that all we need are acres and acres of windmills and acres and acres of solar panels and that will take care of our energy problem. The fact is, solar and wind power make up only one-tenth of one percent of our energy needs. There is no way that we are going to be able to deal with our energy problem with renewables because if you look at the bottom line, this purple line, going out to 2020, you can see that it is going to represent a very small part of the production we have in America.

There is no question, we need more energy. We need more oil. We need more gas. We need more nuclear. We need more coal. While conservation helps, it is not going to meet our estimated consumption without drastically changing America's standard of living. We cannot kid ourselves and think otherwise.

Although it won't get the entire job done, a good beginning in our goal of achieving a solid energy policy is a bill that is currently on the Senate calendar, H.R. 4, and which is part of the amendment to the underlying bill before the Senate that was submitted today by Senator LOTT.

It is a good beginning. Those of us who have been on this issue for a long time would like to see amendments dealing with an ethanol component which will help decrease our dependence on foreign oil. We need to use more ethanol. We need to have an electricity title to improve nationwide delivery. We need more funding for clean coal technologies and a nuclear title, including Price-Anderson reauthorization.

It is a beginning, a big beginning, a bill that passed the House of Representatives and one that should be passed in the Senate.

I hope when Monday comes and this body has an opportunity to vote on the issue of cloture dealing with the amendments to the underlying bill that we will vote to allow those amendments to be debated by the Senate. It is important not only to the economic well-being of our country, but it is important to our national security.

We cannot allow ourselves to be lulled into a false sense of complacency simply because energy prices have stabilized. People say, ''Natural gas prices are down, GEORGE,'' and, ''Oil prices are down, GEORGE.'' The fact is that they have been down before and we have seen them go up. These prices are like a yo-yo, up and down and I am worried that one day, we are going to end up hanging at the end of the string.

It is time for us to act. As sure as the Sun will rise, so too will prices. OPEC will make sure it happens. The longer we wait to pass an energy bill, the more vulnerable this Nation will be to supply disruptions, which will, in turn, have a dramatic impact on our economy, our environment, our health and, yes, our national security.

The time has come for the Senate to act and adopt an energy policy for the United States of America.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. 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.

ENERGY POLICY

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, let me thank my colleague from Ohio for outlining his position on the legislation we are discussing, the energy bill, H.R. 4. His presentation certainly summarized the fact that this indeed is in the national security interest of our Nation. He pointed out that our continued dependence on such unreliable sources as Iraq, at a time when we are not sure what our next move will be, puts us in a rather embarrassing position. He has certainly highlighted the vulnerability of this country, which is growing; there is absolutely no question about that.

The question we have—legitimate question—is just whether or not H.R. 4, which has passed the House of Representatives and is before us, does the job as a comprehensive energy bill. I am going to spend a little time on that because I think the public deserves to know what is in H.R. 4.

I will again ask my colleagues to reflect on the vote that is going to take place on Monday. This is not a vote on the issue of ANWR; this is a vote on the entire bill that passed the House of Representatives. A vote will be seen and read strictly as a vote on passing an energy bill. I think that is significant. It is a vote for or against passing an energy bill that has passed the House of Representatives.

With that, of course, is the cloning ban. I support that. The Senator from Kansas made an excellent presentation on the merits of that. It is rather unusual to see such devoid issues brought together, but that sometimes happens in this body. It is important to point that out and highlight that Senator BROWNBACK's presentation is simply a 6-month ban. What we are seeing here on cloning is the scientific and medical movement is so fast that we are not sure where the ethical evaluation should come down. Therefore, a 6-month moratorium on cloning is certainly in order. I certainly support that.

Here is what H.R. 4 does for the Nation. The amendment is the legislative portion of the President's comprehensive energy policy. It aims to secure America's energy future with a new national energy strategy that is designed to reduce energy demand, increase energy efficiency and supply, and enhance our energy infrastructure and our energy security.

I think that should address the issue some have raised that this is nothing but a very narrow bill containing ANWR. Let me tell you what we have in here in the sense of reducing demand. This bill reauthorizes Federal energy conservation programs and directs the Federal Government to take leadership in energy conservation with new energy-saving goals.

Secondly, it expands Federal energy savings performance contracting authority. It increases the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, LIHEAP. It provides weatherization and State energy program authorization levels to meet the needs of low-income Americans. It expands the EPA and the Department of Energy's so-called energy star program. It directs the EPA and the Department of Energy to determine whether energy star labels should be extended to additional products. We used to see seals of the Underwriters Laboratories. This is much like that, but these stars are awarded for reduction in energy use. In other words, you can get a better, more efficient refrigerator, but you probably won't because your other one is working just fine. But these new ones deserve a particular rating and some identification. That is what the energy star program is all about. It highlights that this is indeed an energy-saving device and technology that has been put on your iron, refrigerator, or dishwasher.

