

families, and imposing higher energy bills on our own seniors makes about zero sense, while huge carbon emitters such as China and India continue to ramp up energy consumption.

Global carbon emissions would hardly be affected anyway, but millions of lives here certainly would be. The American middle class would be deeply and adversely affected.

Left, right, and center, we should all be able to agree this is simply nonsensical. What we should all be working for is an “all of the above” energy strategy that will utilize more of our domestic resources to create jobs and meet America’s energy needs. It is a smart and focused approach that accommodates both our economy and our environment, and it is one that Republicans strongly support and Democrats should as well.

Democrats should also work with us to pass the legislation that would allow Congress to actually vote on environmental regulation to ensure Washington’s rules strike the right balance between protecting the environment and creating jobs. That legislation is so important to my home State of Kentucky.

Case in point. I spent this past week-end with hundreds of coal miners and their families at a rally in eastern Kentucky, and I heard from them how the administration’s war on coal is hurting so many who struggle every day just to get by. It is a war that is taking away hope and destroying jobs.

Let’s be honest. The most immediate crisis in the Obama era is the jobs crisis—the jobs crisis. It always has been. If only our friends on the other side were willing to talk a little less and work with us a little more. There is so much we could get done on that front. There is so much we could be doing to create jobs and grow the middle class today. We could build a Keystone Pipeline that would create thousands of American jobs right away. We could increase U.S. exports and expand American jobs with trade legislation. We could reform our tax and regulatory structures to free small businesses so they can grow and hire and enrich their communities. And we could pass the dozens of House-passed jobs bills just sitting on the majority leader’s desk—so many that even House Democrats are starting to complain. These are the kinds of things we could get done once Washington Democrats show they are ready to work with us.

Talk is cheap. We know that. And America’s middle class is tired of all the talk. They want action. Let’s provide it on jobs.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. 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.

AMERICAN ENERGY RENAISSANCE

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, with the very unfortunate events in Ukraine in the headlines and the Ukrainian people close to our hearts, I rise today to speak to a topic that has significance not only for that European crisis and for our own well-being but also bearing a little bit on the longer term subject of climate change, which, of course, was a big discussion here last night.

This morning I am speaking to the American energy renaissance and its broader benefits to us all.

Today American technology and know-how are delivering energy abundance, keeping energy affordable, enabling energy to be cleaner than the next most likely alternative, permitting us to rely on ever more diverse energy sources, and, finally, improving energy security for our people here in this country and around the world.

America’s overall production of nearly every type of energy is rising. The efficiency of just about everything—whether it is our vehicles or whether it is our buildings—is increasing. And in comparing our supply with our demand, we are rapidly approaching a self-sufficiency rate of 90 percent. The American energy revolution has generated a variety of welcome benefits. It is creating jobs. It has generated revenues. It has helped reduce both energy prices and price volatility. And as our Nation imports less, the simple fact is there is more energy available for others. That, in turn, is creating the kinds of supply conditions in the world oil market that allow all of us to deal with the bad actors from a position of relative strength.

There was a recent essay in *Foreign Affairs* which argued that energy has been viewed as a strategic liability in the United States since back in the 1970s. Now energy is becoming a strategic asset—a strategic asset—and one that can boost the U.S. economy and grant Washington newfound leverage around the world. It is really hard to disagree with that.

The question then becomes, What will we do with this strategic asset? How will we use our newfound position? There was a survey of responses to Russia’s disregard for Ukrainian sovereignty, and of those prudent areas where the United States might go. Energy is clearly among the most major strategic assets we possess. How we use it to bring about geopolitical stability can really define our leadership in the world.

Our first real challenge as a nation is how to keep this American resurgence going. There are two specific areas where we have to make some decisions; that is, whether to grant access to new lands and new markets, and that will go a long way in determining whether we actually do that.

As I noted, America’s total energy production has increased dramatically in recent years, but within those numbers there is a serious dichotomy.

Nearly the entire oil and gas production resurgence here in the United States has occurred on State and private lands, not the millions of acres managed by the Federal Government. Despite the discussion of all of the above and no small amount of credit taken by the administration, combined carbon fuel production on Federal lands actually fell from 2008 to 2012. That is a disappointing trend which, in my view, needs to be reversed.

Consider, for example, the opportunity we are missing in my State of Alaska. Thirty years ago, in March 1984, Alaskan crude oil production stood at 1.6 million barrels per day. The Trans-Alaska Pipeline System had been completed just a decade earlier. There were debates over opening new areas to production and even allowing exports of crude oil from the State, but the Federal Government did not act at that time. It did not seize Alaska’s best and most obvious opportunities. Production peaked at 2.1 million barrels per day in March 1988. It has been on general decline ever since then. Alaska’s production has dipped below the half million barrels per day marker several times since 2012. This is a fall of nearly 75 percent from its high.

