

and they might be taken out of context. That reminds me of an editorial from a few years ago, and here is what it said:

Keeping cameras out to prevent people from getting the wrong idea is a little like removing the paintings from an art museum out of fear that visitors might not have the art history background to appreciate them.

Similar arguments were made when consideration was given to televising these proceedings. Nevertheless, for two decades the legislative sessions and committee meetings in the Senate and the House have been broadcast live, and the legislative branch is better for it. The majority of States permit live video coverage in some or all of their courts. It is time the Supreme Court did the same.

Mr. President, I am sure you have found when you have gone back home there are people who watch C-SPAN nonstop. I have literally had people in my hometown of Springfield come up to me in the grocery store and say: Is Senator BERNIE SANDERS feeling well? I saw him sitting at his desk, and he looked a little bit pale.

They follow it with such close regard for the Members and the speeches that it is a surprise to many of us who live in this institution and work in it every day.

In my view, the Cameras in the Courtroom Act is a reasonable approach that balances the public's need for information and transparency with the constitutional rights of those who appear before the court. As in past years, the Cameras in the Courtroom Act enjoys bipartisan support.

I thank Senators KLOBUCHAR, CORNYN, SCHUMER, HARKIN, GILLIBRAND, BEGICH, and the Presiding Officer, Senator BLUMENTHAL, for cosponsoring the bill. These Senators, as well as Senator GRASSLEY and myself, believe public scrutiny of Supreme Court proceedings will produce greater accountability, transparency, and understanding.

I thank Senator LEAHY, chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, for scheduling my bill, the Cameras in the Courtroom Act, for a vote in the Judiciary Committee. It was reported out with a strong bipartisan vote, and it is now pending on the Senate calendar. The bill has been cleared by every Democratic Senator for a vote by the full Senate. I am still hoping we can bring it to the floor as quickly as possible.

Mr. President, now I would like to touch on a related issue. Just as Supreme Court hearings should be televised to the American people, so too should the Court's ethical standards be available for review by the public. The ethics rules for all branches of government should be clear and public. When ethics decisions arise in the Senate—for example, the Senate Ethics Committee is responsible for enforcing the rules for Senators and our employees. Everyone knows the standards and expectations for Congress because they are a matter of public record. That

cannot be said for the Supreme Court of the United States.

Our Supreme Court has publicly adopted some limited ethics rules but not others. The Court does not have an ethics office, nor is it subject to the judicial conference which regulates all other Federal judges outside the Supreme Court. Instead, as the highest Court in the land, the Supreme Court polices itself, and it asks the American people to just trust them. Of course, I have the highest respect for the Justices' abilities and their judgment. It has been my honor to come to know some of these Justices personally over the years. But if the public is asked to trust the Justices to police themselves, we are at least entitled to know the rules by which they play.

To its credit, some of the Supreme Court's ethics rules are already pretty clear. Through an internal resolution, the Supreme Court has adopted the same financial restrictions that apply to all other Federal employees. I recently sent a letter—along with Senators LEAHY, WHITEHOUSE, FRANKEN, and BLUMENTHAL—to John Roberts, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, asking him to publicly release one of the Court's resolutions which says that the Justices will follow the same regulations on outside employment, honoraria, and income that apply to other justices. The Chief Justice agreed to our requests and publicly released this resolution for the first time since it was adopted in 1991. I applaud Chief Justice Roberts' action. I encourage him and the other Justices to continue on this path by releasing all of their ethics rules.

Nevertheless, there is more work for the Supreme Court to do to increase transparency and accountability. The Court should either adopt a court resolution agreeing to follow the judicial code of conduct—the same ethics code that applies to all other Federal judges—or adopt and publicly disclose their own ethics code. Many have called for the Supreme Court to adopt the Judicial Code of Conduct.

In response, Chief Justice Roberts has explained that the Justices use the code as one source of guidance but not the only source to decide ethics questions. Given that they already apply the code in practice, it seems a logical next step for the Court to adopt its own resolution formally affirming this practice or they can adopt a resolution making it clear which ethics rules do or do not apply.

All of the Justices deserve respect for the difficult and weighty decisions they face. But as some of the most powerful members of our government, it is not too much to ask of them to make their ethical standards open and clear. By making their ethics rules more transparent, the Justices will foster greater public trust and confidence in the Court and its decisions.

In conclusion, let me emphasize that I have a high regard for the Supreme Court and all of its Justices. I do not

intend to question or impugn any Justice with my suggestions. But let's be clear; we live in an era where there is a great deal of mistrust in government institutions, starting with Congress but through all branches of government. At the same time modern technology enables us to provide the American people with more access to the workings of government which could help to reduce some of this mistrust.

