

First, it is time to provide significant and real financial rewards for conservation. Everybody talks about conservation. We all know it makes sense to conserve energy. But there are very few actual financial rewards for conserving. I think it is time to put real dollars behind those who are willing to make the tough decisions with respect to conservation. For example, if it is a hardship to move your energy use from peak hours to times when demand is lower, let's reward that financially. Let's reward real-time pricing so as to take steps that are meaningful to decrease electric power shortages that are now causing price spikes and blackouts.

Second, I think it is time to lift the veil of secrecy around energy markets in this country. It is clear that energy is being commoditized, but it is not possible to get real information about supply and demand and transmission, which is what is needed when energy is being bought and sold in markets all across this country.

In electricity markets today, power is, in fact, being traded as a commodity, but basic information about how electric power systems and markets work is just unavailable in much of the United States. If electricity is going to be traded as a commodity, let the Congress take steps to ensure access to information so those markets can function efficiently.

I intend to introduce legislation shortly to ensure that Americans in every part of this country can get access to information about transmission capability, outages, and the information that is needed to be in a position to make energy markets work in a fair way.

Third, to encourage responsible power production, reward developers who demonstrate a commitment to good environmental policy. I do not think energy production and meeting this country's environmental needs ought to be mutually exclusive. There are ways to do both. I think there ought to be an effort by Congress to reward energy developers who meet tough environmental standards by moving them to the head of the line, the head of the queue for permits. This country needs new powerplants. I think there is bipartisan support for that effort. But we ought to say to power producers and power generators, when you are going to be an environmental leader, we are going to move you to the head of the regulatory queue.

Fourth, we need to bring free enterprise back into the energy markets. In my home State of Oregon, four companies essentially control 70 percent of the gas that is sold at the pump. I believe if there were real competition at the gas pump, prices would come down. Competition works in Oregon and across this country. But a variety of anti-competitive practices are squeezing competition out of the oil industry. I do not think it is an accident that people of my State have lost more than

600 gasoline stations in just a few years. It is true in much of the country that three or four companies control delivery of gas at the pump. Unfortunately, the Federal Government seems to have taken the position with respect to competition that, unless you have a handful of big energy producers huddled up, say, at a steak house in a downtown hotel dividing up energy markets, there is really nothing wrong.

In fact, we learned last week that even though west coast gasoline markets are being redlined—there is significant evidence that those west coast gasoline markets are being redlined—the Federal Government is not prepared, under the laws as written today, to take significant action to deal with it.

Just because something is not illegal doesn't mean it is not anti-consumer and that it does not have anti-competitive ramifications. So I think it is extremely important we look now to steps that actually produce competition in the gasoline markets rather than to conclude that just because you do not have energy producers huddled up at a steak house dividing markets everything is all right.

Finally, it seems to me that good science ought to be the basis of a bipartisan effort to address our energy predicament in this country. The Vice President recently stated the United States has to build 1,300 powerplants to meet projected increases in demand for energy over the next 20 years. However, scientists at the Energy Department's National Laboratories recently said that new technologies could reduce projected growth in energy demand by 20 percent to 47 percent, which could translate into as many as 600 fewer powerplants.

Certainly on a bipartisan basis this Senate can agree that we cannot ignore the science. More efficient transmission lines, moving away from the old model of a central powerplant and towards cleaner energy with combustion-free fuel cell technology, is just one of the options available. When it comes to the oil and gas sector, that fuel cell technology could be making cars run cleaner and more efficiently within a few years. Instead of subsidizing just the old fossil fuel industries with an energy proposal that says, go do your thing, our energy policy could be jump-starting a variety of renewable energy technologies with real promise for the future.

What I have discussed today—first, financial rewards for conservation; second, lifting the veil of secrecy around energy markets; third, creating incentives for energy developers to comply with tough environmental laws; fourth, bringing some free enterprise back into energy markets; and, fifth, looking at the science that comes out of the Energy Department itself—are five initiatives that the Senate could use on a bipartisan basis to build a sensible energy policy.

I was struck at the end of last week when the President of the United

States said that Americans should use their tax relief as the primary way to deal with the energy crisis in this country. I don't think Americans ought to have to use their much needed tax relief to prop up misguided energy policies. I think that is just throwing good money after bad. I think it is important—and the distinguished Presiding Officer, the Senator from Kansas, and I have home roots in a place that knows something about energy production—to create incentives for energy production in this country. I think it is possible to do it while rewarding those who are going to meet tough environmental standards.

So I am hopeful that this week, as Congress focuses on energy policies and the President unveils his proposal, that we recognize this country is ready for bold and bipartisan leadership on the energy issue. This Congress can provide it. We can insist on policies that make sense for the environment and for consumers and for the energy industry, but it has to be a policy that says everybody does their fair share. It has to be a policy that says everybody has to be part of the solution and we are not just going to say to the country: You tighten your belts while the power folk get a free ride.

I believe it is possible to bring together responsible leaders in industry, the environmental sector, and the consumer movement to create an energy policy that will get us beyond the very difficult months ahead and build a sound foundation for the future.

I yield the floor.

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

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

The senior assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, 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. THOMAS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to be able to speak for 10 minutes as if in morning business.

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

RURAL MENTAL HEALTH ACCESSIBILITY ACT OF 2001

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, last week we had the opportunity to introduce a bill called the "Rural Mental Health Accessibility Act of 2001."

I am pleased to be joined by Senators CONRAD, DOMENICI, JOHNSON, ROBERTS, and NELSON from Nebraska to bring forward the opportunity for us to strengthen medical provisions for mental health in rural States in particular.

