

saved money in a coffee can in the basement so he could send my dad to college. My dad went to a community 2-year college and then went on to the University of Minnesota, where he earned his journalism degree. He went from those hard-scrabble mines in Ely, MN, on to a journalism career where he got to interview everyone from Mike Ditka to Ronald Reagan to Ginger Rogers. My mom taught second grade until she was 70 years old. I still run into people who tell me what a great teacher she was. And here I stand, a U.S. Senator, the granddaughter of an iron ore miner, the daughter of a teacher and a newspaperman, and the first woman elected to this job from my State. One thing I know for sure: It would not have been possible without education. It would not have been possible without my parents, my grandparents, and my teachers, who believed in me and believed in the value of education.

I still remember getting into college. I still remember back then—and I graduated from high school in 1978—that it was \$10,000 a year to go to the college I went to. I remember my dad thinking: I can't afford this. We went and met with the student loan and financial aid people. He was wearing his brown polyester pants, and he had all these coins in his pockets. Somehow we were able to get this done through loans and through his financing a good part of it. Back then, on a journalist's salary and my mom's teacher salary, we were able to afford a college like that. But now I see my daughter and I know how much it has changed and how expensive it is. Yet it is still so necessary.

Higher education doesn't just benefit individual students, it benefits our entire economy by creating a more flexible, productive, and mobile workforce at a time when more jobs require some form of postsecondary education. In manufacturing now, more jobs require postsecondary education than not. We cannot allow cost to be a barrier to opportunity when we have job openings right now.

I see my friend the Senator from North Dakota, and I know they have job openings in North Dakota. We have job openings in Minnesota. We have job openings that require skill, that require post-high school skills. Yet a lot of our kids can't afford to get those degrees.

Rising costs for education are putting a strain on families and students and making college seem out of reach for too many young people. Many find themselves deeply in debt long before they set foot in the workplace.

This student debt hangs like an anchor around not just these students but around our entire economy, and it is dragging us down. Graduates with high debt may delay making key investments, such as saving for retirement or getting married or buying a home.

We had a hearing today in the Joint Economic Committee with Chairman

Yellen of the Federal Reserve, and she talked about the fact that while our economy is improving, housing is still flat. She talked about the fact that housing is flat because so many young people aren't forming households. They are not getting houses.

Student debt may impact a person's career choices by deterring graduates from taking jobs in order to pursue jobs that allow them to pay their debt. So we don't have people going into teaching.

According to the report I released as Senate chair of the Joint Economic Committee, our State has one of the highest rates of student debt in the country, with 71 percent of recent graduates in Minnesota having a loan debt compared to 66 percent nationally. The average debt load of student borrowers who graduated in 2011 in Minnesota is also more than \$3,000 higher than the national average. It is over \$30,000 in our State compared to \$27,000 nationally.

The good news is that there are things we can do. As you know, Mr. President, last summer we acted to prevent the interest rates on subsidized Stafford loans from doubling. Yesterday we introduced the Bank on Students Emergency Loan Refinancing Act in the Senate. This bill would give student loan borrowers a fair shot at managing their debt by offering them the opportunity to refinance their debt at the same low rates offered to new borrowers in the student loan program.

Outstanding student loans now total more than \$1.2 trillion. That even means something in Washington. It surpasses total credit card debt and affects 40 million Americans. That is why I am a cosponsor of the Bank on Students Emergency Loan Refinancing Act—because it is time we gave students a chance to refinance their loans and find better financial footing.

Education is the pathway to economic opportunity. Workers with higher levels of education have experienced much faster wage growth and lower unemployment rates than other workers. But the increasing level of student debt in recent years presents challenges for graduates just beginning their careers. These bright young people should be planning for their futures, not struggling financially because they worked hard to earn their degrees.

Our country has come a long way since my grandpa saved that money in a coffee can in his basement so he could send my dad to college. There are parents all over America who want to do the same thing, but the money they have to save right now couldn't fit in a coffee can. That is why we have to make it easier and not harder for our students.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill and pass this bill so students can manage their debt and build a better future for themselves and for their families.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, this is the first time since 2007 the Senate has taken up and considered an energy bill. I am pleased we are finally discussing this important issue. I hope we will also take time to talk about our country's recent boom in oil and gas production.

