

that we are getting paid but our staffs are not getting paid, I think there is going to be an outcry. So I ask the Speaker on behalf of all those colleagues whose names I read to take up S. 388 without delay. It is sitting at the desk. What does it say? Members of Congress and the President should not be paid in case of a shutdown.

That is pretty simple.

I know my colleagues are on the Senate floor. Let me guess, Senator BLUMENTHAL and Senator LIEBERMAN, might you be here to discuss what happened last night? And I am going to—since my remarks were not happy, I am happy to give up the floor at this time and listen to their remarks. I congratulate both of them on a great victory.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Connecticut.

CONGRATULATING THE UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT BASKETBALL TEAMS

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Madam President, I thank the Chair, and I thank my friend from California. One might say, in the context of the debates going on in Congress now, that Senator BLUMENTHAL and I have come to the floor of the Senate to talk about a governmental program that really works, that has inspired an entire State, perhaps a nation. I speak, of course, of the University of Connecticut baseball program.

It is with great joy that I come to the floor of the Senate today to congratulate the University of Connecticut men's basketball team and their great coach, Jim Calhoun, on winning the NCAA championship last night. This has been a remarkable season. A team that started unranked, a young team in a year that was supposed to be a rebuilding year came together in a magical way. They had their ups early in the season, they had their downs as time went on, but the run that began with the Big East tournament a few weeks ago has, for our State and I think anybody who follows and loves college basketball, really been inspirational.

I do want to say, in terms of inspiration and I suppose I might say in the spirit of bipartisanship or at least good sportsmanship, that I offer congratulations to the Butler Bulldogs on their great run in the tournament, which also was inspirational. I thank my Indiana colleagues for their good sportsmanship and for what they described as the best popcorn in America, made in Indiana—that is part of a friendly wager they made, Senators LUGAR and COATS, with Senator BLUMENTHAL and me—which we will be pleased to accept and devour.

This has been quite a year. Led by their floor leader, Kemba Walker, and assisted by an extraordinary group of young athletes, this group of student athletes demonstrated to all of us what a combination of hard work, dedica-

tion, commitment, and teamwork can achieve. Honestly, I tip my hat to these “top dogs” today of college basketball.

Of course, in my opinion, no matter how good and how much potential the players on this UConn men's basketball team had, they simply could not have done it without their great coach and a great man, Jim Calhoun. This is not the first time I have had the honor to come to the Senate floor to commend the performance of Coach Calhoun and the UConn Huskies. In fact, with last night's victory, Jim has etched his name in basketball glory by winning his third national title. He becomes only the fifth coach in history to win three national championships, and he joins the ranks of other greats such as John Wooden and Coach K, Mike Krzyzewski. He is only one of 8 coaches to run up over 800 career wins.

Over the years, I have watched Jim build upon the athletic program at UConn, transforming it from an occasionally regional contender to a regular national powerhouse. His three national championships and seven Big East championships have put our team, the State team of a relatively small State, on the college basketball map and set a high standard of excellence. I think none of this would have happened without Coach Calhoun's vision, his drive, his caring for players, and his extraordinary basketball brains.

There is a larger lesson, as there often is in sports. But this was a team that came into the Big East tournament with most people thinking the season would end quickly for them. They had will, which is a word Coach Calhoun uses a lot. They always had the potential and the ability, but they had the will. I am looking at the Senate pages now, young people.

There are a lot of people who read these UConn Huskies out at different times of the season, but they didn't read themselves out of the competition, and their coach never did. He kept telling them they had what it took to be champions. They pulled together. They worked together. They developed their potential to the fullest. They played and lived like a family. And you might say Coach Calhoun is the loving father who employs a lot of tough love but draws greatness out of these players and gives all of us in Connecticut a tremendous sense of pride.

I do not want to finish my statement without also telling Coach Geno Auriemma and the great players on the UConn women's basketball team how proud we are of them and how much we thank them for another remarkable season that was also filled with historic accomplishments, including an impressive run to the Final Four and a recordbreaking 90-consecutive-wins streak. The Lady Huskies were led by the all-impressive Maya Moore, who achieved AP All American honors in each of her 4 seasons at UConn and scored over 3,000 career points. So I give my congratulations to Coach Geno

Auriemma and to the players on the UConn Lady Huskies, who also made us proud.