As you might imagine, rural States have many unique problems. We have small towns and small cities where not all medical specialties are present. We

have to build sort of a network of health care for small towns. One of the things that has been most difficult to provide in those rural areas is mental health in small towns where kids need some counseling, and where there are real problems with no one there who is a specialist in mental health.

This Rural Mental Health Accessibility Act reflects on those unique needs and provides States and local communities flexibility.

The Federal programs that assist in health care needs in Wyoming are different than they are in Pennsylvania, or in Rhode Island. We need to have flexibility in all cases, particularly in the case of mental health which is more of a speciality.

This act provides for creative and collaborative provider education to help provide education for the mental health provider so they can come to those rural areas and give some assistance in education.

It increases access to mental services to vulnerable children and seniors in unserved rural areas throughout these States.

Certainly the circumstances are unique. With the stigma associated with mental illness, people do not seek the services. They are not handled there, and it cannot be done easily.

Seventy-five percent of the 518 nationally designated mental health professional shortage areas are located in rural areas, which, I guess, is not hard to understand.

One-fifth of all rural communities have no mental health services of any kind.

Frontier communities have even more drastic numbers. Ninety-five percent have no psychiatrists. Sixty-eight percent have no psychologists. Seventy-eight percent have no social workers.

You can see that it is really necessary to have a network where people can move around to provide the services that the communities do not have.

Suicide rates among rural children and adolescents are higher in urban areas. That is a very surprising statistic. We don't think of it that way. In fact, it is true.

Twenty percent of the Nation's elderly population lives in rural areas. Only 9 percent of our Nation's physicians practice in rural areas.

Often the primary care physicians are the only ones who are the source of treatment in these particular areas.

Primary care physicians do not necessarily have the specialized training in terms of mental health.

To address these issues, this bill does the following: Create the Mental Health Community Education Grant Program; States and communities to conduct targeted public education campaigns focused on mental illness, focused on suicide, and focused on substance abuse. These are things that all communities to some extent are trying to keep out of the public eye, kind of acting as if it really isn't true. But, in-

deed, we know that it is, and especially in rural communities.

I must tell you, frankly, that I am surprised at the suicide rate in a rural State such as Wyoming, which is higher than most places. It really points out the need for the kind of health services that we are hoping to provide.

It creates an Interdisciplinary Grant Program; permits universities and other entities to establish interdisciplinary training programs so they can provide, hopefully, training for these kinds of health providers.

Mental health and primary care providers are taught side by side in the classroom, so that with clinical training in rural areas we can help provide for all of these kinds of needs that exist. We encourage more collaboration, certainly, amongst providers, so we can have this network we talk about.

It actually authorizes \$30 million for 20 mental telehealth demonstration projects. And it is equally divided. I think as we get more and more into high-tech telemedicine, it will be even more important. Of course, to do that you have to have equipment, you have to have people on both ends who have some training to provide these kinds of services.

It provides mental health services to children and elderly residents at long-term care facilities located in mental health shortage areas.

Projects also provide mental illness education and targeted instruction on coping and dealing with the stressful experiences of childhood, adolescence and aging. One might even think it is appropriate where we have some of the kinds of problems we have in public schools. There is often the necessity to have help in these stressful experiences.

It requires a study. The Director of the National Institute of Mental Health of the Office of Rural Health Policy will report to Congress on the efficacy and effectiveness of mental telemedicine.

So I think it is something that is very much needed, something we can help provide in communities where it does not now exist. Frankly, without some special assistance, it probably will not exist in the foreseeable future.

There are a number of supporting organizations. The Rural Mental Health Accessibility Act is strongly supported by the National Rural Health Association, the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill, the American Psychiatric Association, and the American Psychological Association.

So I believe it is critically important that we consider this legislation as we talk about health care. Again, I cannot overemphasize the need for flexibility and taking a look at all the areas to be served. It is one thing to serve in a downtown metropolitan center—and they have their difficulties, of course—but it is also difficult to serve in Medicine Bow, WY, where you have to reach out from somewhere else to bring in

people to provide these kinds of services.

So, first of all, I thank the Presiding Officer for being a sponsor, but also I thank him for the time and the support he has given to helping those in need of health care and mental health care.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The senior assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. NELSON of Nebraska). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, I believe we are in an hour of time allocated to the Senator from Wyoming.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 2 p.m. is under the control of the Senator from Wyoming, Mr. THOMAS, or his designee.

TAXES

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, I rise to talk, again, about taxes.

The legislation now before the Senate includes education, which we will be debating this afternoon and which we will be working on until the tax bill comes from the committee, and taxes—probably two of the most important issues the Senate will address this year. Certainly everyone is most interested in education, and there are a number of broad topics within education that are legitimate to discuss. One of them is the role of the Federal Government in financing education.

Most would agree that the basic responsibility for elementary and secondary education lies with local government and State government. Traditionally, the Federal Government has provided about 7 percent of the total financing for education. It is an important contribution but certainly a relatively small one in terms of the total cost.

One of the other issues will be that of deciding how much flexibility there will be in terms of expending Federal moneys made available, whether or not, as was the case in the last administration, where the dollars which were allocated to education were generally assigned to the purpose for which they were allocated, either for smaller classrooms or for building improvements, new buildings, in reality, the real decision as to how moneys are used by local districts ought to be what the way local leaders believe they should be.

The needs are quite different in one place or another. I come from a State of small communities. The needs there are quite different often than they would in be in downtown Pittsburgh, PA. We need flexibility.

There will also be and there have been, in fact, great discussions about the amount of money that ought to be