We need to encourage Americans to go out and buy these. But, obviously, some are reluctant because theirs is working fine. But they can reduce energy consumption and therefore their energy bill. It directs the DOE to set standards for appliance standby mode energy use. It reduces light truck fuel consumption by 5 billion gallons over 6 years. Now this is the CAFE—people are saying, ''Where are your CAFE savings?'' It directs the DOE, in the sense of light truck fuel consumption, to reduce it by 5 billion gallons over 6 years. It also improves Federal fleet fuel economy and expands the use of hybrid vehicles.

What do we mean by Federal fleet? We say before we put mandates on the general public, let's put it on the Government fleet and see how it works. That is kind of the old saying that charity begins at home. So it will improve the Federal fleet economy. It increases funding for the DOE's energy conservation and efficiency R&D programs designed to reduce consumption of energy. It expands HUD programs to promote energy-efficient single and multifamily housing. That should answer pretty much the concern some have raised, well, you don't have anything in your bill to reduce demand. I think we do.

On the issue of increased supply, we have provisions for environmentally sensitive oil and gas exploration on the Arctic Coastal Plain. That is ANWR. I will talk about ANWR later. Clearly, the reserves are there. It is estimated to be between 5 and 16 billion barrels. We have an average somewhere in between 5 and 16. It will be as big as

Prudhoe Bay, now producing the 13 billionth barrel. We can get 10 out in the field—the largest field ever found before. I have a chart here that shows a comparison with our good neighbors from Texas, and I am sure my staff can find it in a moment or two. As they look, I will move into the other areas of increased supply.

I think we all assimilate in our minds domestic oil reserves coming from the great State of Texas, and the great State of Texas has been producing a lot of oil for a long time. This says: ANWR, More Oil Than Texas. This is from the Energy Information Administration which reports that Texas proven crude oil reserves are 5.3 billion barrels.

In 1998, the USGS estimated there is a 95-percent chance of more than 5.7 billion barrels from ANWR, a 50/50 chance of more than 10 billion barrels of oil and a 5-percent chance of more than 16 billion barrels of oil. So if we want to use the average, ANWR has more potential than Texas.

I have heard my friend, the junior Senator from Massachusetts, speak in generalities about why this should not be open. I have never heard a good explanation as to whether or not he believes there is evidence to suggest it cannot be opened safely, but he does generalize that it is insignificant.

If the oil in ANWR were to be the average of 10 billion barrels, ANWR would supply 321,428 barrels per day to the State of Massachusetts. That would last the State of Massachusetts 85.2 years. The State of Connecticut uses 216,000 barrels per day. It would last Connecticut 126 years. South Dakota uses 59,000 barrels a day. It would provide South Dakota with 460.3 years for their petroleum needs. I throw that out simply as a matter of comparison when individuals say the increased supply is insignificant. It is not insignificant.

Further, increased supply authorizes new oil and gas R&D for unconventional and ultra-deep-water production. We are seeing that in the Gulf of Mexico. That is where our new finds are, in deep water. The industry has done an extraordinary job of advanced technology, and they have been very fortunate. They have had very few accidents. It provides royalty relief incentives for deepwater leases in the central and western Gulf of Mexico. It streamlines the administration of oil and gas leases on Federal land. It authorizes the Department of Energy to develop accelerated clean coal power initiatives. So it recognizes the significant role of coal, which makes up nearly 50 percent of our power generation in this country.

It establishes alternative fuel vehicles and green school bus demonstration programs. That should appeal to many Members. It reduces the royalty rate for development of biothermal energy and expedites leases. It provides for regular assessment of renewable energy resources and impediments to their use. It streamlines the licensing process for hydroelectric dams and encourages increased output. It provides new authorization for fossil, nuclear, hydrogen, biomass, and renewable R&D.

These things are included to increase the supply, but they are not only in ANWR. There is authorization for new technology, hydrogen, biomass, renewable R&D, because we want to remove our dependence even greater on imported oil. The difficulty many people fail to recognize is America and the world move on oil because we do not have any other alternative. We wish we did. We can generate electricity from coal, from gas, from nuclear, from wind, but we cannot move America and we cannot move the world. That is why we are becoming so dependent on Mideast sources.

If this bill passes this House and this Senate, two things are going to happen. We are going to send a message to OPEC. The message is going to be loud and clear that the United States is committed to reduce its dependence on OPEC. OPEC, I think, will read that and decide, all things being equal, they had better be careful how they operate that cartel because if they move it up too high, why, obviously it is not going to be in their interest. So I think it will be a curb on prices because the more we produce domestically, the less we will import. As we know, those countries need those gas fuels, particularly the Saudis.

Finally, in the area of enhanced infrastructure and energy security, it sets goals for reduction of United States dependence on foreign oil and Iraqi imports. It initiates the review of existing rights of way on Federal lands for energy potential. It directs the Department of Energy to implement R&D and demonstrate use of distributed energy resources. It invests in a new transmission infrastructure R&D program to ensure reliable electricity.