In the years since our last energy debate in the Senate, the United States has transitioned from a position of inordinate dependence on foreign energy sources to become one of the largest energy producers in the world today. Much of this is the result of technological innovation, and we must do everything possible to make it easier for domestic companies to access, refine, and transport the oil and gas that has become available with recent advances in technology.

In my view, energy efficiency and industrial competitiveness should not be addressed without also addressing energy production. The two are necessarily interrelated, and it makes no sense to treat each in isolation. But that isn't happening today. As a result, we are missing a critical opportunity to have an important debate on how best to invest our Nation's resources to support domestic energy production.

The bill we have been discussing establishes new programs promoting energy efficiencies for buildings and manufacturing. It authorizes new spending for career skills and workforce training. But instead of simply devoting additional resources to energy efficiency programs, we should first understand the impact of existing energy sector programs administered by the Federal Government and, most critically, have a serious conversation about broader energy policy.

If the Senate actually functioned the way it was designed and I was given the opportunity, I would have called up amendment No. 3015, which would eliminate some of the duplication and overlap which has become so prevalent as the size and scope of the Federal Government continues to expand.

Our Federal bureaucracy has grown to the point that government agencies are simply unaware many of the programs they administer are duplicated by similar—and sometimes nearly identical—programs administered in other Federal agencies.

The Federal Leviathan has become so large and complex that the left hand literally doesn't know what the right hand is doing, especially when it comes to spending taxpayer moneys. This is simply unacceptable.

Our national government has grown so unwieldy that coordination between its individual parts cannot be assumed and often must instead be mandated. This phenomenon is certainly the case with many of the programs that would receive funding if this bill was enacted as currently written.

Currently, the Department of Labor, the Department of Education, and the Department of Energy each administer

programs that fund training and education targeted specifically at the energy sector. I am sure the Federal bureaucrats in each of these three agencies are trying to do as best they can. But it can't possibly be necessary or, for that matter, wise for all three agencies to be doing the same thing.

The obvious solution is for the Department of Energy to ensure there are no federally funded programs with the same stated objectives as the programs they are already administering.

My amendment requires the Secretary of Energy to coordinate with the Secretary of Labor and the Secretary of Education prior to issuing any career skills and workforce training funding opportunity announcements to ensure that these three departments are not issuing redundant and overlapping grants.

We cannot keep spending more taxpayer dollars in the same inefficient ways. Energy efficiency is important, but far more important is our Nation's overall energy policy. We should be discussing energy efficiency only as part of that critical debate.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana is recognized.

KEYSTONE XL PIPELINE

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I wish to speak about the debate which has gone on the last 2 days on this floor about two very important issues related to a stronger energy policy for America.

As I said earlier in the week, and I was proven to be correct, it is unlikely we would develop an energy policy in the next 4 days in open debate on the floor of the Senate. Lots of people came down and talked about things they thought should be in it. Many of those things I agree with, but there is a process we go through, and we are working through—not as quickly as some people would like, but we are making a lot of progress.

Right now on the floor of the Senate are two very important pillars or two very important cornerstones or two very important first steps which could be taken in the building of a stronger, more vibrant, more commonsense, more middle-class-friendly, more job-creating energy policy than the one we have right now.

The saddest thing about watching this debate or speeches which sort of parade as if it is a debate, but it is not really—pretend that it is a debate but it is not—the speeches we have heard are not outlining the truth to the American public about what is going on.

We have the opportunity the next time the Senate gathers early next week to have a cloture vote on an energy efficiency bill. That means bring debate to an end and vote on an energy efficiency bill which will create hundreds of thousands of jobs, supported by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the

American Chemistry Council, and the Environmental Defense Fund. Hundreds of organizations have come together across the political spectrum looking here for common sense and cooperation, and they are not finding much of either.

