

think that, while we have come a long way, we have a long way to go to make sure we have civil rights for everyone in America.

THE HIGHWAY BILL

Madam President, we were disappointed, as I indicated yesterday, at not being able to invoke cloture on this highway bill. I was satisfied yesterday that the Speaker of the House indicated that he thought the best thing to do, at least as I read the reports, would be to take the Senate version of a bill, if we can figure out a way to pass one, and then they would use that—he would bring it to the floor for a vote. I hope that is the case. The press doesn't always get things right, but I hope in this case they did.

Senator MCCONNELL's staff and my staff are exchanging paper as we speak. I hope we can work our way through this bill. I think it is unfortunate that we are going to have to have votes on a number of amendments that have nothing to do with this underlying piece of legislation.

This is one thing the American people really do not like. At our townhall meetings, our visitations with people throughout our States, I have come to the realization that they hate what they call riders—things that have nothing to do with bills. The Senate rules allow them in most instances, so if it takes this to get this bill done, then we will have to move forward in that way. I hope we can do that. As I said, we are going to exchange paper, and I hope both sides will react positively. I am confident we will over here, and I hope we can work something out.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

GAS PRICES

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, last week I came to the Senate floor to speak out on an issue that is on the minds of a lot of Americans these days: the rising cost of gas at the pump and how the administration's policies are actually making matters worse.

The President may try to take credit for production gains that are entirely the work of others, but more to the point is the fact that production is up on private lands and down on Federal lands. The property the President and the Interior Secretary actually manage is the property upon which production is down.

In fact, when it comes to the rising cost of gas at the pump, it is my view that the administration's policies are actually designed to a purpose: to bring about higher gas prices. That is a view which should not be the least bit controversial given the fact that the President's own Energy Secretary has sug-

gested on a couple of occasions now that his goal certainly is not to drive gas prices down.

For the President's part, he often says that Americans should judge him not only by his words but on his deeds. So when it comes to gas prices, I have pointed out that the President continues to limit offshore areas to energy production and is granting fewer leases on public land for oil drilling, has encouraged countries such as Brazil to move forward with their own offshore drilling projects, continues to impose burdensome regulations on the domestic energy sector that will further drive up the cost of gasoline for the consumer, has repeatedly proposed raising taxes on the energy sector, which we all know would only drive gas prices even higher, and, finally, has flatly rejected the Keystone XL Pipeline.

All of these help drive up the cost of gas and increase our dependence on foreign oil. So the President simply cannot claim to have a comprehensive approach to energy because he doesn't—he simply doesn't—and anytime he says he does, the American people should remember one word: Keystone.

Another thing they might want to do is play a clip of the press conference the President held just yesterday. Asked about whether he actually wants gas prices to go up, the President's facetious attempt to deflect the question only served to confirm the premise. But it was the President's admission that rising gas prices hurt the economy that really betrayed the administration's attempt to have it both ways on this issue, because if higher gas prices hurt the economy, then why in the world is the administration calling for higher taxes on energy manufacturers? We know these taxes would drive up the price at the pump and send jobs overseas. The Congressional Research Service said that. If the President wants to drive prices down, he should stop calling for these increases in taxes.

Look, if the President wants Americans to think he is serious about lower gas prices, he has to do more than simply say—and this is what he said yesterday—"No President would want higher gas prices in an election year." "No President would want higher gas prices in an election year." What about other years? Would they want them in other years? It is only in election years that it is a problem? He has to get serious about changing his policies, and he might want to consider an Energy Secretary who is more committed to helping the American people than in helping the administration's buddies in the solar panel business—and that brings me to a larger point.

The President likes to talk a lot about fairness. We have heard a lot about fairness, but when it comes to rising gas prices, the American people don't think it is particularly fair that at a time when they are struggling to

fill the tank, their own tax dollars are being used to subsidize failing solar companies of the President's choosing, not to mention the bonuses executives at these companies keep getting. I think most Americans are tired of reading about all the goodies this administration's allies are getting on their dime even as the President goes around lecturing everybody about fairness.

I will tell you what is not fair. What is not fair is that it costs about \$40 more to fill a 20-gallon tank with gasoline than it did when this President took office. That is not fair. Yet this administration continues to pursue policies that would make it even worse.

Earlier this year the White House launched a campaign in support of the payroll tax holiday, asking Americans what \$40 a month would mean to them. Yet, now, when it comes to gas prices, they are doubling down on policies that are taking away that \$40 a month given by the payroll tax holiday to fill the gas tank. Once again, they are trying to have it both ways, and, frankly, the American people have had it.

TRIBUTE TO JOHN RABUN

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I would like to pay tribute today to a friend of many decades, a Kentuckian who is a hero to many and a personal hero of mine for his work on behalf of children that has had a national impact. In his 28 years of service with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, John Rabun has saved literally thousands of lives and averted tragedy for thousands of families.

As the very first employee of the national center since its creation back in 1984, he has been the heart and the soul of that organization. His dedication and passion for the issue will continue to shape the national center long after he leaves it. Frankly, for John, saving children was not just a job, it was his mission. That is why it is such a blow that after 28 years of service, John Rabun will retire from his work at the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children this Friday, March 9. I cannot say enough how much this man will be missed.

John and I have a history that stretches back almost four decades, dating to his time as a social worker in Jefferson County, KY. Of course, Jefferson County contains the city of Louisville, my hometown, and in the late 1970s and early 1980s, I served as the judge-executive for Jefferson County. What that is, I say to the Presiding Officer from New York, is like the county executive for the county. It was in this capacity that I got to know John Rabun.