It requires a study of boutique fuels and issues to minimize refinery bottlenecks and supply shortages because, as we remember, it was not so very long ago under the previous administration, when we had a shortage of heating oil in the Northeast in the wintertime, the decision was made to open up SPR. We took 30 million barrels out of SPR. Suddenly we found we did not have the refining capacity because we had not built new refineries in this country in 20, 25 years, so all we did was displace what we were importing. That is kind of the situation. So this does provide some relief.

It initiates supply potential for renewable transportation of fuels to displaced oil imports, it offers scholarships to train the next generation of energy workers, and it prohibits pipelines from being placed on national registers of historic places. That is what the bill does.

Last night the majority whip, Senator REID, my good friend, came to the Chamber, and I do not know whether he was ill informed or not, but in any event I will comment a little bit on his statement. I assume it was an attempt to support the majority leader's priorities from the standpoint of the remaining time we have in this session and what those priorities should be. I know many of my friends on both sides of the aisle feel very strongly about the railroad retirement legislation, but the majority leader stated he thinks it is more important this body consider the railroad retirement legislation than comprehensive energy legislation. That is contrary to polling information I just presented. That polling information, as I said, indicated that 95 percent of Americans say Federal action on an energy bill is important. That is not enough because 72 percent of the Americans say passing an energy bill is a higher priority than other actions Congress might take.

We have seen polls from time to time. We take them or leave them, but this was an IPSOS-Reid poll done in November. So clearly there is a little bit of difference expressed by the polling information on what the priorities should be.

Now, evidently, the leader thinks it is more important that we consider a farm bill. It is kind of interesting about how we set priorities because the farm bill does not expire until the end of next year. Does it have the same prioritization as the exposure we are seeing in the Persian Gulf, the danger of terrorism to Saudi Arabia in bringing down the Royal Family, a couple of tankers colliding in a terrorist attack in the Straits of Hormuz, terrorizing oil fields? These are the crises that would come about, and clearly with our increased dependence on Iraqi oil and the fact we are looking to finalize things over there against those who sponsor terrorism, it is beyond me how the leader would consider the farm bill as being more important, particularly when it is not due to expire until the end of next year.

I know what good soldiers are about. I have been in the majority and I have been in the minority, and sometimes we are asked to defend the indefensible. That is politics. I think the whip is doing a good job as we have come to understand he always does in the Senate. However, I really cannot stand by and watch the facts simply evaporate. As I indicated, we simply cannot stand by and watch the facts simply evaporate. I emphasize ''facts.''

During his comments, the majority whip stated that the overall benefits to the country for developing a small area of the Arctic Coastal Plain were ''nonexistent.'' I find it rather ironic that he would make that blatant statement. Nonexistent? Did the majority whip really say the overall benefit to the country would be nonexistent when we have seen the Teamsters, the unions, the veterans, the minority groups in this country say they think this is the most important thing for the Senate to take up, and the fact that the House has passed it sends a strong message. We have some work to do.

When he said that would be nonexistent, I asked myself, can he really believe that? Does he really think the facts support his assertion? Knowing that the majority whip would never deliberately mislead other Senators, I only conclude he doesn't know all the facts. He, as well as the majority leader, have never taken the time to visit the area. We have made repeated offers. I have taken many Members there.

It is ironic we only have to justify on the side of the proponents the merits of the issue based on our personal experience, the experience of my senior colleague, Senator STEVENS, and Representative DON YOUNG. The administration has seen the area, physically gone up there. The Secretary of Interior has been up there twice. I took her up last February. We took off with a wind chill factor of 72 degrees below zero. It is tough country.

One chart shows the bleakness of the Arctic in the wintertime. I am also convinced the only way the Senator might learn those facts, if he doesn't visit the area, would be if I were to share more and more facts with him in the hopes he will understand. I am here to make the Nation aware of the significance of what this could mean to our energy security. I will also make the Nation aware of the benefits to the country in opening a small sliver of the Arctic Coastal Plain for development.

Today, I will share with the Senate what the Clinton administration said about ANWR. I think my colleagues should know what the previous administration said about ANWR, as related by the Energy Information Agency in May of 2000, an agency created by Congress to give unbiased energy information. I will come back to this in a moment.

ANWR is the area on this chart to the right on the map of Alaska. Also shown is the State of South Carolina for a size comparison. There are 19 million acres in ANWR. We have 365 in the whole State. ANWR, on the big chart, the 19 million acres, is already predestined by Congress for specific designation. The darker yellow is part of the refuge. The lighter yellow is in a wilderness in perpetuity. That is about 8 million acres. The green at the top is the 1002 area, or the ANWR coastal plain. The geologists say this is a very productive area. It is 60 miles from Prudhoe Bay. Prudhoe Bay, of course, is the field that has been producing for some 27 years.