These coalitions have spent an enormous amount of time lobbying Members of the House and the Senate to pass an efficiency bill led by Senator SHAHEEN and Senator PORTMAN, two very respected Members of this body—one Republican with strong conservative credentials, one Democrat with strong progressive credentials but both demonstrating in their career the ability to work together and find common ground, exactly what the American public is asking for. We can ask any Republican, any Democrat, any Independent, and they say: Can't you all work together and find a way forward?

So Senator PORTMAN and Senator SHAHEEN did. They brought a bill to committee. I wasn't the chair. I can't take credit for this. RON WYDEN is the chair and LISA MURKOWSKI is the ranking member. They can take credit for this. They came up with a fantastic bill which creates jobs, saves a lot of energy, and is our best source of energy through efficiency. It creates jobs right here in America. It is the cleanest energy we can produce.

So these two terrific Senators come and bring us a bill. It is debated in public, in committee, and amazingly comes out of committee I think on a vote of 19 to 3, a very important piece of building an energy policy.

Even as chair of this committee now—and I hope to remain chair for many years to come. There is an election between that and that aspirational goal, so we shall see. I would like to remain chair. But I can promise it is not going to be one bill which comes out of the energy committee that builds an energy policy.

First of all, part of the bills have to come out of the Finance Committee. They are about tax policy related to the generation of all sorts of different kinds of electricity not even in my jurisdiction. There are some issues that have to come out of the commerce committee, which has jurisdiction and authorization over pipelines. There are other committees that are going to have to contribute to strengthening and building an energy policy where America can be independent and secure, where we can have partnerships with Canada and Mexico, producing the cleanest fuels possible and generating electricity in the cleanest way possible, abundantly and affordably and reliably for our people, that will make manufacturing soar in this Nation, that will give opportunities for more domestic drilling both onshore and offshore.

The people I represent want this so badly, and they know it can happen. I am not sure why more Senators don't understand this can happen, but it is going to take cooperation. It is going

to take a little give-and-take. I guess that is too much to ask and that is so sad. I guess it is too much to ask for a little cooperation and a little give-and-take.

So this energy efficiency bill comes to the floor, and it is held up because many Members want other pieces of the energy plan. They most certainly have good ideas. Most certainly there are good ideas out there on both sides of the aisle, but there is one idea that is very powerful. To say how powerful it is, I am not going to read my words about it. I have already spoken about it is time to build the Keystone Pipeline now. It is time to stop studying now.

I respect the President's review of the situation. I disagree with the length of time he has taken and with the decision he made last week to continue to study. I have said respectfully to him: Mr. President, the time for studying is over. The time for building is now. The process has run its course over 5 years, five studies. Every one of them has come down on the side of building it for jobs, for security, and it is better for the environment to transport this product, these oil sands, from one of our best friends, Canada, by pipeline than by either rail or truck.

Everyone in this country knows how dangerous and crowded the highways and railways are. One does not need to serve on the transportation committee of the Senate or House to understand that issue. Every mother, every father, every 17-year-old with a driver's license—in our State it is 16, and maybe in some States it is 20—understands how scary it is to drive on highways with big trucks filled with, unfortunately, sometimes dangerous things.

Why would we want this for our children? Why can't we add to the 2.9 million miles of pipeline we have and build a pipeline with Canada? We are not talking about building a pipeline with Cuba or Venezuela. We are talking about Canada—our best ally, our greatest trading partner, and our partner on the frontlines of wars, in the research labs we partner with them—to build a pipeline to safely move oil they are going to produce one way or another because they need it for their economy and the world needs it. They have the highest environmental standards in the world.

Our highways are crowded. Our trains are crowded. Trains are colliding all over the country. Every morning in some section of the country there is another train that has run off the track with horrible materials being spilled into waters and rivers. I think Democrats are upset about that, Republicans are upset about it.

There is one very big idea, very big amendment to the efficiency bill I think the Republicans would truly like; that is, to have a vote on the Keystone Pipeline. As the chair of the committee, I know that is their strong feeling. I am a supporter of the Keystone Pipeline. So I think to myself: Let's see if we could maybe make this work.