I am going to yield the floor in a minute to my colleague, Senator BLUMENTHAL. It strikes me that this is the first time I have had the chance to celebrate here when my former colleague, Senator Chris Dodd, is not here. The first time we celebrated together on the floor, I ended my remarks with the UConn cheer. Afterward, Senator Dodd, then the senior Senator, gave me a hard time as to whether I would make a good cheerleader and whether it was a decorous thing to do on the floor of the Senate. I told him at the time that it could have been worse—I could have just done the UConn Huskies' “woof.”

But now I am the senior Senator, and may I conclude by simply saying U-C-O-N-N, UConn, UConn, UConn. National champs. I know my ending needs a little work, and I will be working on that from now until next year when we hopefully secure another championship.

I yield the floor to Senator BLUMENTHAL.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. I thank the senior Senator from Connecticut for that very eloquent tribute to our team. I am not going to try to match the cheer this year but perhaps next. And I thank him for providing such a model of support for the University of Connecticut, truly a government program that works but also, obviously, one that is completely nonpolitical, bipartisan—perhaps providing another lesson for us here.

I am very honored to rise in celebrating this remarkable accomplishment. This majestic and momentous victory culminates a kind of magical journey for this team. They defied the odds. They disproved the doubt and the doubters, and they stared down adversity with real grit and grace. Remember that they rallied after losing 4 out of 5 of their last regular season games and then had an extraordinary streak of 11 straight wins to win the Big East and then the NCAA championship. They were relentless and courageous in believing in themselves throughout that very tough battle. At some point, as someone said, this team forgot how to lose—again, a life lesson for many of us.

As in every remarkable triumph, this one had a team effort and it had stars. Kemba Walker was perhaps the most notable among them, and he won awards that recognized his remarkable individual effort, but there were also freshmen who were important—I say that as a freshman Senator—Jeremy Lamb and Roscoe Smith.

As important as any player, as my colleague has recognized, was Coach Calhoun, who really demonstrated again the reason he is a champion and a hero to Huskies fans throughout the State of Connecticut and the Nation.

He gave his team strength at the critical time, and he drew that strength from his own life experiences. Just last Sunday, he recalled his day, shortly after his father's death, when he was pumping gas and cutting stone and collecting metal in a shipyard in Massachusetts. He is a fighter, he is a leader, and the UConn basketball program has come a long way under his leadership.

Many recall the days when they had no championships and certainly no winning teams. The program began in 1901, with a season that consisted of a single game against Windham High School, and it was 98 years until Coach Calhoun won them their first championship and now their third. He won that championship because of the great playing of those teams and the players who have gone on to performances that are remarkable in other leagues.

I also wish to join in paying tribute to Geno Auriemma and the Lady Huskies. They came very close, heartbreakingly close, to another championship. Maya Moore and every member of that team deserves our gratitude and admiration.

There is no doubt that both teams—both of them—have a bright future. I look forward to being here again next year and celebrating another Huskies victory, hopefully by both the women's and the men's teams.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, PAUL RYAN is a Congressman from Janesville, WI. I know it because it is right across the border from Illinois. I have relatives and friends who live in the area. I like PAUL. I served with him on the Bowles-Simpson deficit commission. We spent a lot of time together. He is a very bright person, and he has been given a big assignment in the House of Representatives as chairman of the Budget Committee. He and I have different views of the world and of politics, but I respect him very much for his intelligence.

He has laid out a budget plan for House Republicans that is very specific in the goals he has set for America. There are some aspects on which PAUL and I agree. We agree on the fact that we are facing a deficit crisis. We cannot continue to borrow 40 cents for every dollar we spend. It is unsustainable. We borrow the money from countries such as China. China is a nation that is hard charging and competing with the United States, and they are one of our major creditors. That is a delicate position to be in, when a country that one is competing with for jobs and economic growth also

happens to be its banker, its creditor. That is the case. We can't sustain that. As we watch our national debt increase, we understand we have to take serious measures to deal with it.