The TAPS pipeline is an 800-mile pipeline traversing the length of Alaska. Interestingly enough, when that was built 27 years ago, we had arguments in the Senate whether that could be built safely. What would happen to the animals? What would happen to a hot pipeline in permafrost. Would it break? All the same arguments are being used today. There was a tie in the Senate, and the Vice President came in and broke the tie. I cannot recall how many hundreds of billions of barrels we have received, but for an extended period of time that was flowing at 2 million barrels a day. It is a little over 1 million barrels at this time.

This map shows another area worthy of some consideration. That is the red dot. That is the footprint associated with the development. In the House bill that is 2,000 acres. I know the occupant of the chair knows what 2,000 acres is. Robert Redford has a farm in Utah of 5,000 acres. Keep in mind this authorization is for 2,000 acres, a permanent footprint, out of 19 million acres. Is that unreasonable? I don't think it is.

Some are under the impression this is a pristine area that has not been subject to any development or any population. Of course, a village is at the top of the map. Real people live there. They have hopes and aspirations for a better lifestyle and better working conditions, jobs, health conditions, schools. There is a picture of some of the Eskimo kids going to school and nobody there to shovel the walks. There is also a picture of the public buildings, in front of the community hall, with pictures of the Eskimo's two modes of transportation: One is a snow machine and the other is a bicycle. That should take care of the myth that nobody is up there. Real people live there.

The Coastal Plain comprises approximately 8 percent of the 19 million acres. ANWR is along the geological trend that is productive in the sense that the oil flows in the same general area. This is the largest unexplored potential production onshore base in the entire United States, according to the Energy Information Agency.

I return now to the statement of the Clinton administration: This is the largest unexplored potential onshore base in the United States. The Energy Information Agency, under the Clinton administration, did not think the benefits of ANWR would be nonexistent on our Nation's energy supplies. That is why I am amused that the majority whip would use the term ''nonexistent.''

The Department of Interior says if the Energy Information Administration isn't good enough, how about the Department of the Interior under Bruce Babbitt?

I am wondering if that argument isn't enough to convince the majority whip that the benefits of ANWR are not nonexistent on energy supplies.

According to a 1998 Department of the Interior study under the previous administration, there is a 95-percent probability—that is 19 in 20 chances—that at least 5.7 billion barrels of oil in ANWR is recoverable. That is about half what we would recover initially from Prudhoe Bay. There is a 50–50 chance that there is 10.3 billion barrels of recoverable oil. And there is a 5-percent chance at least 16 billion barrels are recoverable.

These are not my numbers. These are not coming from FRANK MURKOWSKI or DON YOUNG or TED STEVENS. These aren't the environmental fundraiser groups' numbers. These are Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt's scientific numbers.

I fail to recognize how the majority whip can add these up and suggest that it is nonexistent, as was stated by the whip. How much oil is there reason to believe is there? We don't know. We won't know until we get in there. Senators might wonder how much these numbers add up to. How much impact would oil from ANWR have on our Nation's energy security, our economy, our jobs?

Let me try to put that in perspective. According to the Independent Energy Information Administration, at the end of 2000, Texas had 5.27 billion barrels of proven reserves. That means there is a 95-percent chance that ANWR has more oil than all of Texas. Think of the jobs associated with the oil industry in Texas.

California has 3.8 billion barrels of proven reserves. There is a 95-percent chance that ANWR has more oil than all of California.

New Mexico has 718 million barrels of proven reserve. There is a 95-percent chance that ANWR can recover almost 8 times as much oil as is proven to exist in New Mexico.

Louisiana has 529 million barrels of proven reserves. Oklahoma, 610 million; Michigan, 56 million; Pennsylvania, 15 million; Nevada, Massachusetts, and Connecticut had no proven reserves.

In fact, the Energy Information Agency states that the lower 48 States have total proven reserves of 17,184,000,000 barrels of oil. That's it, 17 billion. This could come in at the high end. If we are lucky enough to hit Secretary Babbitt's high number of 16 billion barrels, ANWR would almost double U.S. reserves.

These are not my figures. They are figures of the previous Secretary of the Interior. Are these benefits nonexistent, as the whip has indicated last evening?

I hope this will clarify the issue for the majority whip, and any other Senators who might wonder whether ANWR would have an impact on our energy security, economy, or our jobs. To repeat, ANWR could potentially double our reserves overnight. Do I know it will? No. Does anyone else? No. But I will certainly take the word of the Clinton administration scientists over the word of the environmental fundraising groups. They have never wanted this issue resolved because they would no longer have their best fundraising issue to lie their way into well-intentioned American wallets. It is easy to understand how people might be misled. These groups have simply not been telling the truth, period.