Back home we keep talking about a pipeline that is less than half full. The difference is not only geography, it is also policy. Our Federal policies are not working as they should. State policies, combined with private sector inventiveness, powerful as they are, cannot overcome the Federal barriers. In North Dakota, where we see a booming energy market, only 4 percent of that State is federally held. In Texas, it is just 2 percent of Federal lands. In Alaska, 62 percent of our lands are Federal, and most of our untapped resources are within these Federal areas.

Alaska’s falling production is a missed opportunity—a missed opportunity—to create jobs, to generate revenues, to stabilize world energy prices, to diversify world energy supplies. And it is not the only place in America where potential growth is going unrealized. We are passing up tremendous opportunities off of our Atlantic coast, in the eastern Gulf of Mexico, and in the Rocky Mountains West. We also have increasingly burdensome regulations that slow the pace of development in the Federal lands that are open.

All of this highlights the need to re-examine our Federal energy policies and really reorient them for a new century.

That leads us to the subject of exports.

Back in January I laid out the case for why we need to renovate the architecture of U.S. energy trade. We have substantial opportunities for exports of coal, petroleum products, natural gas, natural gas liquids, renewable technology, nuclear technology, and even crude oil. I have called for the lifting of the de facto prohibition on crude oil exports as a preemptive measure. I say what we need to do is lift it to prevent

future losses of production and jobs when our trade restrictions inevitably collide with this surge of light tight oil and condensate production that comes out. The conversation I hoped to frame last year in January when I submitted my "Energy 20/20" report is really very well underway.

My point is that we must increase the value of energy as an American strategic asset for global security and price stability.

I wish to say a couple of words—maybe more than a couple but a few words—about climate change. Many groups have formed to go on the offensive to "wake Congress up" on the issue of climate. They want to force the Nation to talk about this subject no matter what the issue of the day might be. Unfortunately, they also seem to want to blame Republican Members and somehow also to adopt policies that this body has rejected year after year. So much of the climate change conversation seems to be defined by old ideas that have been rejected. It seems that if one is not supportive of yet another regulatory edifice, either through cap and trade, a carbon tax, or letting the EPA expand its authority without any checks by the people's representatives in Congress, then somehow or other one is against the environment. I reject that.

I want to see greater balance. I know we can achieve it, and I think it is important that, again, we reframe the conversation. I think finding agreement on environmental policy is hard, but it is not impossible. I think what we need to do is kind of pull back and change the conversation we are having.

What I want to remind my colleagues of is that part of the opposition I have had to some of the ideas I have heard from folks is based on what those policies would mean for our affordability of energy. Here I mean not just for Americans who are energy insecure, including residents in my State and in some of our most remote areas who already face exorbitant energy costs, but also the 1.3 billion people across the globe with no reliable access to electricity. Worldwide—worldwide—families are struggling to attain the basic necessities of life. Although many portray climate change as our most pressing moral issue, I would suggest it is but one of many. Energy poverty and energy insecurity are others, and ones that we simply cannot ignore and we should certainly not make worse.

Another part of my opposition to cap and trade or a carbon tax is based on what we have seen in Europe as compared to what has actually happened here in the United States. Without climate legislation, but with the advent of increased domestic production here through shale gas production, our greenhouse gas emissions are now 11 percent below our rate of emissions in 2005. Yet our friends across the Atlantic, who actually did pass cap and trade several years ago, haven't exactly seen the expected results. In the face of

weak growth, high unemployment, and high debt, some European nations are now dialing back the extremely expensive subsidies they have offered and, at the same time, many of our NATO allies are clamoring for the cheap and the abundant natural gas that we are now producing on our State and our private lands, and they are importing our abundant and affordable coal.

The unfolding situation in Ukraine also highlights the compelling importance of energy security—something that neither a carbon tax, cap and trade or any climate bill we have seen in the Senate has properly accounted for.

Then there is the approach the President seems to want to take. Earlier this year he threatened to use his regulatory authority to regulate greenhouse gases if Congress failed to act. It is really quite a choice here. He suggests either to pass legislation that we don't like or he will enact regulations that we don't like, either way to be carried out under the Clean Air Act, just not according to the Clean Air Act.

