

## ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. REID. I ask that when we move to the welfare bill, TANF, that on our side for 30 minutes 7 minutes be given to our manager, Senator BAUCUS; 7 minutes to Senator KENNEDY, the ranking member of the full committee; 5 minutes to Senator REED from Rhode Island; and 5 minutes to Senator BOXER from California.

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

The Senator from Wyoming.

## ENERGY POLICY

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, I rise to speak about where we are, where we are going, and some of the difficulties we are finding in getting there. I was listening earlier as the Senator from New York and the Senator from Illinois were discussing some of the issues they consider to be problems with this administration.

They talked about the cost of energy. One of the reasons we are having some problems with the cost of energy is we have not been able to get an Energy bill passed that gives us any direction because it has been obstructed by the other side of the aisle, and it continues to be. So that is not a surprise.

They talked a lot about the health care problems. One of the reasons we have health care problems is the obstruction on the other side that will not allow us to move forward with malpractice insurance.

The same thing, of course, is true with Medicare. They were critical of doing something with Medicare. I remind my colleagues this is the first time in 30 years we have done something to help change Medicare, and it is going to be implemented over a period of time because there will need to be some changes in it. For the first time, people will be given an opportunity to get pharmaceuticals at less cost, and we will begin to have an opportunity to change Medicare from the way it was originally structured. It is very difficult to do that with the obstruction on the other side.

It is frustrating to be in the Senate where we are supposed to be making decisions, supposed to be moving forward. We do not all agree, that is certainly true, but we do have a system that allows us to go forward. That is what votes are for, but we cannot take votes. We continue to sit here and only talk about things.

I am particularly interested in the energy issue, of course. I think it is certainly one that we have talked about for a very long time. It now becomes more important because of the cost increases, because of the difficulties we are having with energy. It begins to be more apparent that we need to have an energy policy that has some plans for where we go over the next 5 or 10 years. We need to do that as soon as we can.

One of the things the Bush administration, Vice President CHENEY and the

President, did was to seek to have an energy policy. All we have heard are complaints and criticisms and still there is obstruction to having an energy policy, when it is so clear that that is precisely what we need to have.

We have higher gas prices at the pumps, partly because OPEC has backed off somewhat, but also because we have made it necessary for refiners to put into place about 18 different combinations of fuel. There have been unexpected disruptions from Venezuela and elsewhere. We are having higher home heating bills because of the stress on natural gas where the consumption is going up much faster than the production, and it is predicted to do that in the future for some time.

So we are still talking about these issues. People are more aware of them because of the blackout, because of the cost, and because of the difficulties. So we need to make some changes, but we need a policy. We are not talking about all that we can do instantly. We are saying we need a general policy, and that is what this policy is. It has to do with alternative sources. It has to do with efficiency. It has to do with conservation. It has to do with more research so that, for instance, there can be more clean coal burned.

Today, the Wall Street Journal said finally people are saying we are having trouble with natural gas because of the demand, but coal is the fuel that we have with the most fossil reserves in this country, and we can do it in a clean way. Particularly, western coal is low in Btu and low in CO<sub>2</sub>.

We need to be moving in that direction. We need a balanced bill, and there are things we can do to accomplish that. We are going to have to change the fuels over a period of time.

Some, particularly on the other side of the aisle, say: Oh, well, we have to start using alternatives up to 40 percent in the next 5 years.

Right now, of all of our energy production, 3 percent is produced by alternatives such as wind. We can do much more in the future, and we hope that we do, but we cannot turn that corner right away. It is a very difficult thing to do.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The time of the Senator from Wyoming has expired.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, I certainly urge that we stop obstructing and move forward with an energy policy.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming yields the floor.

The Senator from Oregon is recognized for 10 minutes.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask the Senator if he will yield for a unanimous consent.

Mr. SMITH. Yes, I yield to the Senator from Nevada.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, our remaining time will be yielded to the Senator from Wisconsin, Mr. FEINGOLD.

## THE DREAD OF ELECTION YEAR POLITICS

Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, as the new year arrived, I looked to coming back to Congress with, frankly, a sense of dread because I knew we were entering a political year, a year where the stakes are high, and the President stands for reelection. I knew there would be an awful lot of my work and the work of all of us tied up in partisan gamesmanship.

I will confess to my colleagues, I do not much enjoy it. I look at my friend from Nevada, Senator REID, and I see a great human being. When I look at Senator FEINGOLD, I see another great human being. I love the message of compassion of the Democratic Party. I know where their hearts are. This is not about good people or bad people. This is about competing ideas.

But because I had that view—my father was a Republican, and my mother, a Udall from Arizona—I understand good people can differ on these issues. Because of that sort of bipartisan approach to life I have always had, in my former life as a businessman, as candidates for public office would come to our company and ask to meet with us and our employees, I welcomed Democrats and Republicans alike equally.

Unfortunately, what I often came away with was the feeling those on the Democratic side loved my employees but they hated employers. That is because they would demand we create jobs and then they would say the way you do that is you raise the minimum wage, increase your regulations, and raise your taxes. I came to understand by doing the books, by doing accounting, one of my most significant costs was Government overhead.

All of them are well meaning. But all of them make it more difficult for capital to come together so labor can be given work to do.

As my colleagues have come to the floor and complained about various aspects of this current obstructionist period—you know, we talk about medical liability, the Senator from Wyoming talked about energy, others have talked about judges—I have to talk today about the whole issue of FSC/ETI and how critical it is we find a way through this morass of partisanship to getting this bill done. What we do by failing the American people is to impose on manufacturers a European tax and a penalty to American potential for creating jobs. I don't think that is what Senators intend, but that is what is happening if we don't get FSC/ETI through this process.

As I mentioned earlier, I love the compassion I hear from my Democratic friends. Yet when I look at some of the policies that are advanced, what I see are policies designed to make the United States more like Western Europe, more like socialist democratic welfare states.

I recently had an experience on a trip with Senator SHELBY and Senator CANTWELL when we had traveled to