I, and many of my colleagues in the Senate, have worked for many years to increase openness and transparency in Congress and the executive branch. I encourage the Supreme Court to take the same approach. Televising Supreme Court proceedings and making public the Court's ethics rules would be a good start. The American people deserve to be able to watch the Supreme Court arguments and cases that can affect their lives, and they deserve to know the ethical standards that govern the Court when it decides cases.

GASOLINE PRICES

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I mentioned yesterday on the Senate floor I spent a great deal of time in deep southern Illinois where some devastating and fatal tornadoes hit last week. As I said then and will repeat briefly now, the amazing outpouring of voluntarism and support from people far and wide was inspiring to me. It is great to know that, just as I had hoped, the people in my State rallied to help the victims.

There were formal organizations such as the American Red Cross and informal organizations such as Operation Blessing which brought together churches from all over the area. There was a Methodist church from Carrier Mills with about 20 of their parishioners. Some were children with rakes doing everything they could to help clean up the mess. It was inspiring to see that. I was happy for that.

I will tell you that in addition to the tornado issue we faced, the one thing that hit people between the eyes in Illinois this last week was gasoline prices. I was in the suburbs of Chicago on Friday evening and saw a gas station with regular gasoline for \$4.09. I saw some lower prices over the weekend, but that was the high watermark or high gasoline mark in my State that I observed. People are very sensitive to this. Gasoline prices literally affect the lives of people individually and families as well. They also have a direct impact on business.

I asked a vice president of Walmart about monitoring retail sales and how to increase retail sales, and he told me that with all of the hundreds and thousands of Walmart stores and employees, they literally monitor sales by the second in real time.

He said: I can observe the sales pattern in a store somewhere in America and tell you within a few pennies or dimes what the price of gasoline is in

that community. When gasoline goes up, people put the money into the tank instead of on the counter, and they stay home instead of going out to shop. That is how the price of gasoline directly impacts economic recovery.

I have listened to so many of the comments that have been made on the Senate floor by individuals on the other side, their approach on how to deal with the issue of gasoline prices and what to do with it. I see the Senator from California. I sometimes wonder if we are reading the same basic information.

The Keystone Pipeline could serve a valuable purpose, but to believe that this is somehow going to have an immediate impact or any major impact on gasoline prices is not realistic. Currently, the pipelines from Canada that exports these oil sands to the United States are operating at less than 50 percent of capacity. So there is plenty of room for more oil sands to come to the United States for refinement. In fact, one of the pipelines goes directly to my State to the Conoco refinery in Wood River, and this refinery has the capacity that could be used to process these Canadian oil sands right now. So to argue this Keystone Pipeline is somehow holding back the export of Canadian oil sands that might have an impact on gasoline prices just does not work.

I have noted there has been a significant increase in the amount of oil exploration and drilling that has taken place under this administration. I believe that is an indication of what we can and should do as a nation to deal with the problem of providing the oil resources in an environmentally responsible way. It is 2 years after the BP spill, and I think it is time for us to reflect on the fact that we never ever want that to happen again.

The devastation that has been caused to so many lives, to so many businesses, and to so much in terms of wildlife will not be calculated. Perhaps it never will be. But we know we cannot allow that to occur again. We should not exalt speed over safety. We have to make certain that as we move forward to develop our energy resources, both oil and gas, we do it in a sensible way. I hope we can gather together and agree that is the way to approach it, along with the administration's proposals for more fuel efficiency in the vehicles we drive and for the development of alternative fuels which will be environmentally friendly and spark new innovation, new businesses, and new jobs in this country in the 21st century.

Mrs. BOXER. Will the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. DURBIN. I am happy to yield.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I thank my friend for putting the gas price situation into a larger picture and also note that one other factor playing a role is manipulation due to some of the instability in the world that our President is certainly dealing with, and

many of us here, and the instability in Iran; the fact that we have sanctions, the fact that there is also a greater demand coming for this product from China and other very high-growth areas.

I say to my friend, is he aware—I know he is, but because of the rules I have to ask it in a question—that we are producing far more of this resource, oil, in this country than we have done? Since 2008 we have many more rigs out there, and is my colleague also aware that the oil companies are sitting on well over 50 million acres of leases on which they are not drilling when they could? And, my last point, is my friend aware that we are exporting more than we ever have from America? That is also a very important point.

To those who say, “drill, baby, drill,” that is not an answer if it is “export, baby, export.” The fact is we are drilling more, and more is leaving America.

So I say to my friend, is he aware of all of these factors, and is he as concerned as I am about the other side playing more politics with this because “drill, baby, drill” is not the answer? We are drilling more than ever. We only have 2 percent of the world's proven supply of oil.