It is difficult to consider really whether this is a serious offer. What we can say, though, is this threat and the rulemakings that will follow is contrary—contrary—to what our forefathers envisioned. Executive authority foregoes the benefits and protections of a legislative process and it curbs the debate that is needed to ensure fair and balanced policy, and particularly in this area where we need to ensure they are fair and balanced policies.

To effectively combat climate change we have to safeguard our economy. Prosperity is key to the resources that we will need to make progress. The Nation has to pursue all forms of energy and stress energy security. We cannot exclusively count on renewables to achieve a low carbon environment. Emission free nuclear energy has to be part of the solution. Technology must play a role in reaching the goals that we set for our country.

Finally, as we discuss the issues and the approaches to these issues, we have to do so with humility, keenly aware of the unintended consequences that could be worse than no action at all. Climate change is a global issue that requires global acknowledgment of the issue and global action. But through it all we must be deeply concerned and always aware about the impacts of our actions on the individual family.

I spend a lot of time in the rural parts of my State. We don't even call them rural; we use the terminology "bush" because it is just so remote, and these are areas where the only way to access the communities is either by air or by boat, up the river by barge. Supplies are brought in two times a year, if you live on the river system. You look around and you may be able to see the impact of climate change, and that is an awareness the people in this region have, but first and fore-

most, these people need to be able to live. This is where they have lived for thousands of years.

When you appreciate the costs they are paying for their energy right here and right now, I can't support anything that is going to increase the energy cost for the people in my State who are already paying—some—close to 50 percent of their income for fuel to stay warm in the wintertime.

I have one letter here that I received just last week from a village by the name of Kwigillingok. This is an area out in the coastal villages region. In this letter from the tribal council they state:

The current cost of heating fuel is 6.02 per gallon and gasoline at 6.52.

If I were to suggest to the fine people in Kwigillingok that in order to arrest what we may be seeing with increased emissions around the globe that their energy prices are going to double, that the cost of their heating fuel is going to go from \$6.02 per gallon to \$12, how will these people live?

We have to be aware of the energy insecurity, the energy poverty in far too many places in this country and truly around the world.

So as we discuss these very important issues about energy and how we do right by all, again let us do so with a level of humility and a level of respect for people all throughout our Nation.

I see that my colleague from Texas is here, another fine producing State. In fact, Texas is a State that is really doing quite well right now when it comes to our energy and our energy resources. Through the efforts of States such as Texas, North Dakota, and California we are seeing a true resurgence in our energy production, and I think an opportunity for us as a Nation to again not only provide for our energy security as a Nation but to provide for security and stability on the global scene as well.

With that, I thank the Chair, and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican whip.

Mr. CORNYN. I thank the Senator from Alaska for her wise words. I wasn't here for all of her remarks, but I was able to hear the percentage of her State that is owned by the Federal Government, which is extraordinary. I think she cited roughly 2 percent in Texas. That was a deal we cut in 1845, and it turned out it was a pretty good deal because Texas lands are overwhelmingly private lands rather than government lands.

I think part of the point she was making as well is that while we have seen a resurgence of activity on private land, particularly when it comes to the shale gas, and on oil plays on public lands we haven't seen that same sort of productivity. If the Federal Government would simply take the same approach that the private sector is taking when it comes to developing these God-given natural resources, it could really boost our economy further and lower unemployment.

So I thank my colleague for her wise words this morning.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to speak as in morning business for up to 15 minutes.

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

AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I want to talk about a number of subjects starting, of course, with the fact that millions of Americans have lost their health insurances because of the unintended consequences of the Affordable Care Act, or ObamaCare.

We also know that in addition to losing the coverage they had, which they were told they could keep, many have now been forced to pay higher premiums. The sticker shock from that has been something we have been reading a lot about. But whether there is sticker shock because of the higher premiums, many people have been finding that their deductibles are huge, making them effectively self-insured up to \$5,000 for their health care costs, definitely not something they were promised as a result of ObamaCare.

We also know that roughly 10 million people, about 10½ million people, remain unemployed in America and that 3.8 million of them have been unemployed for more than 6 months. Since the recession has ended—and, of course, a recession is, technically speaking, two consecutive quarters of negative growth—I think, if asked, most Americans today feel as though we are still in a recession because of what is happening to them personally. We know that since the recession ended, median household income—one measure of economic health in the country—has gone down by \$2,500. So at the same time people are experiencing higher costs for health care, for groceries, for gasoline, and other necessities of life, they are seeing that their median household income has declined by \$2,500—a double whammy.

According to a Joint Economic Committee analysis, if the Obama economic recovery had been as strong as an average post-1960 recovery, we would currently have millions more private sector jobs.