I am happy to debate any and all, at any time, on the merits of this issue. If there are those who do not believe me, or the Clinton administration, how about organized labor? Teamsters, maritime, construction trade unions,

the AFL/CIO, operating engineers, and many other unions have joined us in support of this legislation. They think it will have a great impact on the economy, on our national security, on our jobs. They estimate between 250,000 and 750,000 jobs will be created here at home by opening ANWR.

They do not believe the benefits to our Nation are nonexistent, as the majority whip has indicated.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has used 15 minutes.

Mr. MURKOWSKI. I ask unanimous consent I may have another 10 minutes.

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

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I would like to take a note here, relative to the number of ships that would have to be built if, indeed, ANWR were opened. A lot of people overlook the reality that Alaskan oil is unique. It has to move in U.S.-flagged vessels because the Jones Act requires that. Any movement of goods and material between two U.S. ports has to be moved in a U.S.-flagged vessel. So all the oil from Alaska moves down in ships built in U.S. yards, with U.S. crews, and flying the American flag.

This is the largest concentration of U.S.-flagged tankers in existence in our country, in this particular trade. They would require, if ANWR opens, 19 double-hulled tankers which would add about $4 billion to the economy and create 5,000 jobs each for 17 years because these new ships will come on as replacements for others.

I do not know if those benefits are nonexistent, but to the States—Maine, where they are likely to build some of these ships; Alabama, Mississippi, Texas, Washington, California—these are jobs. These are good jobs, good jobs in U.S. shipyards.

What about these other ships that bring in oil, the 56 percent that are coming from overseas? They bring their oil in foreign-flagged vessels. They don't have the deep pockets of an Exxon.

I will conclude because I see other Senators are here waiting for recognition. But I want to ask again, the benefits are nonexistent? I hope this will clarify the issue for the majority whip and any other Senators who might wonder whether ANWR would have any impact on our energy security, the economy, and jobs.

To repeat, ANWR could almost double our reserves overnight. Do I know it will? Does anyone? No. But I, again, would take the word of the Clinton administration scientists over the word of the environmental fundraising groups. They have never wanted this issue resolved because, as I indicated, they would no longer have the best fundraising issue to lie their way into well-intentioned American wallets.

It would be easy to understand how they might be misled but, as I have indicated, they pulled the wool over the public's eyes. This is an issue that involves our national energy security. It is a very fundamental issue.

I will conclude by, again, referring to the other organizations—the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the American Legion, Vietnam Veterans Institute—which think it is good for the national security. They do not believe the benefits to our Nation are nonexistent, and they ought to know. They fought the wars.

The House acted on national energy security legislation before September 11. Frankly, they have shown up the Senate. In that body, committees were allowed to advance energy legislation, debate it, and pass it to the floor for further consideration.

Here, the majority leader seized the bill from the committee of jurisdiction, the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, of which I am a ranking member. I used to be chairman. He has seized the bill from the committee of jurisdiction and has substituted his will for the will of the committee. He has bypassed the committee process entirely.

I am very disappointed that we were not able to bring around the majority to recognize this matter should go to the committee of authorization and not be taken away from it, but I am not chairman of that committee anymore.

Finally, I offer up this question to the Senate: If, indeed, the benefits to this country were nonexistent, there was so little oil there, then why is there such a huge campaign to deny Americans that oil? We can all ask ourselves why—16 billion barrels of oil, times $30 a barrel, is almost one-half trillion dollars.

It is about $480 billion; $480 billion is nonexistent? If that is the price about the time ANWR comes on line, that means $480 billion stays at home rather than being spent abroad for oil. With that kind of money, we can better provide for our schools, our security, our health care system, our elderly.

Here we are today rising before this body at last to take up an energy bill. The amendment offered by Senator LOTT is the underlying legislation. Divisions A through G of the amendment will provide us with the remainder of a comprehensive energy policy to guide this Nation into the future.

As I have indicated specifically, these provisions provide ways to do the following: Reduce our demand for energy, increase our domestic supply of energy, invest in our energy infrastructure, and enhance energy security.

I will go into more detail at a later time.

But for the past decade, America has lacked a comprehensive energy strategy. We are aware of that. Without such a guidebook, our record of economic expansion and resulting growth in demand has outpaced our energy production. We saw a similar situation last year in the sense of a perfect storm, if you will. All the parts of our energy supply were stretched, and there were limits on output. We actually saw that occur.

As we know, when supply doesn't meet demand, prices go up. When you have a cartel such as OPEC, they are able to do things that antitrust laws in the United States simply prohibit. They are able to set prices by reducing supply. As we all know, when supply doesn't meet demand, the price rises.

Rising energy prices have already been blamed by many economists for putting us into the recession we now face. It is a matter of particular importance that we develop a comprehensive national energy strategy for our economic and our national security.

