

President Obama's last Environmental Protection Agency head told us as much, saying: "U.S. action alone will not impact world CO₂ levels." That is a quote from her. She said: "U.S. action alone will not impact world CO₂ levels." That was spoken by the previous EPA Administrator.

You need emissions-heavy countries such as India and China on board first. That is just a scientific fact, although I suspect our friends on the left will conveniently ignore it because the point of this whole exercise is sadly obvious. It is not about science or global warming at all. It is all about making privileged elitists—elitists who may not feel the pinch of a higher utility bill or the pain of a lost job—feel as if they did something.

There is another reason why the echoes of ObamaCare here are so unmistakable. The President's national energy tax represents a direct attack on the American middle class.

Experts say it would devastate entire swaths of our economy and could lead to a loss of nearly half a million jobs, according to one AFL-CIO labor union estimate. In fact, the head of that union, the United Mine Workers of America, said this energy tax would lead to long-term and irreversible job losses.

The national energy tax would also shift middle class jobs overseas, shatter our manufacturing base, and drive up energy costs for families. It is a dagger aimed right at the heart of the American middle class, at a time when our constituents are already struggling under the weight of so many of this administration's other failed policies.

Let's not forget: Opportunity has already decreased for too many families under this President's watch. Millions of our friends and neighbors are still out of work, and the economy is at a standstill.

This is President Obama's plan, to squeeze the middle class even harder, ship American jobs overseas and to do it by going around Congress? It is clear that the President is trying to impose this national energy tax via Executive order because he knows the representatives of the people would never vote for it.

He knows that Congress already rejected a similar national energy tax when he tried to pass it back in his first term. Maybe he is avoiding legislative accountability because he knows this energy tax is too cruel, because he knows it would have an especially devastating impact on the most vulnerable members of our society—the poor, the unemployed, and seniors on a fixed income.

It is a curious thing. The same elites who like to lecture us from their privileged perches about helping others are often the same people who seem to care the least about who their extreme policies hurt. To them the American people are just *hoi polloi*, the commoners who these elites think need their enlightened guidance.

That is especially true when it comes to coal-mining families in my State, good people who this administration hasn't even bothered to hear from. Kentucky miners know that coal keeps the lights on. All they want to do is provide for their families and put food on the table.

They have committed no crime, they have done nothing wrong, but the Obama administration has declared a war on them all the same. A White House advisor was quoted as saying that a war on coal is "exactly what's needed."

These are callous positions, to be sure, but they are easy things to say when you live hundreds of miles away, when you don't have to live with the real-world consequences of your ivory tower ideological fantasies, when you don't have to see the raw human costs of your schemes. That certainly was the approach the administration took when it scheduled listening sessions to discuss its anti-coal regulations. It only wanted to hear applause from fellow leftwing elites, so it didn't schedule a single listening session in coal country—not one.

This is what one miner said at a coal listening session that I hosted in Eastern Kentucky after the administration refused to attend: "Our biggest worries now are just trying to keep a roof over our heads [and] food on the table."

He is not alone, and he needs to know this: We are on the side of the aisle that hears him. We are not going to let this administration's anti-middle class policies go unchallenged.

That is why today I am introducing legislation, the Coal Country Protection Act, that would push back against the President's extreme anti-coal scheme. It would require that simple but important benchmarks be met before his rules could take effect.

The Secretary of Labor would have to certify that it would not generate loss of employment. The Director of the Congressional Budget Office would have to certify that it would not result in any loss in the American gross domestic product.

The Administrator of the Energy Information Administration would have to certify it would not increase electricity rates, and the Chairman of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and the president of the North American Electric Reliability Corporation would have to certify that electricity delivery would remain reliable.

It is just common sense. That is why I call upon the majority leader to schedule a vote on this legislation immediately and to help us pass it, because Kentucky mining families are counting on him and so are countless middle-class families in my State and across the country who stand to get hurt by this administration's cold ideological attacks.