This morning, in a bipartisan meeting of Senators with the President, we had the chairman of the Senate Budget Committee, KENT CONRAD, describe our current situation. At this point in time, about 14 percent of our gross domestic product is coming into the government in revenue, which is the lowest percentage in 60 years, and expenditures represent about 24 percent of our gross domestic product. That 10 percent difference between revenue and expenditure equals deficit. We have to reach a point where we are prepared to cut spending and make changes that will lead to a more stable economy and deal with our deficit honestly.

There were two State legislators who wrote a letter to the New York Times several weeks ago that caught my attention, a Democrat and Republican. They were talking about their State challenge, and they said: We have come to the conclusion that we can't cut our way out of it, and we can't tax our way out of it. We have to think our way out of it. We have to focus on changes in State government policy that reduce waste and inefficiency and move us toward a more solid position.

I think the same lesson applies in Washington. We have to be thinking about what we need to do to move forward so our children and grandchildren don't inherit the deficit we now face, a deficit which, of course, is growing by the day.

I always like to give a little historical perspective so people understand where we are and how we arrived. I ask people to think back to the year 2000, if they can. In the year 2000, President William Jefferson Clinton was leaving office, and President George W. Bush was coming into office. Snapshot: What was the state of America then? The snapshot would tell us that we had a national debt in the year 2000 of \$5 trillion. The accumulated net national debt of America when President Clinton left office was \$5 trillion. We were in our third year of generating a surplus; that is, more money coming into the government than being spent. The surplus was being put into the Social Security trust fund and buying more years of solvency for the trust fund.

President Clinton, as he left office, handed the keys to the White House to President Bush and said: This coming fiscal year, 2001, you will have a \$120 billion surplus. Welcome to Washington.

Now, fast-forward 8 years later. The year is 2008. President George W. Bush is leaving office, handing the keys to the White House to President Barack Obama. What was the national debt? It was \$5 trillion when President Bush came into office, and as he left the projected debt for the next year was \$11 trillion. In 8 years President Bush had more than doubled the national debt,

and we were witnessing record deficits. He said to President Obama: Here is next year's budget. Incidentally, it is \$1.2 trillion in deficit.

How did this reversal occur in only 8 years? It occurred because the policies of the Bush administration called for waging two wars and not paying for them and doing something that had never been done in U.S. history by any President: tax cuts in the middle of a war. A war is over and above the ordinary expenses of government. If we cut revenues at the same time, it makes it impossible to balance the budget. In fact, it drove us to record-high deficits. That is what President Obama inherited, an \$11 trillion national debt and a deficit for the first year in office of \$1.2 trillion and losing hundreds of thousands of jobs to unemployment as he was being sworn in.

Fortunately, the recession we face has slowed down and started to stabilize. As of last Friday, we are seeing the lowest unemployment rate in 2 years. We are coming out of this slowly, but we are coming out of it. We are making a recovery.

The point we made in the deficit commission—and it needs to be repeated—is, as we chart a glidepath to bring us out of deficit, let's get the recession behind us. Let's get the 14 million unemployed Americans back to work. We will not balance the budget with 14 million Americans unemployed. These are people who need the basic necessities of life and are not working and paying taxes. That creates a drain on the Treasury. We need to move toward restoring jobs, creating good-paying jobs as part of our overall agenda.

That is the lead-in to Congressman PAUL RYAN proposing a budget resolution on his side of the rotunda. He released it today. As we take a look at this resolution, where it leads, we see that Congressman RYAN claims that he will reduce the deficit by \$4 trillion over the next 10 years compared to the President's budget, but he achieves this solely through spending cuts. His cuts are focused. Instead of looking at all of the spending of government, he takes a small amount out of the Pentagon spending, some \$78 billion. In light of the Pentagon budget, that is a nick, a fractional amount. I want America to be safe. I want our security to never be in question, but we waste a lot of money at the Pentagon with contracting out and with things we should not buy. We could save a lot of money there.

Congressman RYAN's budget does not address that. He leaves, unfortunately, that aspect of the budget untouched, largely; \$78 billion over 5 years is hardly an effort to try to reduce waste and efficiency in the Department of Defense.

Then he turns to the domestic discretionary budget. That represents 12 percent of the overall budget. That has health care, education, medical research, things of that nature, in it. That is where he makes the biggest cuts in the coming 5 and 10 years.

