

Recently this body voted on a tax bill that allows taxpayers to keep more of their hard-earned money in an attempt to jump-start this economy. The tax cut was passed on the premise that consumers and businesses are better suited than government to make sound economic decisions that translate into economic growth. That same premise applies to energy. Yet the Energy bill under debate tosses that premise out the window. Suddenly the consumers and businesses of this country, which we are trusting to make sound economic decisions to put the whole economy back on track, cannot be trusted to make sound energy decisions. Instead, we are dictating their energy choices for them. No body of persons, not even a panel of 100 of the world's most brilliant economists, let alone the Senate of the United States, has the knowledge, wisdom or foresight to make such decisions rationally for millions of American citizens.

Let's take a look at what this bill would do. It mandates greater use of ethanol, a fuel that is already heavily subsidized. Without subsidies and mandates, ethanol would virtually cease to exist as a motor fuel. It subsidizes renewable energies such as wind power, which again would not survive in the competitive marketplace due to the high cost and low value of the electricity produced. It subsidizes coal, already the most plentiful and affordable energy source in this country. Coal power will continue to thrive in this country whether subsidized or not, as long as we don't regulate it out of existence, yet we are providing subsidies for coal power. This bill subsidizes nuclear power, which would probably be competitive were it not for the onerous regulatory restrictions that needlessly burden that industry. The list goes on.

Let me suggest that the greatest obstacle to affordable and reliable energy in this country is the U.S. Government. Before this body looks outward for solutions to our energy problems, it should look inward. It should identify those laws, regulations, and other Government impediments that prevents this country's citizens and businesses from making sound energy decisions. We encumber the U.S. energy economy with all sorts of onerous and often unneeded and outmoded rules that raise the cost of energy and distort energy markets. Instead of fixing this state of affairs, this bill compounds these errors by further raising the cost of energy to American taxpayers and further distorting energy markets through subsidies.

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, I rise today to speak to an amendment to fix a funding gap that exists for meritorious Women's Business Centers that are graduating from the first stage of the program and entering the sustainability portion.

I would like to first thank Senator SNOWE, Chair of the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, for working very closely with me on

this issue. Her leadership and support has been invaluable. I would also like to thank Senator BINGAMAN for his support on this issue. As a long-time ally of the Women's Business Centers and all SBA programs, his assistance on this amendment has been very helpful. Last, I want to express my gratitude to Senators HARKIN, EDWARDS, CANTWELL, ENZI and DOMENICI, as well as Congressman MCINTYRE, for their backing and for their hard work to resolve this issue.

As I have said on more than one occasion, women business owners do not get the recognition they deserve for their contribution to our economy: Eighteen million Americans would be without jobs today if it weren't for these entrepreneurs who had the courage and the vision to strike out on their own. For 18 years, as a member of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, I have worked to increase the opportunities for these enterprising women in a variety of ways, leading to greater earning power, financial independence, and asset accumulation. These are more than words. For these women, it means having a bank account, buying a home, sending their children to college, calling the shots.

And helping them at every step are the Women's Business Centers. In 2002 alone, these centers helped 85,000 women with the business counseling and assistance they likely could not find anywhere else. Cutting funding for any centers would be harmful to the centers, to the women they serve, to their States, and to the national economy.

The funding gap for Women's Business Centers in sustainability exists because the Small Business Administration has chosen to short-change existing, proven centers in order to open new, unproven ones. By incorrectly interpreting the funding formula set up in the Women's Business Centers program, the SBA has made way for new centers at the expense of those that are already established. This is both bad policy and contrary to congressional intent.

As the author of the Women's Business Centers Sustainability Act of 1999, I can tell you that when the Women's Business Centers Sustainability Act of 1999 was signed into law, it was Congress's intent to protect the established and successful infrastructure of worthy, performing centers. The law was designed to allow all graduating Women's Business Centers that meet certain SBA standards to receive continued funding under sustainability grants, while still allowing for new centers—but not by penalizing those that have already demonstrated their worth.

Currently there are 81 Women's Business Centers in 48 States. Forty-six of these are in the initial program, 29 are already in sustainability, and 6 more are graduating or have graduated from the initial program and are now apply-

ing for sustainability grants. Because of these potentially 6 new sustainability centers—from Georgia, Iowa, Illinois, North Carolina, Texas, and Washington State—and because the SBA is incorrectly interpreting the funding formula for sustainability grants in order to open new centers, the amount of funds reserved for Women's Business Centers in sustainability must be increased from 30.2 percent to 36 percent.

This amendment does just that. It directs the SBA to reserve 36 percent of the appropriated funds for the sustainability portion of the Women's Business Centers program—even though the SBA already has the authority on its own to increase the reserve—thereby protecting the established Women's Business Centers from almost certain grant funding cuts and still providing enough funds to open six or more new centers across the country.

I want to again express my sincere and steadfast support for the growing community of women entrepreneurs across the Nation and for the invaluable programs through which the SBA provides women business owners with the tools they need to succeed. As a long-time advocate for women entrepreneurs and SBA's programs, my record in support of the SBA's women's programs and for women business owners speaks for itself. I have continually fought for increased funding for the women's programs at the SBA, for sustaining and expanding the women's business centers, and for giving women entrepreneurs their deserved representation within the Federal procurement process, to name a few. With respect to laws assisting women-owned businesses, I have been proud to either introduce the underlying legislation or strongly advocate to ensure their passage and adequate funding.

This amendment is necessary to continue the good work of SBA's Women's Business Center network, and I urge all of my colleagues to support it.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that we proceed to a period of morning business.

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

EULOGY OF DAVE DEBUSSCHERE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I read in a number of national publications brief excerpts of the eulogy that former Senator Bill Bradley gave at the funeral of Dave Debusschere. The paragraphs I saw were really moving.

I was able to obtain a copy of the full eulogy that Senator Bradley gave on May 19 at St. Joseph's Church in Garden City, NY. It is really, truly, a moving eulogy. It outlines the context and the relationship of Dave Debusschere and Bill Bradley and other members of the New York Knicks team, but especially those two who were roommates