make the program work. We will perpetuate the current outdated, fragmented, litigious system.

Most important of all, we will delay, once again, the day when our nation finally has clean streams, rivers, and lakes, from sea to shining sea.

I regret that this provision has been included in the conference report and I will work to reverse the decision at the earliest opportunity.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent for 15 minutes in morning business.

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

A NATIONAL ENERGY POLICY

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, for most of the 1990s, the average gasoline prices in Honolulu hovered at roughly 25 cents to 50 cents above the national average. In June 1999, only 1 year ago, Hawaii's price of $1.51 per gallon ranked above Oregon's at $1.44 and the national average of $1.14.

As late as last month, according to the Automobile Association of America, Hawaii topped the Nation with an average per gallon price of $1.85, compared to the next highest state, Nevada, at $1.67 and a U.S. average of $1.51.

This month, according to AAA, Hawaii ranked fourth highest with an average price for regular unleaded of $1.86 per gallon. That fell below Illinois with an average of $1.98, Michigan at $1.96, and Wisconsin at $1.91. Still, Hawaii's price was well above the U.S. average of $1.63.

It is no pleasure to say that Hawaii has lost this dubious distinction as the State with the Nation's highest gasoline prices. The pocketbooks of Americans are hurting all over the country.

There has been no shortage of blame—short supplies, pipeline problems, cleaner gasoline requirements, too much driving and gas guzzlers, oil company manipulations, even an esoteric patent dispute, to name a few. So far, the initial examination of the causes of the dramatic increase of prices in some areas of the Midwest has provided no clear picture. The Clinton administration has asked the Federal Trade Commission to investigate if there were any illegal price manipulations in the Midwest leading to such dramatic price increases.

This problem of dependence on imported oil has been in the making for many years. Our import dependence has been rising for the past 2 decades. The combination of lower domestic production and increased demand has led to imports making up a larger share of total oil consumed in the United States. In 1992, crude oil imports accounted for approximately 45 percent of our domestic demand. Last year crude oil imports accounted for 58 percent. The Energy Information Administration's Short-Term Outlook forecasts that oil imports will exceed 60 percent of total demand this year. EIA's long-term forecasts have oil imports constituting 66 percent of U.S. supply by 2010, and more than 71 percent by 2020.

Continued reliance on such large quantities of imported oil will frustrate our efforts to develop a national energy policy and set the stage for energy emergencies in the future.

For months now, we have watched the price of gasoline and fuel oil rise at breakneck speed. All across America, families have suffered ever-escalating prices.

We have not had a coherent and comprehensive energy policy for a long time. Additionally, we have not had a commitment to address our dependence on foreign sources of oil. Absence of an effective policy and a visible commitment to addressing our energy dependence have made us hostage to OPEC's production decision. It has also encouraged Mexico, our NAFTA partner, to join OPEC in limiting oil supplies.

We all understand that there is no overnight solution to America's energy problems. We can't turn this trend around overnight. Tax repeals and other such short-term actions may appear appealing, given the political climate, and may even provide limited relief in the short run, but they do not provide a solution to our energy problem. They do not provide a sound basis for a national energy policy. Their unintended consequences may be other problems such as deficits in highway and transit funds.

The only way to reverse our energy problem is to have a multifaceted energy strategy and remain committed to that strategy. In my judgment, you need both of these in equal portions. This will send a clear message to OPEC and their partners about America's resolve.

The way to improve our energy outlook is to adopt energy conservation, encourage energy efficiency, and support renewable energy programs. Above all, we must develop energy resources that diversify our energy mix and strengthen our energy security. Natural gas appears to be the most attractive fuel to form the cornerstone of our energy policy. It is the right fuel to bridge the energy and environmental issues facing us.

If we are to have a comprehensive energy policy that strengthens our economy and serves the real needs of Americans, then we need to dismantle our dependence on foreign oil as soon as possible. And the way to do this is to begin using more natural gas—a domestically abundant fuel—that is safe and reliable to deliver, more environmentally friendly than oil, and over three times as energy-efficient as electricity from the point of origin to point of use.

Let me state those facts again: Natural gas is plentiful, efficient, environmentally friendly, and it is a domestic fuel source.

Natural gas offers itself as a good choice for the fuel of the future. It offers us many advantages that other fuels do not. About 85 percent of the natural gas consumed in America each year is produced domestically. The balance is imported almost entirely from Canada. We have a large domestic natural gas resource base and advances in exploration and production technologies are allowing increased production. We also have potentially vast resources in the form of methane hydrates. This resource base is yet to be explored.

