

Senator SCHATZ and Senator MARKEY, two Democrats, had never had a vote on one of their amendments in the Senate before Republicans gave them a vote last week. Senator COONS will get his first vote on an amendment today.

All of these amendments aren't the only way again the Senate is working for the American people. Another is going to happen on Thursday. The Energy and Natural Resources Committee is going to hold a hearing on a bill that I introduced earlier this month.

We have four Republican sponsors on that bill and four Democratic sponsors: Senators HEINRICH, BENNET, HEITKAMP, and KAINE. It is the LNG Permitting Certainty and Transparency Act. Now Senator TOOMEY, a Republican, was added as cosponsor, and Senator UDALL, a Democrat, was added as cosponsor. So there are five Republican and five Democratic cosponsors.

This is an idea that the House considered last year, and it passed with bipartisan support. Forty-six Democrats voted in favor of increasing America's exports of liquefied natural gas. The House is expected to vote again and pass a bill like this one this week. This is an idea that has bipartisan support in the Senate as well. So it should be a no-brainer. Plans to send American energy overseas are wrapped up in Washington redtape, and Americans who are eager for the jobs on these projects continue to wait.

This bipartisan bill will do a lot to fix that problem. It would set clear deadlines for Washington to make timely decisions on these import permits—export permits, importtant permits to export liquefied natural gas.

Once there has been an agreement and an appropriate environmental review, the Secretary of Energy will have only 45 days to act on a permit application. Increasing American natural gas exports would do three important things.

No. 1, it would create jobs. That is, of course, most important. These are American jobs, jobs for Americans. The private sector wants to create these jobs—not government jobs but private sector jobs.

No. 2, it would help to reduce our Nation's trade deficit. The trade deficit currently stands at \$39 billion.

No. 3, these exports would support our American allies. Last year Russia invaded Ukraine and seized control of Crimea. Why? Largely because of the natural gas facilities there.

There was a group of Senators who were actually in Ukraine. I was one of them the day the Russian helicopters landed just north of the gas plants there. This was about the gas. Well, we could help reduce the threat Russia poses to Europe by offering more options for our allies to buy American natural gas.

There is no good reason for the endless delays on these export permits. Our bill would speed up the process. These export projects are job creators with bipartisan support. They have

been stuck in Washington's bureaucrat gridlock.

The Senate is going to be acting to get these projects moving. That is why the American people sent us to the Senate. It is how the Senate is supposed to work. Committees consider the ideas on both sides, the bills get debated in committee and on the floor, and every Senator has a chance to talk about it and then to offer amendments that might improve legislation. That is how it has always worked before. It is a slow process. It was meant to produce consensus.

The majority leader, HARRY REID, changed all of that. The Democratic majority leader did everything he could to block amendments and to bypass and to skip committees. Did he do it to make better laws? No, not at all. Did he do it to speed up action so the Senate could be more productive? Of course not.

It was a transparent campaign tactic to keep vulnerable Democratic Senators from having to take tough votes. Even Democrats couldn't get votes on their amendments. Well, that gimmick by HARRY REID—the campaign tricks—failed, and the American people were not fooled.

That is one of the reasons voters across the country chose Republicans to lead both Houses of Congress. The American people said they deserve better, and the American people are absolutely right. The American people want Democrats to start working with Republicans to get things done.

That is what Senator HEINRICH and I—and others who are cosponsoring this measure today—are doing with our bill. The American people want an honest debate on important issues such as the Keystone jobs bill, as well. The American people want their representatives in the Senate to be able to offer amendments to bills such as this one.

That is how the Senate should work. That is how the Senate is working under Republican leadership, and that is how it is going to continue to work.

So I am pleased to see the votes are going to be held on these amendments. I am pleased to stand and cast my vote on behalf of the people of Wyoming. I look forward to more votes, more debate, and more consideration of ideas from both sides of the aisle.