Under previous control of this body by the Republicans, the Senate had a very aggressive timetable. That timetable was to get a comprehensive energy bill passed by the Fourth of July. We were working on this bill and introduced it shortly after we came in last year in late January. We had a change. And the GOP left a legacy to the other side. We have done our part.

When I was chairman, our committee had 24 hearings. We heard from 160 witnesses, and we introduced the Murkowski-Breaux bipartisan bill and were ready to move. The President's national energy policy framed the debate.

I can see no reason why the Democrats should not have kept this schedule. But since they took control, we have had a few hearings and heard from some of the same witnesses. We started a markup on the bill of the new chairman in August. We engaged in good-faith discussions to come to a consensus only to find our committee stripped of its jurisdiction by the majority leader because he pulled the plug on the Energy Committee's deliberations and simply took over the process bypassing the authorizing committee and bypassing Senator BINGAMAN, who is the chairman. I can only guess why.

We had the votes in committee to pass out an energy bill. We asked the majority leader, Senator DASCHLE, for a date certain. We asked the chairman of the committee, Senator BINGAMAN, for a date certain. The statement from our Senate leadership is there will be no new energy bill this year. That statement has been made.

At least we are in the Chamber tonight. We have an energy bill up for consideration. I thank all my colleagues who played a role in assuring this would come about, because I made a commitment that we were going to bring this matter up before we go out on recess. Now we are in it.

In recent weeks, there has been considerable talk of the need to address the Nation's problems in the old spirit in a bipartisan manner. I wish we could. We have seen this with respect to an antiterrorist package, the airline security measure, and several other pieces of legislation. Sadly, this air of ''bipartisanship'' has broken down with respect to energy policy. We now find ourselves in a partisan standoff.

I think, though, we all agree we need an energy policy. We have one which

passed the House. That is before us. It is up to us to address whether we are going to simply walk out of here without an energy policy or take this up seriously, vote it out, get it to conference, and respond to the request of our President.

We have seen threats of filibusters, suspension of committee activities, and a failure to give the American people a fair, open, and honest debate on this issue.

I do not think, and I refuse to accept, that meeting the energy needs of this Nation is a partisan issue.

At the beginning of the session, I sought out my colleagues on the other side of the aisle for their ideas and suggestions. And as committee chairman, I delayed introducing any legislation until a measure could be developed that reflected their interests. We worked hard on that.

S. 389, while not perfect, met that requirement and remains the only bipartisan comprehensive energy measure introduced in the Senate.

At a time when the country is seeking unity and bipartisanship, we should be moving forward with a bipartisan energy bill. Just as we did last year with respect to electricity, we should put the contentious issues to a fair and open debate, and vote on them.

Repeatedly, the President has called on Congress to pass energy legislation as a part of our efforts to enhance national security.

With H.R. 4, the bill now sitting on the Senate calendar, the House of Representatives has done its job. Now it's the Senate's turn. The best thing we can do to ensure this Nation's energy security is to act now: take up the House bill, amend it, and go to conference.

Make no mistake about it. That is what we should do. This energy policy proposal will create new jobs in domestic production and new energy technologies. This will be a significant economic stimulus that couldn't come any sooner—when the economy needs thousands of new jobs.

At stake are billions of dollars in construction spending, hundreds of thousands of jobs, and billions of dollars that won't go overseas in future energy spending.

Our increasing dependence on foreign oil helps to support the very terrorists we now fight in the Middle East and elsewhere. We import nearly a million barrels per day of oil from Iraq, and some of our oil payments to Saudi Arabia may have been used against us in the events of September 11.

As a matter of national importance, we cannot allow our energy security to get bogged down in partisanship and procedural maneuvers. One of the purposes of committees is to test various proposals and to provide the Senate with a considered recommendation. A majority of the members of the Energy Committee have been willing to provide this advice—and report out a bill. Yet the majority leader and the committee chairman have seen fit to ''short-circuit'' the regular order to avoid votes on certain issues. These votes would prevail if we could get the matter up in the committee.

The American people deserve better than this. They deserve more than just partisan sniping on energy issues. We certainly need to provide for the security of our energy supply. We need to deal with our infrastructure and our domestic capacity for development, refining and transportation and transmission. And we should take those steps that we can all agree on to promote the energy technologies of the next decade and beyond.

Our Nation deserves a fair, honest, and open debate on all aspects of the important energy issues, including ANWR. This is a debate that a majority of members were ready to have in committee, but that opportunity was denied us. We are ready to have that debate and let the votes fall where they may on all the contentious issues that remain.

So let us now finally—since we are on the bill—have this debate so we can look the American people—our constituents—in the eye when we go home for the holidays and say that, yes, we have passed, in the national interest, an energy bill, H.R. 4, which passed the House overwhelmingly; and then tell them we are going to do our part to provide safe, secure, and affordable energy supplies now and into the future.

