

jobs in West Virginia. In recent years, we have seen what advances in energy technology can do to broaden energy production and benefit the broader economy. The shale boom has made the United States a leading producer of both oil and natural gas. The benefits are felt by Americans every time they fill their tank and balance their budgets at the end of the month.

In my State of West Virginia, Marcellus shale natural gas production is creating jobs and providing the opportunity to expand downstream manufacturing, but Federal Government policies can hamstring our energy economy by slowing the production and the use of our resources.

West Virginia, unfortunately, has seen that firsthand in our State's coal mining industry, where thousands of jobs have been lost. Just last week, AEP issued layoff notices to employees at three West Virginia powerplants. These closures are years ahead of schedule and the early closures are solely because of the Federal Government's MATS rule.

Yesterday, Patriot Coal announced it was temporarily idling the Paint Creek Complex, which employs 400 workers in West Virginia. Coal-fired plant closures driven by EPA emission regulations were cited as part of the problem.

The upcoming EPA regulations for carbon emissions from powerplants will have an even more devastating impact. Findings from reports by well-respected economic analysis firms show costs could get up to \$479 billion over a 15-year period while causing double-digit electricity price increases in 43 States.

Over half of the country's power comes from coal. Yet EPA is predicting that by effectively eliminating one-half of our energy production we will reduce average electricity prices by 8 percent. Well, somehow that just doesn't add up. How does this impact our Federal budget?

An energy economy that works will provide the low-cost, reliable electricity to power our broader economy. By contrast, excessive regulation means fewer people working in my State's energy sector. Higher cost, less-reliable energy is a tax against manufacturing and job growth across the country. That means fewer individuals working, fewer businesses providing jobs, and, ultimately, fewer government revenues.

The budget resolution before us this week recognizes the importance of American energy production. The reserve funds in this budget will improve our energy infrastructure, reform environmental regulations and promote job growth. To supplement the strong energy provisions already in the budget, I have filed several amendments to strengthen our energy security.

Last year, the administration reached a climate agreement with China. That agreement requires short-term carbon emission reductions in the United States, but China is allowed to

continue increasing its carbon emissions until 2030. That disparity could place the United States at a significant economic disadvantage.

My amendment would block any international environmental agreement that would result in serious harm to the U.S. economy.

I have also filed an amendment that would block EPA from finalizing, proposing or issuing any regulation that would reduce the reliability of the electricity grid. Our economy relies on electricity being available. Families expect the lights will come on when they flip the switch. They expect to have heat in the winter and air-conditioning in the summer. This simple amendment says no regulation from EPA can imperil access to reliable electricity. That makes sense to me.

I urge my colleagues to support the balanced budget that is before the Senate this week, including these amendments, and to support policies that will allow our economy to benefit from America's vast energy resources. The jobs and the revenues that come from energy production can play a significant role in a responsible Federal budget.

The American people elected us to make government more efficient, effective, and accountable. American families must live within a budget, States must adhere to a budget, and it is time for the Federal Government to do the same.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

THE BUDGET AND CHILDREN'S HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I rise to talk tonight about one issue: the issue of children. But I wish to speak about that one issue in two separate contexts: One is the budget we are debating now and will continue to vote on all week and the second is with regard to the Children's Health Insurance Program.

Let me start with the premise that I believe those of us who were elected to both Houses of the Congress and in both parties are charged with a basic responsibility to our children. It doesn't matter where we live or what State we represent or what district, in the case of the House, I believe we are charged with that responsibility.

A long time ago, Hubert Humphrey, who served in this Chamber for many years and was well known across the country, set forth a moral test for government. He talked about the moral test being how government treats those in the dawn of life, those in the shadow of life, and those in the twilight of life. Of course, in speaking of the dawn of life, we are talking about children. That test is still appropriate and we should try our best to adhere to it in terms of public policy, especially when it comes to the budget.

The budget, of course, is a reflection of who we are as a country and what

our values are. It is in a sense a mirror into which we look or should be looking to see who we are. And if we are not setting forth policy and being strong advocates for our children, we may as well not be here. So I think there is a test that each one of us must face when it comes to what we are doing on behalf of children.

I also believe in a very real sense that the programs, the strategies, the expenditures we make on behalf of children are in fact an investment—an investment in the long-term economy of the United States. This isn't just the right thing to do; it is also the best thing we could do for a growing economy and for our fiscal situation years from now. If kids are healthier, they will get better jobs. If they learn more when they are younger, they are going to earn more when they are older. That is not just a rhyme, it is true, and all the studies show it. So I believe this budget debate is a time to reflect upon what will happen to our children. I have real concerns about the budget as it relates to children.