I had the pleasure this last weekend of hearing a fascinating debate with Larry Summers, economic adviser and former president of Harvard University—a brilliant economist—and another brilliant economist, Senator Phil Gramm, who taught at Texas A&M. Senator Gramm was making the point that if we had had a typical recovery after a recession, it would have been a V-shaped recovery. We did not get that. The economy continues to grow slowly, unusually slowly, and they were both exploring the reasons for that. A lot has to do with uncertainty about the role of the Federal Government when it comes to taxes, when it comes to regulation, and when it comes to our escalating national debt—now over \$17 tril-

lion—and what that might mean in the future.

But add all this up and Americans are continuing to feel increasingly pessimistic about the state of our economy, the state of their personal health care relationships with their doctors and hospitals, and the future of the country. That is something all of us ought to be profoundly concerned about.

Yet rather than promote real health care reform that actually deals with the unaffordability of health coverage or something that will get the economy growing again, my friends across the aisle, many of them, spent last night—all night—talking about climate change. That is right, climate change.

So the message to millions of people out of work or who have lost their health coverage or to people who are living from paycheck to paycheck because median household income has actually declined is that what America really needs right now is more taxes and more regulation and the big government that goes along with it.

It is easy to see why many people think Washington is just out of touch with the concerns of average hard-working American families, and last night was an example. It is hard to square the message with the genuine concern for the middle class and middle-class prosperity. I mean, if we are really concerned about hardworking American families working from paycheck to paycheck just to make ends meet, I doubt we would have an all-night debate on climate change.

If my friends across the aisle really did believe that job creation should be our top priority, they wouldn't have wasted precious time with last night's political stunt. For that matter, they wouldn't be opposing the Keystone XL Pipeline, which would single-handedly create thousands of well-paying American jobs.

I realize that many people have good-faith concerns about the long-term implications of rising greenhouse gas emissions. Over the next three decades worldwide emissions are indeed projected to surge. But that has almost nothing to do with the United States and almost everything to do with developing countries such as China. As a matter of fact, the ranking member of the energy committee, the Senator from Alaska, and certainly the Senator from Wyoming know this very well. One of the reasons why carbon emissions in the United States are going down is because of the natural gas renaissance we have seen—because of unconventional shale gas exploration in places such as Texas and all around the country. So we are finding ways to reduce carbon emissions for those who are worried about those, as a result of taking advantage of the resources we have here in the United States, together with the innovative technology that is used to develop it.

Those of us who oppose bigger, more intrusive government in the form of

cap and trade legislation or higher taxes such as carbon taxes or other job-killing greenhouse gas regulations are not denialists. I prefer to say we are realists.

We understand America's contributions to global emissions over the coming decades will be relatively minuscule. We understand the economic costs of President Obama's regulations through the Environmental Protection Agency would vastly outweigh the environmental benefit.

So why do they want to put a big wet blanket on the economy and on the aspirations and dreams of hard-working families in order to pursue policies in which the negative will vastly outweigh the positive benefit to American families?

In fact, the Obama EPA itself has admitted its proposed greenhouse gas rule would not have a notable impact on U.S. carbon dioxide emissions until the year 2022.

I would also note, despite having Members of his party talk about climate change all night—which is all it was, talk—there is no legislation they are offering, nor will the majority leader, who controls the agenda of the Senate, bring legislation to the floor to actually vote on it. So it is just talk or, perhaps I can say, it was just a lot of hot air.

Our colleagues across the aisle—including the majority leader who controls the agenda of the floor in the Senate—seem to be content letting the President use his pen and phone, skirting the legislative process, not engaging with Congress to try to do things which actually are the priorities of the American people but instead to rely on unelected EPA bureaucrats. I could be surprised, but I would be surprised to learn if the consensus in America wouldn't be that we should be focusing on policies which create jobs, rather than destroy jobs and punish families in return for meager or nonexistent benefits.

Speaking of destroying jobs and punishing families, the Congressional Budget Office—which is the official budgetary scorekeeper for Congress—recently estimated the President's proposal to raise the minimum wage to \$10.10 an hour would actually destroy up to 1 million jobs.

I believe sometimes here in Washington people think those who actually create jobs can absorb regulations, taxes, and other economic burdens, together with the uncertainty many of those policies cause, and it will have no impact on their ability to continue to create jobs, grow jobs or to grow the economy. But the Congressional Budget Office has stated what should perhaps be intuitive, which is, if you raise the cost of doing business on businesses, they are going to have to find someplace to cut.

What that means is they are going to have to cut more people from their jobs. They estimated up to 1 million people would lose their job if we raised