

Moreover, I know this may be a radical idea in the Halls of Congress, but, no, I do not believe that this legislation should approve a \$10 billion bailout for Jeff Bezos to fly to the Moon. I know that is a very radical idea, but maybe, just maybe, a middle class which is struggling, which is falling behind, should not see their taxpayer dollars go to the second wealthiest person in America. Radical idea, I know, but that is my view. Mr. Bezos is worth some \$138 billion. He became \$33 billion richer during the pandemic, and in a given year, Mr. Bezos has paid nothing in Federal income taxes because he and his friends write a tax system that benefits the wealthy.

I say to Mr. Bezos, if he wants to go to the Moon, let him go to the Moon. That is OK. But he should do it on his own dime, not that of the U.S. taxpayers.

This is where we are. This country faces enormous issues. We are not dealing with those issues. Instead, we are talking about a massive bailout for profitable corporations and a \$10 billion check for the second wealthiest guy in this country. I would hope that Members of Congress listen to the American people, stand up for the working class and the middle class of this country and not give a massive amount of corporate welfare to people who don't need it.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

#### BIDEN ADMINISTRATION

Ms. ERNST. Madam President, 200 years ago, the Senate went about their business without computers, without cell phones, and any of our other modern conveniences that run on electricity, including the very lights in this room. Working by candlelight might sound quaint today, but many Americans may find themselves doing just that in the not too distant future because the Biden administration is taking the country back to the era of no electricity.

Folks, with President Biden and his same team of advisers who created a nationwide baby formula shortage and out-of-control inflation overseeing their "energy transition," what could possibly go wrong? You don't have to look any further than your energy bills to get an answer.

Prices at the pump have nearly doubled since Biden's first day in office when he started signing Executive orders to turn off American energy supplies. And home electricity prices have increased more than 20 percent since just last summer. What is worse than these expensive energy bills? Well, folks, how about no power at all? Most of the Nation is currently in danger of experiencing power outages due to energy shortages caused by the closure of power plants as part of the Democrats' push towards renewables. These Biden blackouts will make it impossible to even run fans and air conditioners on the hottest days of the summer.

But not to worry, folks, Biden's Energy Department has issued some tips of what to do in case of an outage, which include stocking up on candles, keeping an ice chest on hand, and having a gallon of water available for every person in your house for each day you are without electricity.

Folks, that is not the most reassuring advice since no one knows how many days we could be kept in the dark during a Biden blackout.

The reality is these power outages pose a bigger problem than just the inconvenience of being uncomfortably warm or unable to watch TV for a few hours or possibly days.

Extended outages could be a matter of life or death for many folks who depend upon electronic medical devices or temperature-sensitive medicines.

You are probably wondering how it is even possible in 2022 for there to be an energy shortage right here in the United States of America. It is simple math: Democratic policies.

The ongoing closure of traditional power plants is reducing our capacity to supply enough electricity for millions of homes and renewables are not yet producing enough energy on their own to make up the difference.

The Democrats are predictably blaming global warming, but the truth is the rolling blackouts and rising prices are really being caused by man-made energy change. Just this year, the Biden administration has reduced domestic oil and gas leasing, created regulatory barriers for building pipelines, and taken administrative actions that put hundreds of solar energy projects across the U.S. on hold.

We can't just turn off the power sources we depend upon without having reliable, abundant, and affordable alternatives readily available. Yet that is exactly what the Democrats, at President Biden's direction, are doing.

I am proud that my home State of Iowa was the first State in the Nation to adopt a renewable portfolio standard nearly 40 years ago.

Today, Iowa generates most of our energy from renewables, with wind power being our primary source. Iowa also leads the Nation in the production of ethanol and biodiesel. And despite what critics say, the use of corn ethanol and soybean biodiesel reduce greenhouse gas emissions while helping to keep our Nation energy independent and our State green and clean.

However, renewables still only produce a fraction of the total electricity the Nation relies on to run, making it impossible and irresponsible to simply unplug our traditional energy sources.

Just look at California, which has set a goal of achieving a carbon-free power grid. The State is forecasting that energy shortages could leave as many as 4 million California residents without power this summer.