Again, these are in our society the folks who are powerless and in many cases voiceless. They are not voting, they don't have a lobbyist, they don't have a high-paid strategist or voice for their needs. Because they are powerless and because they are in a sense voiceless, it is up to us to speak on their behalf—and we speak with our votes, we speak with our work.

So what is the proposal in this budget? Let me work through some of the numbers.

According to one of the leading advocacy organizations in the United States, First Focus, discretionary investments make up nearly one-third of all Federal investments that go to children. So what we do on the discretionary part of the budget—which, by definition, because it is discretionary, we have decisions to make about it year after year. Because of that, we have to be very careful when it comes to these decisions—whether it is the budget resolution, whether it is the authorization process, or whether it is in fact the appropriations process. This funding, this so-called discretionary, nonmandatory—if I can call it that—part of the budget includes programs such as Head Start, childcare assistance, housing support, special education, to name a few examples that have a direct and substantial impact upon our children.

The Republican budget we are debating this week cuts \$236 billion over 10 years in the nondefense discretionary part of the budget. Nondefense discretionary is a long way of saying the part of the budget that we vote on and we will have votes on that relate to the appropriations. So \$236 billion over 10 years is the cut. That cut, I would argue, falls disproportionately in a substantial way upon children.

What do these cuts mean for children and for families? Of course, we cannot separate one from the other. We will

look at Head Start, and 35,000 children will be cut from Head Start—some 1,250 fewer children in a State like Pennsylvania, just by example for one State. What are we going to gain? How better off would the country be with 35,000 fewer kids in Head Start? I don't think we are going to be better off. I think we are worse off if we do that. It makes no sense. This is a program that has been in existence for 50 years. It has helped a lot of children succeed.

The State director from my office in Pennsylvania, who just left our staff recently and served with distinction, Ed Williams, was a Head Start kid. I meet people all the time in our State who are leading very successful lives in the private sector or public sector. Ed is just one example of having had the benefit of Head Start to get a head start in life because of disadvantages that certain children face.

How about students with disabilities, a \$347 million cut to funding for students with disabilities, which means a little more than \$12 million less for Pennsylvania children with disabilities.

How about housing, 133,000 nationwide fewer housing vouchers. In Pennsylvania, that adds up to 620 families who, if they had those vouchers, would be able to afford decent and safe housing. What are we getting for fewer families who have access to housing vouchers? Again, it is not an experimental program. It is a program that we know works, a program that has been in existence for a long time to help folks.

We know when we invest early in a child's life, we see a great return on investment. All the studies show this. It is irrefutable: If you spend a buck, you get a lot more than a buck back. By some estimates, the bang for the buck is in the double figures. In one study on early learning, we get \$17 back for the \$1 spent.

I mentioned before that if we make investments in children in terms of their early learning, they will in fact learn more now and earn more later. That is what we should be focused on when it comes to our children, when it comes to their ability to succeed in school and, of course, when it comes to their ability to get a good job and be part of a growing economy.

The budget proposal makes deep cuts in many other investments to protect our most vulnerable children, including the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, the so-called SNAP program that we used to call food stamps. That, of course, provides nutrition aid. If we were doing the right thing as a nation—and we are not there yet, even though we have made some progress on some fronts—we would make sure children have enough to eat. That would be one pillar of our protection for children. We are not there yet, but the SNAP program helps substantially on that. We would make sure they have early learning opportunities. I talked about that and will talk about it more. We would make sure they have access

to health care. That is why we have Medicaid for poor children, that is why we have the Children's Health Insurance Program for others, and that is why so many private sector companies provide health care that, of course, covers children of their employees. But if we are doing at least those three things—early learning, food security or food and nutrition, as well as health care—we are going to be doing what is right for our children.

I would argue we have to examine this budget and apply a kids' test—not a special interest test, not a lobbyist test, not a who-is-powerful test, not a test about who has the most to gain from this budget, but who might have to most to lose, and one of those groups, I would argue, is our children.

When it comes to the SNAP program, according to Feeding America—another great advocacy group—nearly half of all SNAP participants are children. And according to another organization we rely upon for analysis, the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, investments in SNAP lifted 2.1 million children out of poverty in 2013.

So why would we cut a program like that, that would disproportionately and adversely impact our children? What do we gain from that as a country? What do we gain when fewer and fewer children are helped with a nutrition program that will make sure they have enough to eat?

In addition to SNAP, the Republican budget would roll back significant progress we have made for children who qualify for the child tax credit or the earned-income tax credit. If the improvements to these credits are allowed to lapse, the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities estimates that 1 million children will fall back into poverty. I think people in both parties would argue that these two—and maybe especially the earned-income tax credit—are one of the best, some would argue the best—the best—poverty reduction strategies we have ever had in place in our policy.

