

Democrats themselves admit it would not lower gas prices by a penny. So it is a fair question: What in the world are they doing? Once again, Democrats have been faced with a crisis and have done their best to turn it into a political exercise rather than doing something to actually help people and create jobs.

They pushed a tax on energy because evidently some of their leaders think it polls well. So does Mother's Day. I would suggest Democrats spend a little more time looking at the price of gas at their local gas stations than at the latest polling numbers about class warfare rhetoric.

At a time when Americans are genuinely struggling out there, the Democrats have chosen to waste 2 weeks making a political statement rather than in trying to make a difference.

The American people deserve a lot better than that, and that is why Republicans have offered the Offshore Production and Safety Act of 2011, which we will vote on later today.

Our plan has basically three objectives; first, to restore American offshore production; second, to improve safety; third, to require bureaucrats in Washington to get to work on the permitting process to make a decision one way or the other.

It would have three corresponding effects. First, and most important, our plan would help reduce the price of gas at the pump. By unlocking our own domestic resources and speeding up the permitting process, our plan would actually do something to increase supply, putting downward pressure on price. As the Democratic Senator from Missouri said yesterday: "The more supply, the less the price."

It would also help alleviate our dependence on foreign sources of oil, and it would create thousands of energy jobs right here in America instead of sending them overseas, which is why this bill has the support of both the National Association of Manufacturers and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

I have indicated what our bill does in general. Here are the specifics.

In order to restore American offshore production, our plan directs the Secretary of the Interior to conduct previously scheduled offshore lease sales in the western and central Gulf of Mexico, Virginia, and Alaska. In addition, the plan will extend lease terms by 1 year for gulf leases which were suspended under the 2010 Obama moratorium.

After the devastating oilspill we had last year in the gulf, improving safety is one of our highest priorities. That is why our bill amends the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act to require all lessees to develop spill response and containment plans, establishes a public-private task force on oilspill response and mitigation, and orders a study on Federal response to oilspills by the Comptroller General to examine capabilities and legal authorities related to spill prevention and response to clarify appropriate Federal roles.

Finally, it is imperative we put in place a process that makes bureaucrats operate more efficiently on the crucial issuance of permits. That is why our plan puts time limits on the review of and decision on drilling permits, providing for 30 days of application review, with two opportunities for the Interior Department to extend the time period. Beyond that, it provides for a default approval if Interior does not reject the application within 60 days, and it directs the Interior Department to provide rationale for rejection of permits.

This bill is not our last on this crisis. We could do a lot more to increase production here at home, and we should. But it offers solutions, and every provision in this bill has bipartisan support.

At a time of near record gas prices, this is a modest approach, a good first step that takes everyone's concerns into account so we can actually achieve a practical result.

That is what Americans want. It is time to stop pointing fingers. It is time to stop picking winners and losers. It is time to stop telling Americans what is best for them.

It is time to stop holding Americans back with moratoriums, fees, bureaucratic roadblocks, and the ever-expanding reach of a President who seems to think business owners in this country need to get his permission first if they want to create jobs.

Every single American is feeling the pain at the pump, Democrats and Republicans alike. It is time for the two parties to come together and get serious about results. I urge all my colleagues to support the Offshore Production and Safety Act of 2011.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business for debate only until 10:30 a.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees.

Mr. McCONNELL. 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. COONS. Madam 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.

OIL SUBSIDIES

Mr. COONS. Madam President, I rise this morning to commemorate Na-

tional Police Week and to speak to the service of the brave men and women in local law enforcement. But, first, I feel compelled to make a comment in response to the exchange between the majority leader and the Republican leader, to simply speak, if I could, briefly about the ongoing pain each and every working American family feels when they go to the gas station.

With the price of gasoline at an all-time high, with the price of gasoline flirting with \$4 a gallon, with the price of oil retreating from an all-time high, and with, most importantly, oil company profits gushing through the roof and hitting an all-time high, Members of our party, Members of this body came forward yesterday with a bill which got more than 50 votes but failed to hit the 60 needed in this body to make for cloture, which would have made significant progress on dealing with our deficit.

We just heard a comment on the floor that we need to stop picking winners and losers and need to move forward in helping America end its dependence on foreign energy. I could not agree more because the expenditures through our Tax Code—the billions and billions of dollars in needless expenditures through our Tax Code—that continue to subsidize some of the most wildly profitable corporations in American history is exactly that, picking winners, and the losers are the American people.

When I go home to my State—I know, Madam President, when you go home to your State—I hear people day in and day out say: Why can't you do more to help create decent jobs, to deal with the deficit and, more than anything, to stop the oil companies, which are despoiling our natural resources and picking our pockets at the pump.

This is not picking on one particular industry. This is rationally looking at our immense tax expenditures through the code and saying: There is a time here for us to stop. We would save literally \$21 billion by fiscal year 2021; that is, over the next decade, \$21 billion in deficit reduction. That does not solve the problem we need to come together and address as a body—both parties, both Chambers of this great Congress—but it is a significant downpayment.

I am from a State where we produce very little in the way of oil or coal or gas but where we consume a lot of energy and where we have lots of opportunities to invest in alternative energy—investments that would create new jobs, a competitive platform for the United States as we enter this new century and that could, frankly, help sustain our economy going forward.

The votes cast yesterday to sustain these senseless tax breaks and credits, to help keep afloat the most profitable companies in American history, strike me as doing exactly what we were just urged not to do—picking winners, where the average American is, in fact, the loser.

It is my hope we will continue to look, with a sharp and clear eye, at the billions of dollars, the more than \$35 billion in first-quarter profits made by the five largest American oil firms. I have nothing against corporations making profits. In fact, that is what helps propel our economy. As we try to recover from this terrible recession, having a profitable private sector is the best way forward to help create jobs and to help grow our economy and to help deal with Federal revenues.

