

The Gabriella Miller Kids First Research Act will require the director of the National Institutes of Health to allocate \$126 million—\$12.6 million each year for 10 years—of appropriated funds for pediatric research. The money would be allocated into needed research grants for pediatric autism, cancer and other diseases.

The fight for funding pediatric research is far from over but this is a step in the right direction. As Gabriella said, “You may have a bad day today, but there’s always a bright shining star to look forward to tomorrow.” It is my hope that this legislation will help fund research that leads to future treatments and cures.

I would like to thank Senator MARK WARNER and Senator ORRIN HATCH for supporting this legislation and Congressman CANTOR for championing the bill through the House of Representatives.

This bipartisan effort is about making sure pediatric disease research is a high priority. I am proud we were able to pass legislation that honors Gabriella Miller, her family, and her inspiring work as an advocate for pediatric disease research.

GABRIELLA MILLER KIDS FIRST RESEARCH SAVINGS ACT

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 289, H.R. 2019.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The assistant bill clerk read as follows:

An act (H.R. 2019) to eliminate taxpayer financing of political party conventions and reprogram savings to provide for a 10-year pediatric research initiative through the Common Fund administered by the National Institutes of Health, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to proceeding to the measure?

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I reserve the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, we on this side accept this measure, but I do have a few things I want to say before saying there is no objection.

Sequestration cut \$1.6 billion from NIH last year—\$1.6 billion. In the omnibus we passed, we gave them current level funding, but that hole for NIH is still there. NIH has lost huge amounts of money over the past few years in the way that we have struggled to get financing for our country. We in the past have been the guiding light for research on diseases and conditions. We are still there, but we are losing ground. Every country in the world looks at the NIH as a place they would like to be.

This is a small amount of money, but it will be extremely helpful to the NIH.

I would hope my Republican colleagues would join with us in increasing

funding for the National Institutes of Health.

Senator DURBIN is going to introduce a bill today that will fund NIH at levels they need to be funded. It has to be paid for, but it is so very important that we not claim victory for the NIH because of this. It is a small victory and I accept that. I think it is extremely important that we understand the NIH is billions of dollars short of being able to maintain the place they have had in years past.

I repeat, they have been losing ground. The last 5 years have been extremely tough for them. We need to do better for the National Institutes of Health. We have scientists around our country who want to do good work. They want to devote their lives to medical research, but they are not applying for these grants. So many of them are turned down that they are basically—well, maybe I won’t even bother trying.

I am pleased to hear the Republican leader move forward. It is something that is a small step forward to help children who badly need help in the ways of these diseases, which are so difficult for the kids, of course, for the parents and families and certainly our country.

Again, before we leave this issue, I would hope that the appropriations process we are going to go through this year will help us get money. What we have done today is only an authorization, and the public out there should understand it is only an authorization. Until we have appropriations going, there will be nothing going to pediatric research at the National Institutes of Health. We have to carry forward and not have all of these banner headlines that the kids are going to suddenly get help they deserve. That will not happen until we appropriate money for this.

I do not object.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. McCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read a third time and passed, and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid on the table.

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

The bill (H.R. 2019) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

Mr. McCONNELL. I wish to reiterate what we have done. H.R. 2019, which will now go to the President for signature—the original author is Majority Leader ERIC CANTOR in the House—will eliminate taxpayer financing of political party conventions and reprogram savings to provide for a 10-year pediatric research initiative through the Common Fund administered by the NIH.

GLOBAL WARMING

Mr. President, our friends on the other side who run the Senate spent a lot of time talking last night. I am not sure what any of it accomplished. The

reviews seem to be pretty terrible. The AP dubbed the talk-athon a lot of hot air about a lot of hot air and said the speeches were little more than theatrics.

Maybe, as some speculate, Senate Democrats were just trying to please the left-coast billionaire who plans to finance so many of their campaigns.