At this critical point in our Nation's history, we clearly need a national energy strategy to ensure a stable, reliable, and affordable energy supply.

While many choices have been forced upon us in the aftermath of September 11, we now have the chance to choose our energy future. The other alternative is simply to dodge the issue. Will we have the courage to act? Will we have the courage to make the difficult decisions we avoided some 10 years ago?

In 1995, ANWR was in the omnibus bill. It was an energy bill. It passed this body. It was vetoed by the President. Had he signed that order, we would know what was in ANWR. We could be producing from ANWR. The question is, When are we going to start?

As the President said, there was a good bill passed out of the House of Representatives. Now it is the job of the Senate. The Senate can and must act.

I hope my colleagues will join me in voting for this amendment to ensure the security of our energy supply, our economy, and our Nation for years to come.

I thank the Chair for being patient. We are going to be back on this tomorrow. I thank the majority whip for his indulgence as well.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MILLER). The Senator from Nevada.

Mr. REID. Before my friend, the distinguished Senator from Alaska, leaves the Chamber, I did want to say that I was a little disappointed, when he went over the reserves in various States, that he said Nevada had nothing.

Mr. MURKOWSKI. I think the terminology is ''inexistent.''

Mr. REID. Inexistent? The reason I mention that is for 6 years Nevada had the largest single producing oil well in the United States in a place called Railroad Valley. The well went dry about 8 or 9 years ago. But for 6 years it was the best in the country.

Mr. MURKOWSKI. I was talking about current reserves, so there very well may have been a well in Nevada, but there isn't anymore.

Mr. REID. That we have found yet.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I rise today in support of the Railroad Retirement and Survivor's Improvement Act of 2001. As a Senator from Wyoming, I represent a State that bears the undeniable mark of the railroads. Many of the towns across the southern corridor of my State were established on the sites of old railroad shanty towns. These shanty towns were constructed to house the workers that built the railroads. The railroad workers brought diversity to Wyoming. Many of my constituents with Chinese, Irish and Italian heritages call Wyoming home because their ancestors moved there with the railroad.

The railroad is still an integral part of Wyoming today. It transports one of our greatest energy resources, low-sulfur coal, to States that lack our power supply. And today's railroad workers are still an important part of the Wyoming population. I support this bill because I support providing the survivors of railroad employees with the benefits they require to live out their days in my State and other States. I support this bill for another reason; it is a viable option to provide solvency to the railroad retirement fund and increase retirement benefits and while lowering employer taxes.

These two results may sound mutually exclusive, but I assure you that they are not. The bill authorizes the newly created Railroad Retirement Trust Fund to invest the current Railroad Retirement Account in securities, including stocks and bonds. Even a conservative estimate places the rate of return on these investments as greater than the current rate of return in government accounts. This is the mechanism that allows retirement benefits to increase while taxes decrease.

As an accountant, I refrained from sponsoring the bill until I reviewed the actuarial report. After examining the report, I determined that the Railroad Retirement Trust Fund would remain well-capitalized and able to pay benefits under this legislation far into the future. The actuarial report indicated that this would occur even during mediocre economic conditions.

This bill would directly benefit Wyoming railroaders and their spouses by allowing 100 percent benefits for survivors of eligible retirees. It would lower the retirement age from 62 to 60

years for employees that have worked at least 30 years for the railroad. Some of my colleagues have asked why we should lower the railroad retirement age when the Social Security retirement age is increasing from 65 to 67. It is important to make a distinction between Tier I and Tier II benefits in this plan. Tier I benefits are comparable to Social Security benefits, and they do not start paying until the equivalent Social Security benefits are payed. Currently, that is at age 65. Tier II benefits, which are funded by taxes to the railroad employers and employees, pay the early retirement benefits for eligible workers. This is very similar to the ''bridge plan'' offered by private pension plans. This is important because railroading is a physically rigorous profession that ages a body prematurely and is still considered hazardous.

This legislation includes an automatic tax trigger that initiates an increase or decrease of the employer's taxes if the trust fund's amount moves outside of preset barriers. The barriers would ensure that a cushion of 4 to 6 years' worth of benefits payable remain in the account. A number of my colleagues have been presenting graphs that show benefit levels falling and employer taxes increasing 20 years after the program is initiated. I do not dispute this. In fact, it shows the fund's ability to manage itself and respond to decreases in its cushion.

As a Wyoming Senator and an accountant, I support the Railroad Retirement and Survivor's Improvement Act. I support it as a responsible way to manage the funds entrusted to us by the railroad workers. I support it as a way to fully care for the individuals that have contributed so much to our nation's infrastructure. I ask that my colleagues do the same and pass this bill.

SERVICE MEMBERS OPPORTUNITY COLLEGES

Mr. THURMOND. Mr. President, it is with great pleasure that I rise to bring to the attention of the Senate a true national asset, the Service Members Opportunity Colleges, (SOC). The SOC is a consortium of over 1500 Colleges and Universities across the Nation that have taken on the privilege of educating our Nation's men and women in uniform.