Natural gas is the cleanest fossil fuel. Wider use of natural gas will be more benign to the environment compared to some other fuel sources. Natural gas would emit reduced levels of greenhouse gas emissions, and would not contribute to acid rain, smog, solid waste, or water pollution.

We must invest in technologies that help facilitate wider application of natural gas. New technologies such as micro turbines, fuel cells, and other onsite power systems are environmentally attractive. Wider use of these technologies in the private and public sectors must be facilitated. All Federal research and development programs should be reevaluated to provide them with a clear direction. We must boost support for those programs that help replace imported oil.

Transportation demands on imported oil remain as strong as ever. Since the oil shock of the 1970s, all major energy consuming sectors of our economy with the exception of transportation have significantly reduced their dependence on oil. The transportation sector remains almost totally dependent on oil-based motor fuels. The fuel efficiency of our vehicles needs to be improved. At the same time, we must make a concerted effort to encourage development and use of alternative vehicle fuels. Natural gas vehicles should be made an integral part of our transportation sector.

If coal was the energy source of the nineteenth century, and oil was the energy source of the twentieth century, then I submit natural gas can and should be America's source of energy for the twenty-first century.

Americans are demanding an energy system that will guarantee adequate energy for future needs, protect the environment, and protect consumers from exploitation.

We are facing numerous problems related to energy such as runaway prices, shortages, increases in pollution, self-sufficiency, and the effect of energy on our economy. While not a panacea, it is clear to this Senator that increased use

of natural gas must be the center of America's energy strategy.

The American people deserve better than the status quo. Natural gas is America's energy solution.

REMEMBERING THE SACRIFICES MADE FOR FREEDOM

Mr. THURMOND. Mr. President, too often we take our independence for granted, forgetting that countless individuals paid high prices for the privilege of living in a free Nation. Many lost their lives and their families, not to mention their way of life. Recently I received some information from Major George Fisher, Georgia National Guard, regarding the men who signed the Declaration of Independence. Upon having the Congressional Research Service obtain the entire article, I was informed that it had previously been entered in the RECORD by Congressman William L. Springer, Illinois, in July of 1965. The original article was written by T. R. Fehrenbach, an American historian.

In light of the upcoming anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, I believe that this article is worthy of printing again as a reminder of the sacrifices made for our freedom.

I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD, ''What Happened to the Men Who Signed the Declaration of Independence.''

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Congressional Research Service]

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE MEN WHO SIGNED THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE?

(By T. R. Fehrenbach)

On the 7th of June 1776, a slender, keen-eyed Virginia aristocrat named Richard Henry Lee rose to place a resolution before the Second Continental Congress of the United Colonies of North America, meeting in State House off Chestnut Street, in Philadelphia. Lee had his instructions from the Virginia Assembly, and he would fulfill them, but this was one of the hardest days of his life. The 13 British Colonies of America were already far gone in rebellion against what they considered the tyranny of the English Parliament. The shots heard round the world had been fired at Lexington and Concord; blood had flowed at Breed's Hill in Boston.

Lee still believed there was time to compromise with the British Government. But, acting on instructions of his State, he stood and proposed: ''That these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent States, that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the state of Great Britain is, and ought to be, totally dissolved.''

This was no longer opposition to Parliament. It was revolution against the Crown.

American histories sometimes gloss over the fact that passage of the Declaration of Independence was by no means assured. Many of the men assembled in Philadelphia were at best reluctant rebels. There were many moderates among them, men desperately aware of, and fearful of, the fruits of war. Immediately after Lee made his proposal, a majority of the Congress stood against it. It took 4 days of the passion and brilliance of the Adamses of Massachusetts and other patriots such as Virginian Thomas Jefferson to secure a bare majority of one—and then, on a South Carolina resolution, the matter was postponed until the 1st of July.

Many men hoped it had been postponed forever. But John Adams shrewdly gave Thomas Jefferson—unquestionably the best writer in Congress, and perhaps the man with the fewest political enemies—the task of drafting a declaration of independence, and, meanwhile with his fellow Massachusetts man, John Hancock, set to work. What happened between then and the evening of July 4, 1776, when a vote for adoption of one of the world's great documents was carried unanimously, has filled many books. Some of the story—the quarrels, compromises, controversies, and backroom conferences—as Adams admitted, would never be told.

What happened was that in the course of human events the hour had grown later than many of the gentlemen sitting in Philadelphia had realized. State after State instructed delegates to stand for independence, even though some States held back to the last, and finally four delegates resigned rather than approve such a move.