It is interesting that President Obama has threatened to veto eight separate pieces of legislation so far this year. It is interesting to the point that it has a headline in today's USA Today, page 2A: "Obama veto threats are at record high." Veto threats are at a record high.

The President has said he will veto another two bills that haven't even been introduced yet. If they haven't even been introduced, how does he know what they are going to say? How does he know what they are going to say once they go through the process of being amended, passed in the House, passed in the Senate, and get to his desk?

The President should reconsider each and every one of these veto threats.

The Senate is moving forward. The White House is putting up roadblocks. That is not what the American people were asking for in November. The American people want us to work together to get things done, to make their lives better. It is about them. It is not about the people who sit in this body, it is about the American people—their quality of life, people living paycheck to paycheck, day to day, what their lives are about.

The Republican Congress and this Senate continue to listen to the American people. The President of the United States continues to ignore them.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COTTON). The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

FAIR TAX ACT

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, we have had a lot of talk—certainly in the last year or so and certainly as this new session of Congress begins—on the importance of tax reform. Our country is at a point in time where we certainly are no longer competitive globally. The economy now is one that works against us because of our Tax Code. I think there is general consensus in the Senate that reforming the Tax Code is of significant importance, something that must be done.

I am often asked not only when I am back in Kansas but here in Washington, DC: Do you expect there to be broad-based tax reform? And we keep guessing about the likelihood of that happening.

I think it is typical of elected officials, politicians, to always talk about the need for comprehensive tax reform. We talk about lowering rates, making the tax system more fair, less bureaucratic, less paperwork. I certainly join in those sentiments and believe that the current circumstance we have in regard to our Tax Code is such that it limits the freedom of Americans—American business men and women, individuals, and their families. We make way too many decisions based upon the consequences of those decisions and how they are affected by the Tax Code.

So I am all on board on tax reform, but I wish to talk about what I believe is the best solution toward tax reform. And it is not tinkering with the current system; it is an overhaul of the current Tax Code.

I have joined my colleague from Georgia, Senator PERDUE, in once again introducing the fair tax plan. I started a long time ago in Congress, knowing that we needed to make significant changes in our Tax Code, with

the belief that most Americans ought to be able to file a tax return without the need of professional help, that we ought to be able to make decisions that are in the best interests of ourselves, our families, and our businesses without always going to the Tax Code to see what the consequences of those decisions were. I looked at a variety of proposals that were being considered at the time and continue to be considered today and ultimately reached the conclusion that the Fair Tax is the best option for significant reform. I wish to speak for just a minute about why I think that is the case.

As I said, Senator PERDUE and I introduced S. 25, the Fair Tax Act of 2015. I have been a cosponsor of that legislation. It was originally introduced in the Senate by the former Senator from Georgia, Mr. Saxby Chambliss, and I am pleased to now succeed him in his efforts to see that not only is this topic discussed in Congress but ultimately that the Fair Tax Act becomes law. It is a significant step in the direction of individual freedom.

I would highlight for my colleagues—and I have said this on the Senate floor before—I think the greatest responsibility we have as American citizens is to pass on to the next generation of Americans the freedoms and liberties guaranteed by our Constitution and the opportunity for every American to live the American dream. The Fair Tax, in my view, brings both of those goals front and center. Greater freedom and protection of individual liberties is certainly a component of the Fair Tax, and the opportunity for every American to pursue the American dream is a result that comes from the Fair Tax. It is that Fair Tax direction and individual freedom that caught my attention. It is the concept our Founding Fathers knew so well.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. MORAN. I ask unanimous consent for additional time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, the Fair Tax repeals all Federal, corporate, and individual taxes, payroll taxes, capital gains taxes, and estate and gift taxes and replaces them with a revenue-neutral personal consumption tax. The Fair Tax allows Americans to keep the entirety of their income, putting individuals in charge of their own finances, not the government—or, more specifically, not the Internal Revenue Service.

All Americans should be able to trust the IRS, which exercises great authority over the lives of Americans in this country, but we know from past experiences that expectation is no longer founded. So getting rid of the Internal Revenue Service is a significant benefit that comes from the passage of the Fair Tax.

