

amendment is in the Transportation bill. The Transportation bill has now left the building, left the Senate. It is now on its way over to the House. I hope the House will take this bill—and I know they have their own opinions about how things should be. But it is important to get this \$110 billion of investments out for America. We need to keep this recovery going. People are looking for jobs, well-paying jobs. Small businesses get these contracts as well as large businesses for our rail, our water, our transportation.

I hope the RESTORE Act, because it is safely tucked in this bill, will generate some additional votes on the House side. I hope my colleagues from the gulf coast in the House, Republicans and Democrats, will say: Overall, it may not be the House's Transportation bill, but you know what. It is a good bill.

Twenty-two Republicans over here voted for this bill. As Senator INHOFE said, there is streamlining, there are new approaches, there are better approaches, less waste, less fraud, less abuse in this bill. So there are some good things they can vote on.

I thank, again, in conclusion, Senator INHOFE and Senator BOXER and particularly Senator BAUCUS for his help in helping us, at the very end, to put what we needed to get together to pass this RESTORE Act. I will continue to report to all how the courts are going to rule, how much this fine is going to be, and how that money is spent in the next couple years to help save a very important part of our Nation and a part of the Nation that contributes substantially to the GDP of our Nation.

EXECUTIVE SESSION ORDER VITIATED

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order to proceed to executive session at 2 p.m. be vitiated.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Ms. LANDRIEU. I ask unanimous consent that morning business be extended until 5 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each and that the time be equally divided.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from New York is recognized.

COMPLIMENTING SENATOR LANDRIEU

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, first, let me compliment my colleague from Louisiana for her diligence, her hard work. I don't think anybody effectively delivers more for her State in this

Chamber than the Senator from Louisiana. I can assure you, knowing her, now that she has done this, she will have another proposal and she will be talking to us about it probably within a few hours. Because of her hard work and charm and many other good qualities, she never wears out her welcome, at least with the Senator from New York.

GASOLINE PRICES

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, the big issue everyone is talking about is gasoline prices. Obviously, they are a scourge on average families and on our national economy. There are many long-term solutions we debate: the pipeline, incentives for green energy, more exploration, nuclear energy, and of course conservation—probably the No. 1 way to, in the long term, reduce imports of foreign oil into the country and reduce the price.

But everyone is asking, what are short-term solutions?

To me, there is obviously one that would matter more than all the others and that has the best hope of getting something done. So 2 weeks ago, in a letter to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, I asked the State Department to pressure the Government of Saudi Arabia to use its excess oil capacities as a means to calm oil markets. It has been my position that this is the quickest way to bring down gas prices, and the reason is very simple. The No. 1 thing jacking up prices right now is the fear in the markets that Iran will shut off its production.

We have an economic boycott, a majority of nations of the world, of Iran to prevent them from going nuclear. What are they trying to do? They are saber rattling: Squeeze us too hard, we are going to cut off oil. In fact, they cut off oil sales to Britain and France, although those are symbolic because Britain and France do not buy much Iranian oil. But with Iran's saber rattling that they might well cut off oil exports, the price has gone up and up and up. Those who speculate in oil use that and probably have it go up even further.

So that is why I have been, for the last 2 weeks, suggesting the Saudis say they will produce more oil and that they will replace every barrel of production Iran takes off the market for the foreseeable future with a new barrel. The Saudis of course can do that. The Saudis have 2.8 million barrels of extra production, they and the Gulf States. Iran's total sales to the rest of the world are 2.2 million barrels a day. Therefore, they have the ability to do it.

Today I was pleased Saudi Arabia declared it will fill any oil gap as a result of the Iran oil embargo. At the 13th International Energy Forum in Kuwait, the largest gathering of oil-producing and consuming countries, the Saudi oil minister, Ali al-Naimi, said the following: "Saudi Arabia and oth-

ers remain poised to make good any shortfalls—perceived or real—in crude oil supply."