After 4 world-shaking days in July, Thomas Jefferson's shining document was adopted without a dissenting vote, and on July 4 John Hancock signed it as President of Congress, Charles Thomson, Secretary, attesting. Four days later, July 8, ''freedom was proclaimed throughout the land.''

The Declaration of Independence was ordered engrossed on parchment, and August 2, 1776, was set for its formal signing by the 56 Members of Congress. The actual signing of such a document, under British or any other law of the time, was a formal act of treason against the Crown. But every Member eventually—some were absent on August 2—signed.

What sort of men were these, who pledged their ''lives, fortunes, and sacred honor,'' with a British fleet already at anchor in New York Harbor?

For rebels, they were a strange breed. Almost all of them had a great deal of all three things they pledged. Ben Franklin was the only really old man among them; 18 were still under 40, and three still in their twenties. Twenty-four were jurists or lawyers. Eleven were merchants, and nine were landowners or rich farmers. The rest were doctors, ministers, or politicians. With only a very few exceptions, like Samuel Adams of Massachusetts, whom well-wishers furnished a new suit so he might be presentable in Congress, they were men of substantial property. All but two had families, and the vast majority were men of education and standing. In general, each came from what would now be called the ''power structure'' of his home State. They had security as few men had it in the 18th century.

Each man had far more to lose from revolution than he had to gain from it—except where principle and honor were concerned. It was principle, not property, that brought these men to Philadelphia. In no other light can the American Revolution be understood.

John Hancock, who had inherited a great fortune and who already had a price of 500 pounds on his head, signed in enormous letters, so ''that His Majesty could now read his name without glasses, and could now double the reward.'' There was more than one reference to gallows humor that day in August.

Ben Franklin said, ''Indeed we must all hang together. Otherwise we shall most assuredly hang separately.''

And fat Benjamin Harrison, of Virginia, told tiny Elbridge Gerry of Massachusetts, ''With me it will all be over in a minute. But you, you'll be dancing on air an hour after I'm gone.'' These men knew what they risked. The penalty for treason was death by hanging.

William Ellery, of Rhode Island, was curious to see the signers' faces as they committed this supreme act of courage. He inched his way close to the secretary who held the parchment and watched intently. He saw some men sign quickly, to get it done with, and others dramatically draw the moment out. But in no face, as he said, was he able to discern real fear. Stephen Hopkins, Ellery's colleague from Rhode Island, was a man past 60 and signed with a shaking hand. But he snapped, ''My hand trembles, but my heart does not.''

These men were all human, and therefore fallible. The regionalism, backbiting, worries, nepotism, and controversies among this Congress have all had their chroniclers. Perhaps, as Charles Thomson once admitted, the new nation was ''wholly indebted to the agency at Providence for its successful issue.'' But whether America was made by Providence or men, these 56, each in his own way, represented the genius of the American people, already making something new upon this continent.

Whatever else they did, they formalized what had been a brush-popping revolt and gave it life and meaning, and created a new nation, through one supreme act of courage. Everyone knows what came of the Nation they set in motion that day. Ironically, not many Americans know what became of these men, or even who they were.

Some prospered. Thomas Jefferson and John Adams went on to become Presidents. Samuel Adams, John Hancock, Josiah Bartlett, Oliver Wolcott, Edward Rutledge, Benjamin Harrison and Elbridge Gerry lived to become State Governors. Gerry died in office as Monroe's Vice President. Charles Carroll, of Carrollton, Md., who was the richest man in Congress in 1776, and who risked the most, founded the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad in 1828. Most Americans have heard these names.

Other signers were not so fortunate.

The British even before the list was published, marked down all Members of Congress suspected of having put their names to treason. They all became the objects of vicious manhunts. Some were taken; some, like Jefferson, had narrow escapes. All of those who had families or property in areas where British power flowed during the war which followed, suffered.

None actually was hanged. There were too many Britons, like William Pitt, the old Earl of Chatham, who even during a vicious and brutal war would not have stood for that. But in 1776, the war had almost 8 grueling years to run, and the signers suffered. Their fortunes were caught up in the fortunes of war.

The four delegates from New York State were all men of vast property, and they signed the Declaration with a British fleet standing only miles from their homes. By August 2, 1776, the government of New York had already evacuated New York City for White Plains. When they put their names to the Declaration, the four from New York must have known that they were in effect signing their property away.

The British landed three divisions on Long Island on August 27. In a bloody battle, Washington's untrained militia was driven back to Harlem Heights. British and Hessian soldiers now plundered the mansion of signer Francis Lewis at Whitestone; they set it afire and carried his wife way. Mrs. Lewis was treated with great brutality. Though she was exchanged for two British prisoners through the efforts of Congress, she died