I think if the earned-income tax credit is keeping children out of poverty, we should make sure it remains in place and remains a tax strategy that can help prevent 1 million children from falling back into poverty.

We should also be using the Tax Code to help working families rise into the middle class, those families who may not be there yet but can rise into the middle class. But instead, the Republican budget does nothing to prevent tax increases, averaging \$1,100 for 12 million families and students paying for college, and \$9,000 for 16 million working families with children. That makes no sense for those families or for those children.

As many as 486,000 Pennsylvania families could benefit from the earned-income tax credit, the child tax credit and the opportunity tax credit of 2015—all good ideas, all impacted adversely by the budget.

Finally, I will conclude with Medicaid. Medicaid for some people is some

program far away that they don't think affects their lives. A lot of families—lower income families, middle-class families, even—benefit from the long-term care part of Medicaid. A lot of families may not know that Medicaid is the reason that their mother, father, or loved one could be in a nursing home.

What does it mean for kids? Medicaid for so many children, millions of them, is the only health care they have. The good news is that it is very good health care for a lot of children. They get access to early periodic screening and diagnostic testing. So they get the screening and the testing they need so we can provide the kind of health care that child needs, but we cannot provide unless we do that screening for those children. It provides quality health care for millions of children in the country. We should remember that when people make proposals around here to slash Medicaid, some by hundreds of billions of dollars over the next decade, that it is a direct hit—a direct hit on children.

Based on calculations from the White House, the Republican budget proposal would block-grant Medicaid funding to Pennsylvania by more than \$41 billion over 10 years. I don't know how the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania or any State is going to be better off when Medicaid is block-granted, sent back to the States, hoping—just hoping—that maybe the States can pick up the cost. That makes no sense. Our State is going to be worse off if we lose \$40 billion, or even a number lower than that, over the next 10 years on Medicaid.

By one estimate last fall, 47 percent of children who live in rural areas are the beneficiaries of either Medicaid or the Children's Health Insurance Program. So when those folks talk about cutting Medicaid or not doing what I hope we can do—which is to extend the Children's Health Insurance Program for the next 4 years, not only 2—they should remember that 47 percent of rural children benefit from those programs.

When it comes to Medicaid, children may only make up 20 percent of the cost of Medicaid, but half of the enrollees in Medicaid are children. So they might only be 20 percent of the cost, but they are half of the enrollees.

We know that Medicaid was created 50 years ago. The government put forth a promise, which is somewhat of the test I started with about children in the dawn of their life. The promise was to ensure that the most vulnerable members of society had access to health care, a pretty simple promise and pretty easy to understand our obligation when we recite that promise.

So whether it is our kids, whether it is older Americans who need to get nursing home care, or whether it is Americans and many of them children with disabilities, Medicaid ensures that access to health care. Medicaid is the promise we must keep to folks who need nursing home care, to children

who are poor and may not have health insurance without Medicaid, and of course to individuals with disabilities. So we have a long way to go to prove that we are keeping that promise.

Mr. President, I will conclude with some thoughts about the Children's Health Insurance Program. We all know this is not only a bipartisan program but a very successful program. From 1997, when it was enacted, to the year 2012, the uninsured rate for children fell by half—from 14 percent to 7 percent—across the country, a remarkable achievement. It means we are not there yet because we still have 7 percent who are uninsured, but that is a substantial step forward and a substantial measure of progress for the country.

This program, the Children's Health Insurance Program, along with Medicaid, is helping to reduce disparity in health coverage affecting low-income children across the country. Without legislative action to extend funding beyond September 30 of this year, over 10 million children across America are at risk of losing their comprehensive, affordable—I will say that again, comprehensive and affordable quality care, including, by one estimate, 270,000 children in Pennsylvania. About 2 million of the children currently enrolled in CHIP would likely end up uninsured while the others would face higher premiums and higher out-of-pocket costs. We should do the right thing and make sure we have funding in place for 4 years for the Children's Health Insurance Program, not just 2 years.

Unfortunately, what we are hearing from the proposal sent to us from the House is that the 4-year commitment is only 2 years. So we have a lot of work to do. I believe the right thing to do on CHIP is to enact what Senate Democrats have proposed—a 4-year so-called clean extension of the Children's Health Insurance Program as soon as possible, and that is S. 522. That would be the right thing to do.