I wonder if my friend could comment on those points.

Mr. DURBIN. I thank the Senator from California. In response, I would ask consent of the Chair to have printed in the RECORD the New York Times editorial of Monday, March 5, 2012, entitled “Drill Baby Drill, Redux.”

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

[From the New York Times]

DRILL BABY DRILL, REDUX

REPUBLICANS' TIRED REMEDY FOR RISING GAS PRICES WON'T FIX ANYTHING

It's campaign season and the pandering about gas prices is in full swing. Hardly a day goes by that a Republican politician does not throw facts to the wind and claim that rising costs at the pump are the result of President Obama's decisions to block the Keystone XL pipeline and impose sensible environmental regulations and modest restrictions on offshore drilling.

Next, of course, comes the familiar incantation of “drill, baby, drill.” Mr. Obama has rightly derided this as a “bumper sticker,” not a strategy. Last week, he agreed that high gas prices were a real burden, but said the only sensible response was a balanced mix of production, conservation and innovation in alternative fuels.

There are lots of reasons for the rise in gas prices, but the lack of American production is not one of them. Domestic crude oil production is actually up from 5.4 million barrels a day in 2004 to 5.59 million now; imports have dropped by more than 10 percent in the same period. Despite a temporary slowdown in exploration in the Gulf of Mexico after the BP oil disaster, the number of rigs in American oil fields has quadrupled over three years. There have been new discoveries and the administration has promised to open up more offshore reserves. To say that Mr. Obama has denied industry access is nonsense.

Equally nonsensical is the Republican claim that Mr. Obama's proposed repeal of \$4

billion in annual tax breaks for the oil and gas industry—whose five biggest players posted \$137 billion in profits last year—would drive prices upward. As is Newt Gingrich's claim that a proposal now taking shape in the Environmental Protection Agency, and fiercely opposed by refiners, to lower the sulfur content in gasoline would add 25 cents to the cost of a gallon. Agency experts say it would add about a penny.

The truth is that oil prices are set on world markets by forces largely beyond America's control. Chief among these is soaring demand in countries like China. Unrest in oil-producing countries is another factor. The Times noted fears in some quarters that gas could jump to \$5 a gallon if the standoff with Iran disrupted world supplies.

Therein lies the biggest weakness in the Republican litany. A country that consumes more than 20 percent of the world's oil supply but owns 2 percent of its reserves cannot drill its way out of high prices or dependence on exports from unstable countries. The only plausible strategy is to keep production up while cutting consumption and embarking on a serious program of alternative fuels.

American innovation is a big part of the answer. Two byproducts of the automobile bailout were the carmakers' acceptance of sharply improved fuel economy and a new commitment to building cars that can meet those standards. The new rules are expected to cut consumption by 2.2 million barrels a day—more than America now produces in the gulf. These and other measures are not nearly as catchy as Drill, Baby, Drill. But they have a far better shot, long term, of lessening this country's dependence on oil imports and keeping gas prices under control.

Mr. DURBIN. It answers specifically what the Senator just raised, and I would like to read a portion of it.

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The editorial continues:

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plausible strategy is to keep production up while cutting consumption and embarking on a serious program of alternative fuels.

Let me add to this conversation a topic which I think we have been loathe to address on the floor because of its political controversy which was driven home to me over the weekend. I believe our energy conversation has to parallel an environmental conversation. We have to talk about the consumption of energy and the impact it has on the world we live in.

I would say to the Senator from California that in the Midwest, we live in tornado country. I was raised with them. I know how to run to the basement when we hear the air raid sirens, to protect our children, which rooms to go in, which corner of the house. It is just built into our lifestyle in the Midwest. So far this year, we have had over 272 reported tornadoes, early in the tornado season. Last year, we had 50; so 272 to 50.

I would just say to anyone who would like to come challenge me: Is this worth asking a question or two? What is going on with the extreme weather patterns we are seeing more and more? In a given year, one might say these things happen. But as these patterns emerge—last year, Chicago experienced the biggest blizzard in its history in February and then in June the largest rainfall in 1 hour in its history. We think to ourselves: This is not the world in which we grew up. Things are different out there. Are these within our control or beyond our control? I think we have to rely on experts and scientists to lead us in that conversation. But let's at least embark on that conversation by understanding the connection between energy and the environment.

As we find more efficient ways to move our cars and move our economy, as we burn less energy in doing it, there is less damage to the environment. That is a positive. It also rewards innovation, creation and new business and industry so the United States can lead in this area as we have led in other areas before.