If the majority leader and Senate Democrats stand in the way of passing this bill, Kentuckians and the American people will remember who stood

with them and who worked against them. I imagine they will want to send a majority to Washington that would actually work for the middle class for a change, instead of hurting seniors and shipping jobs overseas.

At the end of the day it comes down to this: The President's national energy tax is ObamaCare 2.0. It is a massive big-government boondoggle that is being marketed as something it isn't. It is an idea that will not even solve the larger problem it purports to address, and it will hurt the middle class.

So the President can pretend his national energy tax is about helping the environment, but we know better. It is not going to do a thing to meaningfully control global carbon emissions. This is really about growing government. It is really about making leftwing elitists feel better about themselves, and it is really about helping political supporters in places such as California and New York while inflicting serious pain on people and places like Kentucky.

I am going to continue to fight. Kentuckians deserve no less. I am going to keep vigorously fighting against the Obama administration's continued war on coal jobs and this extreme, extreme anti-middle class national energy tax in particular.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KING). Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 11 a.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with the time equally divided and controlled between the leaders or their designees and with the majority controlling the first half of the time.

The Senator from Illinois.

GLOBAL WARMING

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I rise in morning business to respond to the Republican Senate leader who just spoke.

I preface my remarks by making the claim that I have made on the floor now three different times, and I am still waiting for the first Member of the other party to come to this Senate Chamber and to dispute what I am about to say.

The Republican Party of the United States of America is the only major political party in the world today that denies global warming.

I have said it. I am waiting for them to come forward and say: No, there is another one somewhere. One said: Well, we think there is one in Australia.

Really? So the entire world understands that global warming is a challenge except for one political party, the Republican Party of the United States of America.

And what have we seen with global warming? We have seen a change in the world we live in. Weather is more extreme; things are changing.

We have from time to time young people who come and visit the Senate Chamber and sit in the galleries. They are always welcomed, but of course our debate today is about them. It is about the world they will live in and a question of whether it will be habitable, a world they can live in and prosper. Don't we have an obligation, our generation, to leave that world to them and, if nothing else, a world as good as what we inherited from our parents and grandparents?

That is what this debate about. And if we are going to do that, we have to make some changes. Can America make a change? We sure can. We have led the world when it comes to change. This President sat down with the automobile manufacturers, after decades of resistance to the notion of more fuel-efficient vehicles, and hammered out an agreement that now we are driving cars and trucks that take us the same distance and burn fewer gallons of gasoline.

My wife and I drive a Ford Fusion Hybrid, 36 miles a gallon, and we can beat that with other cars, but we are pretty happy with our little Ford. Nobody put a gun to my head and said buy it. My wife and I thought it was the responsible thing to do. Ford made a great product and we bought it.

There was a time on the floor of the Senate when Ford and other companies were in denial. It will never happen, they said. It is happening. America can change for the better with leadership.

I listened to the arguments from the Senate Republican leader today about the impact of change and the impact of doing something about carbon pollution on poor people and working families. I had to come to the floor. I listened to the plaintive pleas of the Republican leader to think about poor people working and the impact it has on them, and I kept remembering it is his political party that has opposed the increase in the minimum wage, an increase in the wage these poor people are earning. They oppose it, with one exception, maybe two. Their party opposes increasing the minimum wage and comes to the floor and says we can't do anything that could hurt poor working families.

First, let them join us in a bipartisan effort to raise the minimum wage. Secondly, I can report one thing that global warming and carbon pollution is producing today. It is producing the No. 1 complaint of children brought to the emergency rooms across America. What is the most common health problem bringing children to emergency rooms? Trauma? No. What is it? Asthma. I go to classrooms across my State, and I say to the children who are there: Hold up your hand if you know anyone who has asthma. Rural schools, urban schools, it is all the same. Hands go up across the class-

room. These problems are created by the air we are forced to breathe. Are we going to do something about it? We should.