The talking Senators didn’t really introduce any new legislation. I didn’t hear the talking Senators announce votes on bills already pending before the Senate. They basically just talked and talked and tossed out political attacks at a party that doesn’t even control the Democratic-run Senate.

No wonder the American people have such a low opinion of Congress.

The so-called talk-athon perfectly illustrated something else too—the emptiness of today’s Washington Democratic majority.

I remember a time when Democrats could say with some legitimacy that they were the party for working people. Those days seem to be receding further and further into the rearview mirror. Because whether it is addressing the opportunity gap in the ObamaCare economy or building the Keystone Pipeline or last night’s whatever that was, Washington Democrats keep opting for the empty political stunt over the reasonable, substantive solutions for the middle class.

Here is the thing: We need two serious political parties in this country debating serious ideas. When we see Washington Democrats throwing seriousness out the window like this, it is bad for everybody. If Washington Democrats are actually serious about all of the talk last night, they should follow it with action. The Democrats control the Senate. Bring up, bring up the cap-and-tax bill and let’s have a debate, put it on the agenda, and let’s debate it.

As the AP noted, despite all of the bravado, Democratic leaders made it clear they have no plan to bring a Democratic climate bill to the floor this year. So what was all the talking about?

Our friends on the other side set up the agenda. Call up the bill. The reason they won’t isn’t because of obstructionism or whatever else they might want to claim. It is because too many Members of their own party would vote against it.

Remember, Washington Democrats couldn’t even pass that bill when they controlled the Senate with a filibuster-proof majority back in 2009 or 2010. More importantly, the American people don’t want a national energy tax that would make their utility bills even higher than they already are.

Look. Americans have widely differing opinions about how Washington should be approaching environmental policy. That much is very clear. But one thing we should all be able to agree upon is this: Imposing massive restrictions upon our own economy, devastating the lives of our own mining

families, and imposing higher energy bills on our own seniors makes about zero sense, while huge carbon emitters such as China and India continue to ramp up energy consumption.

Global carbon emissions would hardly be affected anyway, but millions of lives here certainly would be. The American middle class would be deeply and adversely affected.

Left, right, and center, we should all be able to agree this is simply nonsensical. What we should all be working for is an “all of the above” energy strategy that will utilize more of our domestic resources to create jobs and meet America’s energy needs. It is a smart and focused approach that accommodates both our economy and our environment, and it is one that Republicans strongly support and Democrats should as well.

Democrats should also work with us to pass the legislation that would allow Congress to actually vote on environmental regulation to ensure Washington’s rules strike the right balance between protecting the environment and creating jobs. That legislation is so important to my home State of Kentucky.

Case in point. I spent this past weekend with hundreds of coal miners and their families at a rally in eastern Kentucky, and I heard from them how the administration’s war on coal is hurting so many who struggle every day just to get by. It is a war that is taking away hope and destroying jobs.

Let’s be honest. The most immediate crisis in the Obama era is the jobs crisis—the jobs crisis. It always has been. If only our friends on the other side were willing to talk a little less and work with us a little more. There is so much we could get done on that front. There is so much we could be doing to create jobs and grow the middle class today. We could build a Keystone Pipeline that would create thousands of American jobs right away. We could increase U.S. exports and expand American jobs with trade legislation. We could reform our tax and regulatory structures to free small businesses so they can grow and hire and enrich their communities. And we could pass the dozens of House-passed jobs bills just sitting on the majority leader’s desk—so many that even House Democrats are starting to complain. These are the kinds of things we could get done once Washington Democrats show they are ready to work with us.

Talk is cheap. We know that. And America’s middle class is tired of all the talk. They want action. Let’s provide it on jobs.

Mr. President, I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

AMERICAN ENERGY RENAISSANCE

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, with the very unfortunate events in Ukraine in the headlines and the Ukrainian people close to our hearts, I rise today to speak to a topic that has significance not only for that European crisis and for our own well-being but also bearing a little bit on the longer term subject of climate change, which, of course, was a big discussion here last night.

This morning I am speaking to the American energy renaissance and its broader benefits to us all.