We can give speeches and talk a lot about how we all support kids, and it is nice to say that and it is nice to vote once in a while for programs and strategies that help kids, but I believe the test is a lot tougher than that. The test will come on this budget vote—a test on whether we support children. If we are cutting Medicaid by hundreds of billions of dollars over the next 10 years, if we are cutting the SNAP program by tens of billions of dollars or more, maybe even higher than that over the next 10 years, and if we are not doing the right thing on children's health insurance—and I could go down a longer list—then we are not doing what we need to do for children. They don't have lobbyists, they don't give campaign contributions, they don't have power, and they may be voiceless, but we have an obligation in both parties and in both Houses to be their voice. But I am afraid we are headed down a road with a budget that harms children substantially, and I hope that

over the next couple of days we will make the right decisions for our children.

With that, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Will the Senator withhold his request?

Mr. CASEY. I will.

F-35 JOINT STRIKE FIGHTER

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I support the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter. I believe this is a critical defense acquisition program which will greatly strengthen not only our national security, but that of our closest allies and partners.

The F-35 Joint Strike Fighter Program began more than 20 years ago. In an age where emerging technologies are introduced daily and where we have become accustomed to instant gratification, we sometimes grow impatient with how long it takes to achieve war-winning capabilities—and we should. Yet today, the F-35 stands on the threshold of being used effectively and decisively in operational missions.

During its journey, the Joint Strike Fighter Program Office has encountered its fair share of setbacks, and—at times—faulty leadership decisions by those in government as well as those in the private sector. From the Pentagon itself, we heard the accusation of “acquisition malpractice.”

The senior Senator from Arizona, JOHN MCCAIN, has repeatedly pointed out these shortfalls and missteps. I echo his frustrations.

In response to the accusations and grievances about the F-35 program, one could have just thrown one's hands up in frustration. Yet through the renewed determination of the F-35's Joint Strike Program Office under the leadership of Lt. Gen. Christopher Bogdan, what once was the poster child for acquisition reform has reached vital milestones and will soon be used by our combat forces.

During his tenure, General Bogdan has demanded and achieved greater performance and accountability among his own staff and his industry partners. He has established and is executing a corrective plan. With that said, there is still much more to do. The problems General Bogdan and the collective F-35 team are overcoming did not occur in an instant, nor will they be fixed in an instant.

Accordingly, today, I call on my colleagues to support the F-35 and provide the F-35 Program Office with the backing it needs to achieve critical future milestones.

In addition, the Congress must continue to challenge the Department, the F-35 Program Office, and the program's industrial partners to reduce not only each aircraft's initial purchase price, but the cost of using and maintaining this strike fighter in the decades that follow. As history teaches us, upwards of 80 percent of the total ownership costs of a weapon system resides not in the purchase price, but in its use and

resulting maintenance. This means the Department must pay critical attention now to the development and execution of a robust F-35 sustainment strategy to ensure long term costs are reduced.

We must also not forget the current purchase price of the F-35 exceeds \$110 million per aircraft. It is inevitable that the price of the F-35 will come down as the numbers of aircraft produced goes up. But the quest for price reduction must be central to our current and future efforts if we are to be able to procure the number of aircraft required to properly execute our deterrent strategies and, if necessary, war plans. Indeed, price will have a dramatic effect on the ability of our allies to purchase the F-35. Therefore, I challenge both the Department and our defense contractors to work toward achieving what many experts agree is an obtainable goal: a procurement price of less than \$80 million per aircraft, and as close to \$60 million per aircraft as possible. If we do this, the current program of record for more than 3,000 aircraft will naturally increase. My personal desire would be to see over 6,000 of these aircraft safeguarding our precious liberties and those of our allies.

This is an ambitious objective, but it is based upon achieving what is best for America and its allies. And I believe everyone in the Department of Defense, the F-35 Program Office, and, yes, the employees of our Nation's defense contractors have this as their central goal.

Therefore, I am reminded of a story from our history about the industrialist Collis Potter Huntington. He was one of the so-called “Big Four” of the western railroads during the late 1800s and built the Central Pacific Railroad as part of the first transcontinental railroad. He also led and developed other interstate lines such as the Southern Pacific Railroad and the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway, known simply as the C&O. As Huntington furthered the C&O's extension through the Virginia peninsula, he opened the pathway for West Virginia's coal industry to reach the coal piers in the harbor of Hampton Roads. Seeing a need for export shipping, he started the Newport News Shipbuilding and Drydock Company in 1886.

Huntington started a long tradition of superb shipbuilding, and he is also credited with giving the shipyard its motto. The motto simply states: “We will build good ships here. At a profit if we can. At a loss if we must. But always good ships.” This motto is emblazoned on a plaque and fixed to a granite monument at one of the entrances to the yard. This motto defined the mindset of generations of ship builders at the yard.

In 1968, the privately held Newport News Shipbuilding and Drydock Company merged with another company. Thereafter, the “Good Ship” monument was removed due to its misalignment with the “new” company's goals.