Right after the Saudi oil minister made this announcement, prices dropped 0.6 percent. My belief is that if the markets believe this is real, the price will come down significantly further. So we are asking the Saudis to repeat this promise because, make no mistake, the more the Saudis repeat the promise to offset Iran's output, the more explicit they are, the more emphatic they are, the more they assure the markets they are for real and that this is not just a psychological device to calm the markets for the moment, the more markets will calm down more permanently and the more the price will come down.

I wish to compliment the Obama administration for doing tremendous work behind the scenes. I have talked to many people in the administration over the last few weeks and they assured me and told me some details of what they were doing and their pressure has finally gotten the Saudis to make this statement. This statement is a great start, but as I said, it should be repeated, reemphasized, and elaborated upon by the Saudis so the markets will be assured.

The President was right on money when he said we also need long-term to our dependence on foreign oil. He is right that drilling alone will not solve our problems. We are producing more domestic oil in the United States than we have in 8 years, and we have discovered a huge supply of natural gas. But we have to look at all fronts. We have to look at green energy, wind, solar. There are tax breaks that encourage these new industries that will employ thousands. We ought to pass them. Our colleagues voted against them on this highway bill. That doesn't make much sense. I, for one, would look at nuclear as something that produces clean energy, that doesn't produce global warming. It has to be safe. Of course, we have to continue to look to produce more oil.

I was one of six or seven on this side, actually—as the Senator from Louisiana is importuning—who voted to open parts of the east gulf to produce more oil and it has begun to do that and that will help.

The No. 1 one thing we have to do in the long run is conservation. The fact that we are getting more miles per gallon by 2020 will reduce our importation of foreign oil—which raises the price—by more than 1.1 million barrels a day. In fact, since we gave the President the ability to increase those CAFE standards further, and he did it, the prediction is, by 2030, we will not need to import any oil as our cars get 45 and 50 miles a gallon and the demand for gasoline goes down. The No. 1 reason we have to import oil is because of gasoline and diesel fuel and airplane fuel. Most of our energy can come from natural gas and can come from water power, wind power, and solar power.

The bottom line: This announcement is a good announcement. I hope the markets will heed it. I hope the Saudis will repeat it. I hope, as a result, the price of oil will come down. It is the best news on a very bad front; that is, of rising gasoline prices, that we have had in a very long time. Let us hope it brings together some good news.

I yield the floor and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

VOTER ID

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, there they go again. On Monday the Justice Department, under Attorney General Eric Holder, added another account to its litany of shameful actions by refusing to preclear a commonsense Texas State law that would require all voters to show a photo ID prior to casting their vote. The Justice Department's refusal to preclear this change in Texas law by the Texas Legislature is simply inexcusable. The Texas voter ID law is constitutional, and it is a popular measure necessary to protect the integrity of the Texas election process.

This is not and should not be a partisan issue. The polling I have seen shows that Republicans, Democrats, and Independents in the 70 percent range all agree that voter ID laws are commonsense responses to the concerns many have about the integrity of the election process. But, unfortunately, I can only conclude that Attorney General Holder and the Justice Department have chosen the low road of politics as opposed to the high road of the rule of law. I believe, unfortunately, the evidence supports the conclusion that this represents the lowest form of identity politics. In the face of high gas prices, the sluggish economy, and a struggling and rising national debt, the Obama administration has used every tool in its political toolbox to try to distract the American people from their priorities—jobs, the economy, and debt—and, unfortunately, divide the American people while they distract them from the real issues.

Political games should not force the State of Texas or any other State to spend its taxpayer dollars suing the Department of Justice in Federal court, which it now must do, to enforce a State law that is clearly constitutional. One does not have to take my word for it—just read an opinion by Justice Stevens in 2008 upholding the constitutionality of a similar Indiana law. It is nearly identical to the one in Texas, and it is justified by a valid interest in protecting the integrity and reliability of the electoral process.

But the Justice Department continues to insist there is something wrong with requiring every voter to prove their identity before they vote, just as you are required to do before you board an airplane, buy a pack of cigarettes at a convenience store, or buy a six-pack of beer at that same convenience store. If you look on the Web site of the Department of Justice, in order to gain entry to the Department of Justice building, you need—you guessed it—a photo ID. Well, this may sound like common sense. Common sense is evidently not that common at the Department of Justice these days.