Today American technology and know-how are delivering energy abundance, keeping energy affordable, enabling energy to be cleaner than the next most likely alternative, permitting us to rely on ever more diverse energy sources, and, finally, improving energy security for our people here in this country and around the world.

America’s overall production of nearly every type of energy is rising. The efficiency of just about everything—whether it is our vehicles or whether it is our buildings—is increasing. And in comparing our supply with our demand, we are rapidly approaching a self-sufficiency rate of 90 percent. The American energy revolution has generated a variety of welcome benefits. It is creating jobs. It has generated revenues. It has helped reduce both energy prices and price volatility. And as our Nation imports less, the simple fact is there is more energy available for others. That, in turn, is creating the kinds of supply conditions in the world oil market that allow all of us to deal with the bad actors from a position of relative strength.

There was a recent essay in Foreign Affairs which argued that energy has been viewed as a strategic liability in the United States since back in the 1970s. Now energy is becoming a strategic asset—a strategic asset—and one that can boost the U.S. economy and grant Washington newfound leverage around the world. It is really hard to disagree with that.

The question then becomes, What will we do with this strategic asset? How will we use our newfound position? There was a survey of responses to Russia’s disregard for Ukrainian sovereignty, and of those prudent areas where the United States might go. Energy is clearly among the most major strategic assets we possess. How we use it to bring about geopolitical stability can really define our leadership in the world.

Our first real challenge as a nation is how to keep this American resurgence going. There are two specific areas where we have to make some decisions; that is, whether to grant access to new lands and new markets, and that will go a long way in determining whether we actually do that.

As I noted, America’s total energy production has increased dramatically in recent years, but within those numbers there is a serious dichotomy.

Nearly the entire oil and gas production resurgence here in the United States has occurred on State and private lands, not the millions of acres managed by the Federal Government. Despite the discussion of all of the above and no small amount of credit taken by the administration, combined carbon fuel production on Federal lands actually fell from 2008 to 2012. That is a disappointing trend which, in my view, needs to be reversed.

Consider, for example, the opportunity we are missing in my State of Alaska. Thirty years ago, in March 1984, Alaskan crude oil production stood at 1.6 million barrels per day. The Trans-Alaska Pipeline System had been completed just a decade earlier. There were debates over opening new areas to production and even allowing exports of crude oil from the State, but the Federal Government did not act at that time. It did not seize Alaska’s best and most obvious opportunities. Production peaked at 2.1 million barrels per day in March 1988. It has been on general decline ever since then. Alaska’s production has dipped below the half million barrels per day marker several times since 2012. This is a fall of nearly 75 percent from its high.

Back home we keep talking about a pipeline that is less than half full. The difference is not only geography, it is also policy. Our Federal policies are not working as they should. State policies, combined with private sector inventiveness, powerful as they are, cannot overcome the Federal barriers. In North Dakota, where we see a booming energy market, only 4 percent of that State is federally held. In Texas, it is just 2 percent of Federal lands. In Alaska, 62 percent of our lands are Federal, and most of our untapped resources are within these Federal areas.

Alaska’s falling production is a missed opportunity—a missed opportunity—to create jobs, to generate revenues, to stabilize world energy prices, to diversify world energy supplies. And it is not the only place in America where potential growth is going unrealized. We are passing up tremendous opportunities off of our Atlantic coast, in the eastern Gulf of Mexico, and in the Rocky Mountains West. We also have increasingly burdensome regulations that slow the pace of development in the Federal lands that are open.

All of this highlights the need to re-examine our Federal energy policies and really reorient them for a new century.

That leads us to the subject of exports.

Back in January I laid out the case for why we need to renovate the architecture of U.S. energy trade. We have substantial opportunities for exports of coal, petroleum products, natural gas, natural gas liquids, renewable technology, nuclear technology, and even crude oil. I have called for the lifting of the *de facto* prohibition on crude oil exports as a preemptive measure. I say what we need to do is lift it to prevent