here we are with gas at \$3.52 a gallon, and the summer driving season is upon us. We are looking now at esti-

mates from the experts that gasoline could be \$4 a gallon. What is that going to do to the family who wants to take a vacation at a reasonable price? What is that going to do to the workers who have to get to work and who are already strapped, and, for Heaven's sake, the poor people who are unemployed who are trying to go and interview for jobs with gas at \$4 a gallon?

We cannot sit here and let this happen. It is time we get together with the President of the United States and have proactive energy ideas, programs, and solutions that are going to keep jobs in America, that will allow us to use our natural resources to begin to set the stage if we have upheaval in the Middle East that causes the supply to go down at a great rate. We need to have our supply go up to meet the test we should have of lowering energy prices for our people with our own natural resources. It is not to put the SPR out and put us in an even more vulnerable position. No. It is to use our resources, with Americans to take the jobs, and increase our supply so the price of gasoline at the pump goes down for the American people, and so we can have the jobs we should have in America stay in America.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

HARRIET TUBMAN

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, 12 years ago this very day, the Senate passed a joint resolution that honored Harriet Tubman, with Harriet Tubman Day, on March 10. That resolution was sponsored by Senator CARPER and then-Senator BIDEN. In the House of Representatives, I served and I cosponsored a similar resolution.

Harriet Tubman was a remarkable woman. She was born in Dorchester County, MD, in 1822. She was a slave for greater than 25 years of her life. At age 25, she married John Tubman. She escaped slavery in 1849. She returned to the eastern shore of Maryland, not once but 19 times that we know of within a 10-year period, in order to rescue slaves and to set them free.

She rescued slaves in Dorchester County and Caroline County in Maryland and throughout the entire Northeast. She was known as the modern day "Moses" for the Underground Railroad.

In the Civil War, she joined Union forces as a spy, as a scout, and as a nurse, operating in Virginia, Florida, and South Carolina.

After the Civil War was over, she settled in Auburn, NY, and was very actively involved in the women's suffrage movement, and she established one of the first African-American homes for the aged.

She died in 1913.

Harriet Tubman embodies the American spirit. She was a strong-willed person who fought for the rights and freedom of those who were oppressed in the barbaric institution of slavery.

Her personal freedom was not enough for her because she recognized there was injustice in this country, and she wanted to be involved. As the joint resolution that passed the Senate 12 years ago said:

... Harriet Tubman—whose courageous and dedicated pursuit of the promise of American ideals and common principles of humanity continues to serve and inspire all people who cherish freedom. . . .

A major part of learning and understanding the significance of history is being able to experience the places where that history occurred.

From Fort McHenry in Baltimore, MD, to the Lincoln Memorial here in the Nation's capital, we have preserved our history for future generations. Millions of visitors and schoolchildren visit these iconic places in American history.

The Harriet Tubman National Historical Park and the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Historical Park is legislation I have filed so we can preserve the history of Harriet Tubman with these historic places for future generations.

I am joined in this effort by Senator MIKULSKI, Senator SCHUMER, and Senator GILLIBRAND. The natural landscape on the eastern shore that existed during Harriet Tubman's day exists today. Her homestead, where her father was born, Ben Ross, exists today. Stewart's Canal, where her father worked, exists today. The Brodess Farm, where Harriet Tubman worked as a slave, exists today. Right adjacent to it, and including part of that property, is the Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge. So we have the landscape in which the Underground Railroad was operating to free slaves in the 19th century. It exists today on the eastern shore of Maryland.

In Auburn, NY, the home in which Harriet Tubman lived still exists, the home for the aged that she started still remains. The Thompson Memorial AME Zion Episcopal Church is still there, and the Fort Hill Cemetery, where she is buried. They are all intact, and all are available for preservation.

The legislation we have filed will preserve these places in American history under our National Park System for future generations. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation, to honor a great American, and to preserve our heritage for future generations.

ASTHMA AND THE IMPACT OF HEALTH DISPARITIES

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I rise to speak about asthma and the impact of health disparities. I have pointed out on the floor before that race and ethnic health disparities exist in America. I have talked on the floor before about sickle cell disease. Well, the same thing is true with the chronic inflammatory diseases of the body's airways that impede breathing, such as asthma.