When it comes to the revenue side of the equation, should, for example, those who are well off, millionaires, pay higher taxes? No. The budget proposed by Congressman RYAN reduces the top marginal rate for individuals and corporations to 25 percent, from 39.6 percent, producing an enormous windfall with that reduction to the wealthiest individuals and corporations, even as spending for programs that benefit low-income families, such as Pell grants for students and low-income families to go to college, are being slashed under his budget. Because the tax plan is revenue neutral, the plan must by definition include tax increases for lower income Americans to pay for the tax cuts which Congressman RYAN's budget gives to the wealthiest 2 percent.

Is that the key to our future? Cutting taxes for the wealthiest people, raising taxes for lower and middle-income families? I don't think that is fair. Those of us who love this country and feel blessed that we were given a chance to live here and do well should accept the reality that we pay back something to this great country and keep it safe and growing in the right direction. Congressman RYAN's budget resolution goes in the opposite direction, cutting taxes for those who have been well off, those who are well-to-do.

What troubles me the most about the Ryan budget resolution is what it does to health care. We cannot seriously address the deficit and debt without addressing the cost of health care. As the Presiding Officer knows, we spent a lot of time debating that over the previous 2 years. We came up with a plan to try to at least reduce the rate of growth in health care costs. I think we achieved some good things. We tried to bring more people into coverage when it came to health care and fewer people showing up at hospitals with no insurance, no payment, actually having their medical bills transferred to everyone else.

Chairman RYAN released a budget proposal for fiscal year 2012 that would repeal the health reform law which we passed and was signed by the President. It would end the Medicare and Medicaid Programs as we know them today. His proposal balances the budget, unfortunately, at the expense of those who can least afford it: low-income families, seniors, and people with disabilities.

First, Chairman RYAN proposes repealing the entire Affordable Care Act. That means all the consumer protections and benefits put in place by that law would disappear. What does it mean to the average family? Right now we changed the law so young Americans can stay on their parents' health insurance policies until age 27. Having lived through this experience of putting kids through college, it is a real worry. One's son or daughter graduates from college, they no longer have health insurance through the ordinary means, either through college or

through the family, and now they are on their own looking for a job. If you are like most parents, you worry. They are one diagnosis, one accident away from serious medical bills. You want them to have the best care.

I can't tell my colleagues how many times I asked my son and daughter: Do you have health insurance now that you are finished with college?

Dad, I feel great. I am healthy.

I wish we could all be so confident. We changed the law so that young people could stay under their parents' health insurance plans until age 27. That is reasonable.

The Ryan Republican budget resolution would repeal that. I don't think that is helpful.

We also have what is called the doughnut hole in Medicare where seniors receive payments for prescription drugs. There is a gap in coverage called the doughnut hole. We start filling that in so seniors have seamless coverage so they can have the prescriptions they need to stay healthy, independent, and strong, out of the hospital, out of the nursing home, in the life they want to lead. Unfortunately, that effort would be repealed by the Ryan Republican budget resolution.

In addition, we put in the law a provision that people with preexisting conditions wouldn't be denied health insurance. Initially, we protect children. If you have a child who is diabetic, has a history of cancer or some other disease, it might be next to impossible to buy health insurance. We protect that family and say children under the age of 18 cannot be discriminated against because of a preexisting condition. The Ryan proposal would eliminate that protection as well.

It also means that health care delivery system reforms put in place by the law, things such as bundling payments to medical providers and reducing reimbursements to hospitals with high rates of infection would go away.

These changes are designed to lower health care costs, but the Ryan proposal would eliminate them. His plan is simply cost-shifting, not cost saving, because we had scored by the Congressional Budget Office—a bipartisan agency—a savings of \$120 billion in the first 10 years from our health care reform. So instead of reducing the deficit, Chairman RYAN's proposal will increase the deficit by at least \$210 billion by repealing health care reform.

Next, Chairman RYAN proposes converting Medicaid into a block grant program. He says this will help the States rein in costs with more flexibility. In fact, it just shifts the costs to States, low-income beneficiaries, and medical providers. When we look at the dollar amounts, he would be reducing Medicaid reimbursement back to the States by 28 percent.