I thank the Senator from California. She is on the floor now with a bill which she has spoken of time and time again, the new Federal Transportation bill. There is no single piece of legislation that will create more jobs—specific jobs that can be identified—than this bill. We have spent 2 weeks—2 weeks, if I am not mistaken, or 3—the Senator from California would know better—3 weeks on the floor of the Senate arguing about contraception on the Federal highway bill, arguing about whether we are going to embark on a foreign policy amendment to the Federal highway bill, so 3 wasted weeks trying to come to a conclusion about a handful of amendments. Unfortunately, this is what gives our Senate a bad name. We should have resolved this long ago and moved to this bill so we can say, if we want a real jobs bill—a real jobs bill—the Senate is leading the

way. To do it, we need bipartisan support.

At noon there will be a vote and those who are following the proceedings can take a look to see how many on both sides of the aisle will support moving forward on this bill. I think our earlier vote was 85. If I am not mistaken, 85 Senators said let's move forward on this bill. I hope we can do that again.

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. ISAKSON. 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.

Mr. ISAKSON. I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 10 minutes in morning business.

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

GAS PRICES

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I am glad to be able to come to the floor. I wish to talk about a subject that was talked about to me a lot during the Presidents Day break back in Georgia. I spent most of that week traveling in my State, going to townhall meetings, listening to Georgians from Savannah, GA, to Murray County, GA, and everywhere in between. It was absolutely easy to tell what the No. 1 issue for the average American or the average Georgia family is; that is, what the price of gasoline is doing to their budget.

Gasoline prices continue to escalate. In fact, I have a Chevrolet Silverado pickup truck that I use from time to time and I had to fill it last weekend. It cost \$78 to fill it, and it wasn't totally empty. That is a big pricetag to fill a pickup truck. When I think of every carpenter or farmer or landscaper or student taking their goods back to school to their dormitory room and how much they have to pay for gasoline to deliver those goods and services or that furniture, I realize how harmful current gas prices are and I fear how high they are going to go.

We need a comprehensive energy policy in the United States of America. I was listening to the distinguished majority whip speak before me. He made an interesting comment about the Keystone Pipeline. He said, even if we approve the Keystone Pipeline, it would not do anything for gas prices today. He is right because we have to build the pipeline. But if we had approved it 2 years ago and it was operating, we would have 700,000 barrels of petroleum more a day coming into the United States. So to say that just because it would not be ready today doesn't help gas prices is not keeping our eye on the ball.

What we have to recognize is, in the absence of a comprehensive policy, in the absence of foresight, in the absence of putting all the general items on the table that generate energy, we are putting off the day in which the United States of America is energy independent. Because we are not energy independent, then what goes on in Iran, in the Strait of Hormuz, and in Venezuela affects the speculation on gasoline and petroleum which affects the prices of gasoline in the United States.

I am not one of these "burn gas right and left, drill as much as you can, fossil fuels are fine." I know we have problems with carbon. I drive a hybrid vehicle, not because I am trying to drive a point but because it makes sense. Anytime you can reduce carbon, that makes sense. But you cannot eliminate it. You cannot eliminate it. What we have to do is we have to put all sources of energy on the table. And one of those is to continue to explore for gasoline and petroleum in the domestic United States of America—off the Gulf of Mexico, off of our coastline, in our national lands that we own where we know we have shale oil and where we also know we have natural gas.

That exploration ought to be replete throughout the country, so we are expanding our supply and reducing our dependence on foreign imports. The best way to lower the price of gasoline in the future for Georgians and for Americans is for the Congress of the United States and the President of the United States to have a comprehensive energy policy that embraces all forms of energy.

To the credit of the President, he approved not too long ago the loan guarantees on reactors 3 and 4 at Plant Vogtle. They will be the first nuclear reactors built in the United States of America since Three Mile Island. Nuclear energy is a safe, reliable, carbon-free—carbon-free—generation of energy. Every time we can expand our nuclear capability we are lessening the pressure on domestic and foreign oil to be burned.

We know in the Haynesville shale and the Marcellus shale, which has been discovered in Pennsylvania and Louisiana and Texas, that we have gone from having a finite supply of natural gas to an infinite supply. Yet, because there is some contest over whether hydraulic fracturing is good or not good, we are not exploring that gasoline as we should or that natural gas as we should. We should be exploring it as much as possible, because it is a cleaner burning fuel than liquid petroleum and gasoline. We ought to be doing renewable energy wherever it makes sense. But we have seen renewable energy has its limits. We spent \$6 billion a year subsidizing ethanol in hopes that it would have reduced foreign imports, but it has not. It has had its own problems with two-cycle engines. But ethanol has a place. It is scalable on the farm in some cases. That is a good source of energy.