

But we have wasted the past decade in a political impasse, and we have failed to do what I think we know how to do best. If we do pursue what I just talked about—providing the economic incentives for the development and proliferation of solar, wind, biomass, hydrogen, and other clean technologies—then we can carry a new message to the rest of the world that takes away the regressive record of the last years and reasserts a kind of credibility that is important to the negotiating process.

I might add, everyone should understand this is not just about global warming. People are always talking about the confrontation between the environment and the economy. But the fact is, we can create tens of thousands of jobs pursuing these alternatives. In addition to that, we would have wide-ranging domestic benefits, including reduced local air and water pollution, preventing respiratory and other illnesses. All you have to do is look at the incidence of child respiratory disease in our country, the increase in the incidence of asthma, including in adults, the remarkable increase in our hospital costs as a consequence of air pollution- and water pollution-carried diseases and illnesses.

We would lessen our dependence on imported oil. We would lessen the pressure to exploit our own natural lands. We would create markets for farmers. We would grow jobs and exports in the energy sector. We would enhance our overall economic strength by strengthening our technological sector. And we would ultimately strengthen our national security as a consequence of these measures.

Those are not small accomplishments, let alone what we would accomplish with respect to global warming. So we have a challenge in front of us. We need to recognize we have been going backwards. We are at 1980 levels in automobiles because of the loophole on SUVs. There are countless numbers of things we could do on building efficiencies in America, countless numbers of things we could do for various engines and air-conditioners, and other emitters of greenhouse gases, if we were to try to apply the technological capacity of our country to that endeavor.

So my hope is this administration will recognize the energy study done 2 years ago which said that if we were to try to implement what we know we can do today—what IBM, Polaroid, and these other companies are doing today—we could, in fact, do so in a way that is completely neutral to our economy. We could have the upside of gains on addressing global warming while having the upside on our economy.

We should begin with steps that benefit the environment and the economy and are technologically achievable today. We can and should increase the efficiency of automobiles, homes, buildings, appliances and manufacturing.

The efficiency of the average American passenger vehicle has been declining since 1987 and is now at its lowest since 1980. That is unacceptable. Our cars and trucks could and should be increasingly more efficient not less efficient. Despite doubling auto efficiency since 1975, we are actually now backsliding. It is time to update national standards for vehicle efficiency. It is time to get more efficient gasoline, diesel, natural gas, hybrid and fuel cell vehicles off the drawing board and onto America's highways. We can do it. We are doing it. Hybrids, once considered exotic, are on the market today getting 50 miles to a gallon.

We can improve the efficiency of residential and commercial buildings. I am a cosponsor of the Energy Efficient Buildings Incentives Act. It is a bipartisan proposal to provide tax incentives for efficiency improvements in new and existing buildings. Once implemented it would cut carbon emissions by over 50 million metric tons per year by 2010 and provide a direct economic savings that will exceed \$40 billion.

We can strengthen efficiency standards for clothes washers, refrigerators, heat pumps, air conditioners and other appliances. Standards issued in 1997 and earlier this year by the Department of Energy must be fully and effectively implemented. The net energy savings to the nation will be \$27 billion by 2030. The environmental benefits include a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions equal to taking more than 14 million cars off the road.

We must push the deployment of domestic, reliable and renewable energy from wind, solar, biomass and geothermal by creating markets and providing financial incentives. Today, California gets 12 percent of its energy from renewable energy while the rest of the country gets less than 2 percent of its electricity from renewable energy. We need to do a better job. Our nation has great potential for wind power—not only in states like North Dakota, South Dakota or Iowa but also in coastal states like Massachusetts. Planning is underway for an offshore wind farm off the coast of Massachusetts that will be generating as much as 400 megawatts of power—enough to power 400,000 homes.

We have only begun to tap the potential of geothermal in Western states and biomass, which can produce energy from farm crops, forest products and waste. But to seize this potential we must create the markets and financial incentives that will draw investment, invention and entrepreneurship. Unfortunately, America is falling behind. One of the challenges in wind development is long delays in purchasing equipment from European suppliers who have the best technologies but also long delays because of rapidly growing demand. I believe American companies should be the technological leaders supplying American projects—instead it's European firms. We must create the market and the incentives

for these technologies and let America's entrepreneurs meet the demand.

Finally, we must look to the long term. If we are ever to convince the developing world that there is a better way, we must create that better way. To do so, we must invest in solving this problem with the same urgency that we have invested in space exploration, military technology and other national priorities. For too long our investments have been scatter shot and poorly coordinated—and lacked the intensity we need. We need a single effort, with strong leadership, that investigates how we meet this challenge and sets a path for a sustainable future.

If we do this, if we act early and invest in the future, I am confident our investment will be rewarded. It will bolster our economy, make us more energy independent, protect the public health and strengthen our national security. Unlike today, America will be the leader in clean energy technologies and we will export them to the world. As America has throughout our history, we will lead in finding a global solution—and we will protect the global environment for generations to come.

That is the challenge. I hope the Senate and House will show leadership in engaging in that effort.

I thank the Chair and I thank everybody else in delaying a little bit. I yield the floor.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now stand in recess until the hour of 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, at 1:04 p.m., the Senate recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. NELSON of Florida).

BETTER EDUCATION FOR STUDENTS AND TEACHERS ACT—Continued

AMENDMENT NO. 536

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I yield 10 minutes to the Senator from Connecticut.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, I thank my friend from New Hampshire.

I rise this afternoon to express my support for the amendment offered by my colleague from New Hampshire which would create a Federal private school choice demonstration project. This amendment closely tracks choice proposals that I have cosponsored myself, both with Senator GREGG and, before him, with Senator Coats of Indiana.

This is an experimental program. It is designed to test an idea that can help some of our children get a better education. It is focused exclusively on