The State's utility provider wants to build five new fossil-fuel power generators to ensure the availability of reli-

able electricity in the future. But the challenge is more than just making up for the reduction in power production because the transition to renewables is creating new demands for electricity.

For example, our increasingly unreliable power grid will face even greater strains as more and more electric vehicles are plugged into it. To drive just 100 miles, an EV requires about the same amount of electricity as it takes to run a home for an entire day, including lights, heating and air-conditioning, and appliances. Tesla, the world's top EV carmaker, is already asking EV owners to not charge their cars during certain hours of the day to better ration the use of electricity.

And while President Biden and the Democrats keep telling Americans to buy an electric vehicle to cut down on the cost of gas, the high sticker price makes EVs unaffordable.

Folks, the cold, hard truth is electric vehicles are not as economical, environmental, or ethical as the Democrats want us to believe. Proponents of the Green New Deal portray themselves as heroes in a fairy tale riding to the rescue—on an EV, of course—to defeat the greedy corporations polluting the planet for profit so we can all live happily ever after. But the truth is it ain't that easy being green.

Consider the component parts used in both EVs and solar panels. Well, they are largely produced by Communist China's State-supported corporations, often using slave and child labor.

As a result, the world will be more dependent on Communist China for some energy products in a post-carbon economy than we are on OPEC for petroleum today.

President Biden's own Energy Department admits that "U.S. decarbonization goals are reliant on both Chinese firms and the Chinese government."

And while we will rely on China for the technology, the communist regime will rely more heavily on the forced labor of children and modern-day slaves to produce it. Consider, almost half of the world supply of polysilicon used in solar panels is made in Communist China, often by the hands of forced labor of ethnic and religious minorities. And nearly every silicon-based solar panel is likely to contain components that originated in the area of China where forced labor camps are widespread. China also has significant financial control over the world's supply of cobalt, which is an essential element used in the batteries of EVs.

The Congo produces 70 percent of the world's cobalt, and Chinese-backed companies own or have a financial interest in most of the African nation's cobalt mines. These Chinese corporations are subjecting the miners to physical abuse and hazardous conditions in exchange for very little money. Tens of thousands of children—some as young as 4 years old—are exploited to work in the mines with few safety protections.

President Biden promised to create green jobs, but he didn't mention that they would be done by children in Africa or slaves in China. These poor kids are mistreated and malnourished and even drugged to suppress their hunger so they can work for longer hours. Breathing in toxic fumes causes long-term health problems, including lung disease and heart failure, as well as birth defects. And miners are often buried alive when tunnels cave in.

These are some of the kids who mine the cobalt to make an EV run. And in the other photo are some of the folks who produce ethanol for motor vehicles. I know which photo I would rather see. Who powers your vehicle?

In addition to the toxic harm to humans, the extraction of cobalt also causes severe environmental pollution to the water, air, and to the soil.

Just take a look at this picture. This is a mine in Congo where cobalt is extracted to make batteries for EVs. Nothing about this landscape looks like an environmental success story to me. By contrast, the picture over here is a beautiful farm in Iowa where corn is grown to make fuel for motor vehicles. Every year, I drive through mile after mile of cornfields on my 99-county tour. It is the type of scenic drive that reconnects you with nature and reminds you of the importance of proper stewardship of the land we live off of.

Folks, we can all have a cleaner conscience knowing that energy made in Iowa is creating economic opportunities for our neighbors, while keeping our communities green, rather than exploiting children or creating a toxic wasteland. Can the same be said about the initiatives that are being pushed by the Biden administration? Like begging OPEC to pump more oil, sending our Nation's strategic oil reserves to China, or subsidizing China's market in slave and child labor.

Are we going to tell the truth to the children that riding the electric school buses that the Biden administration is spending \$5 billion on to purchase, what really makes the wheels on these buses go round and round is the exploitation of other children who are their age or even younger? Or are we just going to tell them more green fairy tales?

It is time to come clean about the Democrats' Green New Deal. Just like President Biden's other policies, this radical agenda is creating problems, not solving them, including greater dependency on foreign adversaries like China and Russia, reliance on child and slave forced labor, harm to human health and the environment, higher costs, and energy shortages and blackouts. Democrats are literally trying to keep America in the dark about these inconvenient truths.