I recognize that consumption taxes can be regressive, meaning they are

harmful to those at lower income levels. So the Fair Tax takes that into account by providing a pre-rebate for those who fall below certain poverty income levels so that the basics—the things we by necessity need to buy in our individual daily lives—are not covered by a tax, therefore creating greater progressivity to what otherwise would be a more regressive tax and something that I think is still important in this country to make certain we don't overtax those at the lowest income levels in the United States.

Certainly, our current Tax Code has significant complexities with all the paperwork. By some estimates, U.S. companies are currently holding over \$20 trillion overseas. With the passage of the Fair Tax, foreign investments would no longer continue to sit on the sidelines when they could be brought back to America to drive economic growth and create jobs. For international businesses looking to relocate to the United States, the Fair Tax would be a welcomed sign. But the Fair Tax also benefits the consumer. It also benefits the everyday citizen, as I said, because of the pre-rebate.

With my time being short, I look forward to having a dialogue on the Senate floor and in the committees over the next few months, and I ask my colleagues to seriously take a look at S. 25 and to join the Senator from Georgia, Mr. PERDUE, and me and others in promotion of a program that reduces the complexity of the Tax Code in our lives, rids us of the Internal Revenue Service, protects the progressivity of the tax circumstance we find today, and most importantly, allows us to continue to pursue the American dream and promotes our individual freedoms and liberties.

The Fair Tax is worthy of people's consideration. It ought to be more than just a talking point. It deserves a debate, a discussion, a vote, and consideration by the Senate.

Mr. President, I yield back the remainder of my time, 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.

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

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

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY FUNDING

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I am very pleased to be here today to speak to my colleagues about funding for the Department of Homeland Security and to be followed by one of my most valued colleagues, Senator MENENDEZ, whose leadership on this issue has been extraordinarily important. I am also pleased to work with him on a letter he sent yesterday to the President concerning Iran sanc-

tions, where his statesmanship-like path to a reasonable solution on this very complex and crucial issue will be enormously important to the future.

The Department of Homeland Security is one of the most significant departments in the U.S. Government. It has a mandate that is as complex and crucial as any in keeping American citizens and communities and capabilities safe and secure in a dangerous, complex, and threatening world.

In my family, when I was growing up, we had a saying: Don't cut off your nose to spite your face. Unfortunately, that path is exactly what some of my colleagues are choosing to follow in threatening to stop funding for the Department of Homeland Security.

We are reminded of the importance of this Department not only as terrorism raises its ugly head repeatedly abroad but also as perhaps more benign threats exist at home—the most recent of them, the snowstorm that hit the Northeast within the past couple of days. The Department of Homeland Security is not only engaged in a fight against terrorism, not only engaged in keeping America safe from threats abroad but is engaged in a wide variety of other tasks that have to do with the Nation's security. That is the key word in its title—"security."

Americans fear more deeply than ever before that their security is threatened—economic security by stagnating incomes, foreign security as the world becomes more volatile and unpredictable and more threatening, and domestic security as threats abroad metastasize within our own borders.

Many people equate the concept of security at home or homeland security with protection against extreme violence from abroad, violent extremism spawning from abroad and in fact stopping those threats. Finding the wrongdoers and stopping them is one of the major tasks the Department of Homeland Security has, but it has a myriad of additional responsibilities that include aiding the victims of natural disasters and extreme weather, citizenship and immigration, routinely handling matters that involve legitimate applications for visas for entry into the United States, and it fights the scourge of human trafficking. I am privileged to have a Caucus on Human Trafficking with my colleague Senator ROB PORTMAN. So I know it forms a diverse collection of responsibilities that are crucial to security.

In fact, the Department of Homeland Security's responsibilities are comprehensive—so much so that it is simply unacceptable to play politics with its crucial mission. It is irresponsible to hold its funding hostage in a dangerous game of fiscal chicken and threaten daily activities that are vital to America's present and future security.