As I pointed out before, the Affordable Care Act includes a provision I

helped write that establishes the Institute for Minority Health and Health Disparities at NIH. The purpose for including this information about asthma in the RECORD is to point out that we still have challenges that need to be met. I look forward to working with my colleagues on that issue.

Asthma is a chronic inflammatory disease of the body's airways that impairs breathing and affects more than 20 million Americans. People with this condition have overly reactive airways that constrict in response to allergens, temperature changes, physical exercise, and stress. During asthma attacks, the airways spasm and prevent oxygen from getting to the lungs. This leads to chest tightness, shortage of breath, wheezing and mucus production. Severe attacks can require intubation and even result in death. Of the 20 million Americans affected by asthma, about 7 million are children. In fact, about 10 percent of all American children have asthma.

Genetics play a significant role in the development of asthma in children and adults, but asthma is also influenced by environmental factors and racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic factors. Asthma is consistently found to be more prevalent among certain minority groups, particularly among Blacks, Native Americans, and Puerto Ricans. To be more precise, research indicates that asthma is 30 percent more prevalent in Blacks than in Whites; American Indians and Alaska Natives are 20 percent more likely to have asthma than Whites; Asian/Pacific Islander children are three times more likely to have asthma than White children; and Puerto Rican Americans have twice the asthma rate as the Latino American population overall.

In addition to occurring more often, asthma is also more severe in minority populations, and this leads to higher mortality rates for Black Americans. Asthma accounts for more than 4,000 deaths in the United States each year. Blacks are 2.5 times more likely to die from asthma-related causes than Whites. Among children, this ratio is even more staggering—Black children are 7 times more likely to die from asthma-related causes than White children. Interestingly, although Latino Americans and American Indian/Alaskan Natives are more likely than Whites to have asthma, they have a 50 percent lower mortality rate.

As I noted earlier, the gap in asthma outcomes is also influenced by several socioeconomic factors. Health disparities can be attributed to differences in education level, independent of race or ethnicity. Research shows that children whose mothers have not completed high school are twice as likely to develop asthma as children whose mothers have a high school diploma, and this difference remains significant even when controlling for race and ethnicity.

Economic status also influences the incidence of asthma. Studies have

shown that unemployment is correlated with increased incidence, and that people with incomes below the Federal poverty level are 30 percent more likely to develop asthma as those who are above the Federal poverty level.

One reason is that income level is correlated with quality of housing, and substandard housing is strongly associated with poor asthma outcomes. Substandard housing exposes residents to environmental triggers for asthma such as dust mites, roaches, mold, and rodents.

A study in the journal *Pediatrics* showed that eliminating these indoor pollutants could prevent 39 percent of asthma cases in children. Other studies have shown that substandard housing accounts for up to a 50-percent increase in asthma cases.

In addition to indoor triggers, outdoor pollutants are also contributing factors. Researchers have shown that among people living within 50 yards of major car traffic, people living near a road traveled by 30,000 vehicles per day are three times more likely to develop asthma than those who live near a road traveled by 10,000 vehicles per day. To put these figures into perspective, the average segment of I-495, our Capital Beltway, carries about 200,000 cars per day.

The built environment comprising roads, factories, and other human-made surroundings is a substantial risk factor for asthma. Many people are stuck in unhealthy living conditions because they can't afford to move elsewhere, particularly in the case of public housing projects, which are often situated in the most polluted locations. Initiatives such as the Healthy Homes Program run by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development are encouraging, but greater effort must be devoted to raising the quality of the home environment for people living in poverty.

Whether due to one or more of these factors, the impact of disparities in asthma is profound because asthma is such a crippling condition. Untreated or inappropriately treated, asthma makes it difficult to concentrate at school and work, limits physical activity, and often results in absenteeism. It also reaches beyond the patient to family members, as parents are often required to miss work to care for sick children. The Nation's 20 million asthma patients account for more than 100 million days each year in lost productivity due to absence from school and work, according to the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology. Yearly, asthma patients account for more than 11 million office visits and 500,000 hospitalizations. That is an annual cost of more than \$6 billion in direct and indirect medical expenditures. Much of this expense could be avoided with proper asthma management.

Patients who are diagnosed at an early age and whose conditions are well