Folks, the Biden blackouts will be the latest unneeded reminder that the Democrats' Green New Deal can't hold a candle to the Republicans' record of producing an abundant supply of af-

fordable energy right here in the good old United States of America.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam President, it is so interesting being home for July 4 and talking with Tennesseans, and it sounds like Senator ERNST heard some of the same things from her constituents there in Iowa.

But what came up a lot in our conversations was the feeling and the awareness that the Democrats and the media have spent the last few months trying to convince the American people that oil companies are to blame for Biden's energy crisis.

At one point, they even tried to blame the people running the local gas stations, all the moms and pops, but Tennesseans know whose fault it is. Tennesseans are smart. They are watching very closely. And they know that President Biden became responsible for their pain the moment he chose a radical, environmental agenda over the fully realized vision of American energy independence.

That is right, we were energy independent the day he took office.

So President Biden canceled the Keystone Pipeline. He canceled leases and energy infrastructure, and he got behind dozens of regulations that have made it almost impossible for American energy producers to do their job.

At the time, Democrats claimed this was all for the greater good. It is temporary. It is transitioning to the liberal world order. But I think any reasonable person would agree that what has happened is things have gotten worse—terribly worse.

If you don't want to take my word for it, talk to the local leaders who are responsible for keeping the lights on in their communities. City budgets are stretched thin. School budgets aren't doing any better. Parents want to know if the buses will keep running and what will happen in August if the schools can't afford to turn the air-conditioning on. Everyone wants to know what will happen to public transportation, to emergency services, and to law enforcement if the price of a gallon of gas gets too expensive. They have no idea how far the Biden administration will allow this to go, and that is what concerns them the most.

Joe Biden hasn't just failed "we the people," he has sabotaged the pocketbooks of millions of Americans and given our adversaries a huge advantage.

The Democrats gambled on the Green New Deal. It is evident they lost. Their gas holiday was a gimmick, and that failed. Energy prices are through the roof, but they still pulled a million barrels of oil out of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, and they sent it to communist China.

Now the President of the United States has gone hat in hand to Saudi Arabia so that he can beg for oil. He is even trying to cozy up to the Iranians

with a new Iran nuclear deal, begging for oil. Our hard-fought energy independence is gone, along with our Nation's credibility on this issue.

The world is watching Joe Biden. They are watching the Biden blackouts that are really taking a toll on American energy and American consumers, and you and I both know that all the wrong people are seeing this as an opportunity to profit.

If the Biden administration continues to squander our country's resources, we will lose even more ground to the axis of evil. Russia still has a stranglehold on European energy. American supply chains are still hopelessly entangled with China. Iran is ready to steamroll Biden for that new nuclear deal. North Korea is deploying hackers to the West at an alarming rate. I don't think a Civilian Climate Corps has a chance in this match-up.

I would admonish the President to remember that the new axis of evil is playing by a different set of rules. Their only goal is to find our vulnerabilities and exploit them to try to take us down.

I would remind my Democratic colleagues that Biden's energy crisis is a vulnerability, and it is your duty to help lead the country out of it. Don't be complicit. Restart the Keystone Pipeline, open up those leases on Federal lands, get the regulators out of the way, and unleash American energy before it is too late.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, before I speak, I have been asked to make a unanimous consent request that Senators SCOTT, HOEVEN, BARRASSO, and I be permitted to speak for up to 5 minutes each prior to the votes and that Senator BENNET be permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes prior to the votes.

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

BIDEN ADMINISTRATION

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, over the July 4 recess of Congress, I held Q&A's in 17 counties as part of my annual 99 county meetings. The need for energy independence and the concerns over soaring gas prices were raised at nearly every meeting. As an example, at Woodford Equipment in Emmetsburg, IA, farmers raised their concerns over the high cost of diesel and their pricey commutes to work at that business caused by President Biden's failed energy policies.

Today is a very difficult time for American families and businesses, with gas and diesel prices at record highs—more than doubling since President Biden took office. Americans who drive every day are feeling the impact of an administration that is making it harder to drill and refine fossil fuels.

President Biden has stated that it is the administration's goal to have half of the Nation's vehicles be electric by the year 2030. The Energy Secretary