Who are some of the beneficiaries of Medicaid in Illinois, in Pennsylvania, and New Hampshire? Well, the beneficiaries include a lot of elderly people living in nursing homes. These are

folks who no longer have a savings account to turn to. They have a Medicare payment and a Medicaid payment, and that is it. If we reduce the reimbursement under Medicaid, unfortunately, many of them cannot stay in the nursing homes and convalescent centers in which they now live. So we have to think carefully about the way we deal with Medicaid.

By my estimation, my staff's estimation, the \$770 billion cut in Medicaid with the Ryan budget proposal is about a 28-percent cut in reimbursement for Medicaid in the years to come.

That is not the worst part. The worst part, I am afraid, is Chairman RYAN proposes ending Medicare as we know it. Back in the 1960s, the creation of Medicare was the answer to the prayers of many senior citizens. They had Social Security, which provided them with a basic monthly payment that might help them maintain their independence and continue on if their pension or savings did not cover life's expenses, but then came medical expenses. With Medicare we said: If you will pay in through payroll taxes through a lifetime, when you retire you will be covered with Medicare insurance.

Story after story has been told in my family and others of people who found themselves not Medicare eligible but without health insurance. I had a brother—a late brother—who had heart issues. He retired as a member of management from Boeing aircraft and then had a massive heart attack and surgery, and then his health insurance was canceled before he reached age 65. He was worried, worried he would have to dip into savings if he ever had to go back to the hospital. Fortunately for him, he did not have another problem until he reached Medicare eligibility.

So Medicare ends up being a lifeline for many seniors; otherwise, they would see their savings exhausted which they planned to use for the rest of their lives and their security.

Chairman RYAN proposes ending Medicare as we know it and, instead, giving seniors subsidies to enroll in private health insurance plans. This might save some Federal funds, but that is because the Federal subsidy would not cover the full cost of private plans that are as good as Medicare.

I am glad to see Senator BILL NELSON of Florida on the Senate floor. My guess is, Medicare is a pretty important issue in Florida, and I think he probably has some strong feelings about this issue.

But what Chairman RYAN has proposed in the House budget resolution would mean seniors would lose the guaranteed benefits they have today. How much of a cut in benefits? Well, he is very explicit: 60 percent, a 60-percent cut in Medicare benefits for senior citizens. How is that going to work? How are we going to find ourselves in a situation where private health insurance companies are somehow going to provide 60 percent more in services for the

current cost? It is not likely to happen. This will not bring down overall health spending, incidentally. It just pushes the costs on to seniors and makes them sicker when they finally show up at the hospital.

In fact, Medicare provides health care for seniors at a price less than the same benefits cost in the private market. It is a popular program because it works.

The point I would like to make—and I see my colleague here; and I will yield the floor to him—is, I share Chairman RYAN's concern about the deficit and concern about health costs. But if we are going to be honest and deal with this, as I said at the outset, we cannot cut our way out of this problem. We cannot tax our way out of this problem. We have to think our way out of this problem. We have to find approaches that more effectively use the wonderful medical resources in this country at a savings.

We have to reward value when it comes to health care as opposed to volume. We have to make certain those who are ripping off current programs see that activity come to an end. If we work together on a bipartisan basis, we can achieve that. I hope we can do it on a bipartisan basis because it is the only way that will work. Trying to impose this by one party, whether it is in the continuing resolution or in the long-term budget resolution, is not likely to achieve the goals most Americans hope we achieve as Members of the Senate and Congress.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Will the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. DURBIN. I am happy to yield.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. The Senator has pointed out very accurately the analysis of this most recent proposal by the chairman in the House of Representatives. If I recall, did we not address cutting some \$400 billion out of Medicare over the next decade in the health care reform bill that was passed last year?

Mr. DURBIN. That is exactly right, I say to the Senator from Florida, and there were people who were critical of us and said we were, unfortunately, cutting Medicare benefits, which we were not. The Senator may recall that one of the first amendments on the floor—it may have been from Senator BENNET of Colorado, if I am not mistaken—said we are going to protect Medicare benefits, but we are going to try to cut the waste out of the current Medicare Program—the duplication and the overcharging that is going on—so seniors will not pay in terms of health care, but the taxpayers will not be held responsible for something that is not serving them well.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Will the Senator respond to another question?