John earned his bachelor's degree from Mercer University in Macon, GA, and his master of science in social work from the University of Louisville. As a social worker, John managed the company's group home for kids and was one of the first in town to identify

the growing crisis of child abduction and sexual exploitation. Working in those foster homes, John saw the problem firsthand and saw what local police and social services were not seeing. He saw that information between social service workers and law enforcement was not being shared as it should have been. He realized a lot more could be done.

So John, along with a friend and fellow social worker, Kerry Rice, approached Ernie Allen, who at the time was the director of the Louisville-Jefferson County Crime Commission. Ernie is now known as the director and CEO of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, which he helped build alongside John. But way back then, the issue of missing and exploited children had yet to receive the national focus it deserved.

It was John who proposed to Ernie that the county create a special unit bridging the traditional barriers between social services and law enforcement to try to combat this serious problem. They came to me—as the CEO of the county—with this idea, and together we created what I believe to be the first police-social services team in the Nation dedicated to working child abduction and sexual exploitation cases. Eventually, we created Jefferson County's first exploited and missing child unit, with John as its manager. Under John's leadership, almost immediately the unit began to solve cases, rescue victims, and put some very good news on the front pages.

John became famous nationwide as a leading expert on missing and exploited child cases. In 1980, the U.S. Department of Justice asked me to send John and Ernie to Atlanta to consult on a grisly child murder case. John is now so recognized as a leader in this field that he has provided expert testimony to Congress seven times on child abduction cases and has instructed for the FBI Law Enforcement Satellite Training Network. John has provided consultation at nearly 1,000 hospitals and for over 62,000 personnel in America, Canada, and the United Kingdom on the abduction of newborns in hospitals. He is the author of the book "For Healthcare Professionals: Guidelines on Prevention of and Response to Infant Abductions." Thanks in large measure to his efforts, what was once a recurring problem is now all but eliminated.

John has been recognized by the FBI as 1 of only 27 investigators nationwide with the highest expertise in the investigation of cases concerning missing and exploited children. He has appeared on television shows such as "20/20," "Primetime," "Good Morning America," "Larry King Live," and, of course, "America's Most Wanted" with his friend and my friend, John Walsh.

In 1984, John signed the lease for office space for the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children right here in Washington. He began working as that organization's executive vice

president and chief operating officer. It is a post he has held ever since. As the National Center's executive vice president and COO, John manages a staff of 350 and a budget of \$42 million a year. He is the hub of the wheel for all inter-agency communication between the center, the Justice Department, the State Department, the Secret Service, the FBI, the Department of Homeland Security, as well as State governments.

When I say John Rabun has a great passion and drive on this issue that has animated his entire career, I mean it. He is absolutely dedicated to rescuing children who would otherwise fall through the cracks.

Back when he was running the Jefferson County Crime Unit, John led the effort to successfully identify and prosecute the pastor of a major local church for sexually abusing over one dozen children in his congregation. After this pastor's conviction, the judge shockingly sentenced him merely to probation with a community service requirement. John leapt from the prosecutor's table and cried: "Your Honor, will you at least stipulate that this community service not be with children?" The judge held John in contempt of court. Luckily, the prosecutor quickly scurried John out through a side door before he could be taken into custody and after a few days the heat died down. But this story goes to illustrate how John will stop at literally nothing to see justice is done for those who are weakest among us, our children.

John's lifetime of service to children has directly led to the rescue of over 80,000 kids. Let me share with my colleagues just one success story. About 1 year ago, a Los Angeles police detective contacted the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children for information on a 10-year-old boy who had been missing for many years. In 2004, the child's parents separated, and although the mother received custody, her son was abducted from their home. A search began for the boy and his father, which continued for 7 years. Law enforcement had no leads on the child's whereabouts, suspecting the father may have abducted him back to his native country of Guatemala. Upon receiving the call from that Los Angeles detective, the National Center's case management team began coordinating the center's resources with the child's mother and detectives in the Los Angeles Police Department. A missing child poster was created and disseminated around California, and detectives were provided with detailed public database searches throughout the National Center's case analysis division.

Just a little over 1 month ago, the center received a lead from a school official who believed he had recognized the boy as a fifth grader at a Los Angeles elementary school. This official had searched the center's Web site, saw the missing child's poster, and contacted the center's 24-hour hot line. The cen-

ter passed this lead along to police, and I am pleased to say that on January 31 of this year, 8 years after his abduction, this boy was reunited with his mother, and his father was arrested.

Imagine that mother's relief and then multiply that feeling by literally thousands. Only then can we begin to appreciate the immense service John Rabun has done for his country. So that is why we are all going to miss John so much. No one can say he could have done more; however, neither could anyone say his retirement is not extremely well deserved. I am sure he is looking forward to being able to spend more time with his lovely wife Betsy, a retired schoolteacher, and their two children and five grandchildren.

A national movement on behalf of America's most precious resource, our children, was launched because one social worker in Louisville, KY, saw that too many children were at risk and not enough was being done. If every family impacted by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children's work could thank John Rabun personally, it might take another 28 years, and he would never get to retire. But on behalf of a grateful and safer America, I hope the recognition of this Senate and the thanks and friendship of this Senator will suffice instead. So thank you very much, John Rabun.

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, there will now be a period of morning business for 1 hour, with Senators permitted to speak therein for 10 minutes each, with the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with the Republicans controlling the first half and the majority controlling the final half.

The Senator from Tennessee.

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION ACT

Mr. CORKER. Madam President, I rise to speak regarding the highway bill. We each come into work daily with different thoughts. I come in today very hopeful. The fact is we have a bipartisan bill that hopefully will actually have the finance component of it on the floor soon. We have had it worked through the various committees of the Senate—the Banking Committee, the Commerce Committee, the EPW Committee. I think what this body is waiting for right now is the Finance Committee package, and I know they are continuing to work on that package. The reason I come down here, in a very hopeful way, is I think all of us support the highway bill. We want