Founded in 1972 the SOC was created to ''provide educational opportunities to service members, who, because they frequently moved from place to place, had trouble completing college degrees.''

In fulfilling this primary role the SOC and their member institutions currently serve hundreds of thousands of service members. They work very hard to provide opportunities for our brave young men and women to educate themselves while serving our Nation. Consequently the SOC is helping prepare the future leaders of our military and our country. For this I salute them.

However, in addition to their stated mission the SOC, and their director Dr. Steven Kime, have dedicated themselves to ensuring that our men and women in the Guard and Reserve are taken care of when our Nation calls upon them and they are forced to leave school. The SOC does this by using their extensive network to ensure that students called to service are either refunded their tuition or receive credits for later education. Through their hard work SOC has helped create a sense of duty among their member institutions who regularly prove their devotion to this Nation by providing help and assistance to their students called upon to serve.

Consequently SOC has ensured that our brave young men and women called to active duty have one less worry on their already heavy shoulders. In these trying times it is this type of duty and leadership that proves our Nation and the American people are without equal.

Again, I would like to offer my thanks and admiration to the Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges and their men and women working so hard to make life better for our men and women in uniform.

ANOTHER REASON TO CLOSE THE GUN SHOW LOOPHOLE

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I would like to enter into the RECORD some important information about guns and terrorists. Currently, shoppers at gun shows may choose to buy firearms from federally licensed firearms dealers—or from unlicensed dealers. Since unlicensed sellers are not required to run Brady background checks, which involves an instant background check for among other things, criminal history, outstanding warrants and illegal immigration status, gun shows are an important source of guns for criminals and terrorists who would not be able to buy weapons in a store. In fact, several cases have linked the purchase of guns at gun shows to terrorists. For example, in Florida, a man accused of having ties to the Irish Republican Army testified that he purchased thousands of dollars worth of machine guns, rifles, and high-powered ammunition at gun shows and proceeded to smuggle them to Ireland. Now more than ever, we must close the gun show loophole. I urge my fellow Senators to support bringing to the floor legislation that will close the gun show loophole.

MAJOR GENERAL PAUL A. WEAVER, JR.

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I would like to take a moment to recognize one of the finest officers in our Armed Forces, Major General Paul A. Weaver, Jr., the Director of the Air National Guard. Well known and respected by many Members in this chamber, General Weaver will soon retire after almost 35 years of selfless service to our country. Today, I am honored to acknowledge some of General Weaver's distinguished accomplishments and to commend the superb service he has provided to the Air National Guard, the Air Force, and our great Nation.

After completing his Bachelor of Science degree in Communicative Arts at Ithaca College, New York, Paul Weaver entered the Air Force in 1967 and was commissioned through Officer Training School. After earning his pilot wings, he had flying assignments in the F–4E and O–2A, and completed overseas tours in Germany and Korea. In 1975, he joined the New York Air National Guard with which he served in increasing levels of responsibility. This culminated when he took command of the 105th Airlift Group at Stewart Air National Guard Base, New York, in 1985. Following his nine years as commander, General Weaver served as the Air National Guard's Deputy Director for four years and was appointed the Director of the Air Guard in 1998.

General Weaver is a command pilot with more than 2,800 flying hours in five different aircraft. He is a veteran of Operations Desert Shield, Desert Storm, and Just Cause. General Weaver's decorations include the Distinguished Service Medal, the Legion of Merit, Meritorious Service Medal, Aerial Achievement Medal, Air Force Commendation Medal with two oak leaf clusters, Combat Readiness Medal with Service Star, and Southwest Asia Service Medal with two oak leaf clusters.

While serving as Commander of the 105th Airlift Wing, Paul Weaver was responsible for the largest conversion in the history of the Air National Guard. Under his command, the wing converted from the Air Force's smallest aircraft, the O–2 Skymaster, to its largest, the C–5 Galaxy. During this conversion, he oversaw the largest military construction program in the history of the reserve forces as he literally rebuilt Stewart Air National Guard Base.

As the Air National Guard's Director, General Weaver's accomplishments are also noteworthy. He had dedicated each year of his term to a different theme—transition, the enlisted force, the family, and employers, thereby providing focus and enhancements to these four crucial areas. In addition, Paul Weaver's modernization, readiness, people, and infrastructure initiatives have enabled a fuller partnership role in the Air Force's Expeditionary Aerospace Force. The Air Guard achieved all its domestic and global takings and requirements with a force that is also smaller in size. Under General Weaver's leadership, the Air National Guard is even more relevant, ready, responsive, and accessible than it has ever been.

I would be remiss if I also did not mention that the Air National Guard is also fortunate to have another Weaver contributing to its success. Besides