Mr. DURBIN. I would be happy to.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Is it true that in the proposal from the chairman in the House of Representatives, he would take the Medicaid Program—which, generally, is a split, something

like 55 percent Federal money, with 45 percent State money, for the health care for the poor and the disabled—that his proposal is he would give this as a block grant to the States for the Governors and the State legislatures to decide how they were going to distribute it?

Mr. DURBIN. Yes, I say to the Senator from Florida, that is my understanding. But it also includes a 28-percent reduction in the amount of money the Federal Government is going to pay into this. So in your State, and mine, too, a lot of elderly people live in nursing homes and depend on Medicaid. Without Medicare and Medicaid, they could not stay there. If you cut by 28 percent the reimbursement under Medicaid, I wonder what is going to happen to those people.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Would the Senator believe the experience of the State of Florida: When they tried to put all Medicaid into insurance companies—otherwise known as HMOs, health maintenance organizations—those organizations pulled out of serving the poor in rural counties, and yet that is a proposal in front of the State legislature of Florida at this very moment?

Mr. DURBIN. I would say to the Senator from Florida, representing a State as diverse as his, with rural areas and major urban centers, there are some areas where private health insurance companies are not going to do business because it is not profitable. So when Chairman RYAN says we will just try to shift all of this responsibility to the private health insurance market, I am afraid many Americans—those in rural areas, maybe some with preexisting conditions because he is repealing the Affordable Health Care Act too—are going to find themselves without health insurance coverage.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. And a further question to the Senator from Illinois: Would he characterize the proposal by the chairman in the House of Representatives on Medicare as not only cutting the payments to Medicare but the way Medicare is being delivered by altering that into the private sector?

Mr. DURBIN. I say in response—and this will be my last response because I have to run to a meeting—but the interesting point about Chairman RYAN's proposal is the money does not go to the senior citizens under Medicare; the money goes to the insurance company. Think about that: a voucher to an insurance company, and the hope is they would provide the coverage you need.

Medicare, I want to tell you, is like Social Security, one of those programs that people have confidence in. They know the coverage and they know what has happened. Since the 1960s, under President Johnson, when we initiated Medicare, seniors live longer, they are healthier, they are strong, and they are independent. That is what you get with good quality health care. When you start making 60 percent cuts in Medi-

care benefits, such as Chairman RYAN's House Republican budget proposal, you run the risk that a lot of people will not get the good coverage they have today in Medicaid and Medicare.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. I say in conclusion—and I thank the Senator for yielding—all you have to do is ask a senior citizen do they like their Medicare or would they prefer to have it done by an insurance company, and I think you will get a resounding answer.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CASEY). The Senator from Alaska.

USE IT OR LOSE IT

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I would like to take a few minutes this afternoon to perhaps switch the discussion from what my colleagues were referring to earlier in terms of the budget and speak a little bit about the issue of energy—obviously, a topic of great concern.

The President has addressed it as recently as last week in a major address at Georgetown. There have been a lot of discussions about what it is we need to do to respond to the higher prices families are paying at the pump and just how we deal with the issue of energy in general. There has been much discussion about this concept of “use it or lose it.” I want to speak to that proposal a little bit this afternoon.

It is a rather strange proposal that claims to address the rising cost of oil and gas for America's working families. The premise of this is, even with oil at more than \$100 a barrel, and even though lease terms are already limited by law to 5 to 10 years, energy companies somehow are hoarding Federal lands and refusing to produce the resources that are beneath them.

“Use it or lose it” has been presented by this administration and others as a way to increase our Nation's energy production. But even a cursory review will show this is fundamentally flawed in its premise. This proposal will not increase American production. It will not increase jobs or create jobs. It will not raise government revenues or bolster our security. Instead, I believe it is a diversion from our more critical need to produce more of our own resources and to streamline our burdensome regulatory processes.

Now, the idea behind “use it or lose it” is to simply punish companies for not drilling on lands they have leased, so they either drill or they give back the acreage to the government which can then resell it to someone else. But, interestingly, this proposal has drawn some support from a number of Senators and from the President himself who, until recently, have claimed: Well, we can't drill our way out of this. We can't drill our way to lower gas prices. America's oil—and we have been repeatedly told this—has minimal impact on global prices and takes too long to bring online.