Our colleague Max Baucus from Montana recently took on the position as Ambassador to China. He and his wife were headed over and we said half jokingly: I hope the air is clean enough to breathe over there, because if you have been to China, you know it is a challenge every single day. Are we going to take a different approach in America? Are we going to set a different example in America when it comes to public health? This is our opportunity.

If we truly care about working families and their children, how can we ignore what is happening? As the air gets worse and carbon pollution increases and asthma increases, health care costs go up. Lives are compromised. I don't want to see that happen. So if we truly care about working families, care about their children and the health of their children. I might also add, care about providing these families with health insurance. Time and again the same party that came to the floor this morning, telling us about working people, has opposed our efforts to extend the protection of health insurance to working families.

Which State is one of the most successful States in the Union in signing up people when it comes to our new health insurance plan, the so-called ObamaCare? One of the most successful per capita States in the Nation happens to be the Commonwealth of Kentucky, represented by the Senator who just spoke on the other side of the aisle. Hundreds of thousands of people in Kentucky now have health insurance through the President's plan, including thousands under Medicaid.

So when we are talking about who is sensitive to the needs of working families, whether it is minimum wage or basic health insurance, I think our approach is one that has proven to be right. Over 6 million Americans have now signed up for health insurance. In my State of Illinois, over 100,000 in Cook County alone now have health insurance, and I have met some of them.

Roy Romanowski—a great Chicago name—Roy, a big barrel-chested Polish musician, was sitting next to me at a health care clinic and he said, Senator, never had health insurance in my life but have it now and patted his wallet. Now he is signed up for Medicaid. A low-income guy, takes jobs as they come along, he has health insurance—he is about 60 years old—and is happy to have it. So when we talk about standing up for working people, this is part of it.

Yes, it is a challenge when we face change. We are a coal-producing State in Illinois. We are going to have to sit down as a State and make a plan that is going to deal with reducing the pollution which is changing our planet. We can do it. I am sure we can, and America should lead the world.

How many times have our colleagues on the other side talked about

exceptionalism; that America is such a different and great country. I don't quarrel with that. I don't want to be braggadocios about it, but I don't quarrel with it.

But when it comes to a challenge such as this, of cleaning up the environment, shouldn't America be a leader? Of course. That is what President Obama is asking us to do: State by State, figure out a plan that reduces carbon pollution, reduces the public health hazards children and families are facing because of the pollution, reduces the damage taking place to this environment that is changing the world we live in. That is what a leader does.

It is time for us to try to come together and work together to find a solution.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

CFTC NOMINATIONS

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I thank our leader Senator DURBIN for speaking on a number of subjects that actually all add up to the fact that we believe every American ought to have a fair shot to make it, whether it is jobs in a new clean energy economy. When I think about the fact that we will not have a middle class, we will not have an economy unless we make things and grow things—and that is what we do in Michigan. I think about our new clean energy opportunities. There are 8,000 parts in a big wind turbine, and somebody has to make those parts. We can make those in Michigan. So when we talk about doing the right things so we can breathe the air and drink the water, it is also about creating new opportunities for good-paying jobs for people, and it is about making sure our economy works for everybody and that everybody has a fair shot. That is the best of America.

We have before us in the Senate three nominations for the Commodity Futures Trading Commission, and we will be voting on one of them in a few hours. They came out of the Agriculture Committee, which I am honored to chair, so I wish to speak about them for a moment.

This independent agency, the Commodity Futures Trading Commission, is entrusted with the important mission of protecting investors in the derivatives market from fraud, manipulation, and other abuses. That means farmers and ranchers. It means consumers. It means businesses, large and small. It means a way to create capital so it can be invested in new jobs.

The oversight of this agency is incredibly important. Given this responsibility, it is imperative that we select Commissioners who have demonstrated not only expertise in global financial markets but the integrity and the judgment necessary to lead the implementation reforms contained in the Dodd-Frank financial reform law. This