You would have to be blind to reality to deny that a significant amount of voter fraud exists in the United States. Every State has had its experience with voter fraud.

In Texas, back in the famous Box 13 election between Coke Stevenson and Lyndon Johnson for the U.S. Senate, they found a number of votes from voters who were not even alive—dead votes. Perhaps one of the most recent books on this was written by John Fund in 2008, a book called “Stealing Elections: How Voter Fraud Threatens Our Democracy.” In that book Mr. Fund demonstrates why the American people and Texans fear that their legally cast vote will be diluted with the vote of people who are not legally qualified to cast a vote.

Unfortunately, we also know that identity theft is rampant. We have seen this in our broken immigration system, where people claim Social Security numbers and identification that is not their own but is actually someone else's. It is also very difficult to prove because often the legal authorities lack what they need in order to dispute a voter's identity, thus the need for a government-issued photo ID. As a result, officials frequently hesitate to accuse someone of casting an illegal ballot even when they are almost certain a crime is being committed. It is easy for identity thieves to use another person's voter certificate to fraudulently cast a ballot when there is no real requirement for voters to prove their identity. We should be all about making their job more difficult, not easier.

Every case of actual, alleged, or perceived voter fraud has the potential to drive prospective voters out of the Democratic process, undermine the legitimacy of our government, and swing the results in close elections. The Texas voter ID law is necessary to prevent these evils.

This administration would have you believe that State ID laws are intended to drive down the turnout among certain ethnic groups, but this could not be further from the truth. If people are legally qualified to vote, this is a law designed to protect their rights and to make sure their vote counts and that in a close election it will not be swung by people who have no legal right to vote.

In fact, in their own letter to the Texas secretary of state, the Justice

Department presented no evidence—zero, zip, nada—of discriminatory intent in the Texas voter ID law. This is because the law was clearly intended to uphold the sacred principle of “one person, one vote” and is narrowly tailored to avoid all retrogressive effects on voting rights. For example, under Texas law every registered voter is entitled to receive a photo identification card free. So if you don't have a driver's license and you don't have any other form of photo ID, you can get one for free. It also exempts from its requirement anybody above the age of 70. What is more, let's say election day comes and you don't have a photo ID, but you want to vote. You can cast a provisional ballot even without a photo ID just so long as you come back within 6 days and produce one showing that you are who you say you are and thus prove you are legally qualified to vote. The Texas voter ID law will also make sure no legitimate voter is caught off guard by requiring the State to inform and educate all citizens as to what the new law requires.

Despite these multiple layers of protection, the Justice Department insists on pushing their false narrative that this law will somehow suppress legitimate voter turnout. Just the contrary is true. The only votes this ID law will suppress are those people who have no legal right to vote, and it will protect and preserve the right of legitimate voters to cast their vote undiluted by votes of people who are not qualified to vote.

We also know there is data from States that have recently passed voter ID laws that demonstrates there is no evidence whatsoever to support the claim of the Department of Justice that it will somehow potentially suppress minority votes. For example, in Indiana the subject of the Supreme Court decision in 2008 was an Indiana voter ID requirement. Election data in Georgia shows that turnout has increased since the passage of these commonsense photo ID requirements.

The data also shows that the voter ID laws in Georgia and Indiana had no negative impact on minority groups. These findings should be unsurprising given some of the research that has been conducted by a number of universities, including the University of Missouri, the University of Delaware, and the University of Nebraska, among others.

Research compiled by the University of Denver and the University of Nebraska from 2000 to 2006 leaves no doubt about the conclusion. They say: “Concerns about voter identification laws affecting turnout are much ado about nothing.”

In spite of these facts, in spite of the evidence, in spite of the law, the Holder Justice Department continues to cling to their false narrative, claiming that Texas has not demonstrated significant enough evidence of voter fraud to justify its voter identification law. That turns the law of the land on its head.