But the spending through our Tax Code—something that has accumulated on the underside of the American economy over the last decade—has to be stopped. We have to find ways to plug the holes through which billions in potential Federal revenue are leaking. I frankly think it is time for us to have a sensible national energy policy. And continuing to defend decades-old, needless tax breaks for major oil companies so that they can engage in manufacturing by extracting oil from the ground, for example—one of the five that would have been ended by this bill—is just senseless.

So it is my hope that we will reconsider; that as we move forward and try to find a way together to create jobs, to reduce spending and deal with our deficits, we will look hard at some of these outdated tax breaks that make it possible for bloated oil companies to make billions of dollars of profit off working Americans who pay too much at the pump.

NATIONAL POLICE WEEK

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, this week we are honoring the service and sacrifice of Americans who serve us as police.

May 15 to May 21 is National Police Week, and Americans all across this country will be recognizing those who serve and have served in police departments in communities from coast to coast. Law enforcement personnel and their families will also be coming together to hold memorials for those who have made the ultimate sacrifice and lost their lives in the line of duty.

National Police Week holds special significance to me because for the 6 years I served as county executive in New Castle County, DE, I was responsible for a police force that worked hard day and night to keep our community safe. Every year in May, I would gather with our law enforcement officers, with the Fraternal Order of Police, which so ably represented them, with the families of those who had served, and with the families of the one member of our law enforcement community, the New Castle County Police, who had been killed in the line of duty.

I often had differences with the Fraternal Order of Police in my 6 years of leadership, but I will tell you, they were great and tireless partners in standing up for the working men and woman who kept us safe each and every day. They kept us focused on of-

ficer safety, and they kept us focused on providing for them the equipment and the training and the support they so richly deserve.

I will tell you that each and every week that I would have a tough week, when we had difficult times dealing with local budgets or coming to compromise and making reasonable progress in the county, if I ever for a moment felt sorry for myself as I drove home from the county government center, all I needed to do was to turn on my police radio in my county car and listen to dispatch. There was always something going on. As every patrol car went out, as every squad responded to crises, I was reminded day-in and day-out of the incredible selfless service of the men and women of local law enforcement all over this country, these dedicated men and women who sacrifice time away from their families to put themselves daily in harm's way. And sadly, too often, it finds them.

Since the beginning of 2009, 122 American police officers have lost their lives in service to their local community. Today, I wish to focus on one—Patrolman Chad Spicer of Georgetown, DE. A Georgetown native, Chad attended the Sussex Central High School and graduated from Del Tech in 1999. Following 4 years with our State department of corrections, he began service with the police department in Bridgeville, later in the town of Laurel. In 2008, Chad joined the force in his hometown, fulfilling his greatest childhood dream.

On September 1, 2009, Chad and his partner, Corporal Shawn Brittingham, were in pursuit of a vehicle containing suspects in a robbery. The car abruptly stopped. Before the two officers had a chance to get out, a suspect fired a single gunshot at close range, killing Chad and, in a ricochet, seriously wounded his partner. The suspects were eventually apprehended and have been brought to trial.

Patrolman Chad Spicer was only 29 years old when he was murdered doing his job. He is survived by his fiancée, his beautiful young daughter Aubrey, his parents Ruth Ann and Norman, a brother, two sisters, and a family of fellow officers in Georgetown and across our State of Delaware.

His funeral service was one of the most moving experiences I have had in my adult life. Thousands of law enforcement professionals, men and women, and family members from literally all across our country gathered to pay tribute to this brave, likeable, dedicated young man who gave his life in the protection of our community.

Earlier this month, the people of Georgetown, DE, erected a memorial to Chad and his courage and the sacrifice he made for all of us. Georgetown Chief of Police Topping noted that: Everyone in town knew and liked Chad, even those from the roughest part of town, even those who were on the receiving end of his service to our community. Chad died protecting the community where he was born and raised, and los-

ing him to senseless violence like that had a devastating impact on the people of Georgetown and on our whole State.

Chad was the first Delaware police officer to die from wounds received in the line of duty since 1993. His loss is a constant reminder that law enforcement officers all over our country live with the daily reality that each time they go out on patrol, every time they report for duty, their lives may be put on the line as they serve their communities and our country.

This is why I think it is so important that the Federal Government continue to strengthen local police department capacities through things such as the Federal vest grant program that helps local law enforcement purchase bullet-proof vests and other critical police supplies. It is so important to me that when law enforcement—Federal, State, and local—work together, we can succeed in keeping Americans safe. There is always more we can do. This is why the Judiciary Committee will be holding a field hearing later next month in Wilmington, DE, to explore ways we can better improve the collaboration and cooperation between Federal and local law enforcement.

While we honor our men and women of law enforcement every day and every year, during National Police Week, we celebrate their service and sacrifice and thank them for being forever on watch.

In memory of Patrolman Chad Spicer and all of the other law enforcement professionals who have made the ultimate sacrifice, I today stand in memory of their service.

I yield the floor and 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. THUNE. Madam 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.

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that speakers on the Republican side be allocated up to 10 minutes each.

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

ENTITLEMENT REFORM

Mr. THUNE. Last Friday, the Social Security trustees' report and the Medicare trustees' report were both released. They showed that as large as our debt and deficits are now, without tackling these two entitlements, our future debts and deficits will dwarf current levels. In fact, this year alone, Medicare is running a cashflow deficit of more than \$32 billion. This is the largest deficit ever for this program. Likewise, Social Security will run a cashflow deficit of \$46 billion this year. This requires the Treasury to finance