

gallon gasoline. And in particular, I am concerned that all of the evidence showed that this spring we would have these problems.

The administration, for example, has given Congress a variety of reports about how post-Katrina we would have evidence of a supply problem. With respect to the changeover from MTBE to ethanol, all the evidence was available many months ago. The Wall Street Journal was warning about it—that there would be huge logistical problems for service stations and others to make that changeover.

We know that ethanol—and the Senator from Illinois has been one of the leaders in this effort—is going to play an important role in America's gasoline future. Given that, this should have been an all-hands-on-deck approach at the administration trying to watchdog the transition from MTBE to ethanol. This is an administration with enormous expertise in the oil area. For all practical purposes, this is an administration that is almost marinated in oil. One official after another has a history and a background in this sector. Yet where was the Department of Energy? Where was the Environmental Protection Agency? Where was the Commodity Futures Trading Commission at a key time in our country's energy future?

With all the problems overseas—Nigeria, Venezuela, and Iraq producing a tiny fraction of what they were able to produce before the war—we knew that this was going to be a difficult time this spring.

I talked to a gasoline station owner last night. I pulled up and was faced with the prospect of \$3.25 a gallon. That station owner said: Nobody gave us any information at all about how to proceed in this significant switchover from MTBE to ethanol.

They have to clean their tanks. There are tremendous logistical problems and a different role for transportation with respect to trucks and rails versus pipelines. Normally, you would have taken a much longer period of time to make this changeover. That wasn't done.

So the administration should have been there working with the service station owners and the oil companies and a variety of parties to try to minimize the problems when you are having this massive transition in the energy area. So we are going to see instances where people try to exploit the situation. I hope we can get the Federal Trade Commission off the dime and finally go out and take the steps to protect the public from this exploitation.

It was known a year ago that this was a time when we would have a perfect energy storm. We knew we were going to have the equivalent of what amounts to a level 5 hurricane in the gasoline market. Yet the folks in the administration sat on their hands. It did not have to be that way.

I want to work in a bipartisan way to turn this around. Unfortunately, the

same kind of bumbling and bungling approach that was taken in responding to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita has driven our gasoline prices over \$3 a gallon. We ought to come together. I recommended yesterday in a lengthy speech a variety of steps we could take in the short term—for example, helping the States to make this transition to ethanol easier. We can do it in a bipartisan way. If it were not for the bungling of this administration over the last year and its failure to take the steps that could have prevented much of what we have seen, we would not have to come to this point. That is unfortunate. The American people have been gratuitously hammered again. It didn't have to be.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Texas.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I have been listening to the debate in the Senate. Senator CORNYN is going to respond in a little more detail. Honestly, it is very important we address the energy issue in a way that suggests what we can do. The people of America are not interested in Democratic charges against Republicans and Republican charges against Democrats. They want more resources so the price of gasoline at the pump will come down.

In my hometown of Dallas, there are shortages now in addition to the high prices. We need to do some things that diversify our resources so we depend on our own resources for oil and natural gas. That means drilling for oil in our country and trying to make sure we have conservation and alternative sources of energy, which is exactly what Congress has been trying to do. We have been held up in doing it.

I appreciate very much this opportunity. I am very pleased to work with my colleague, Senator CORNYN.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I will use a few minutes to respond to some of the voices that have been raised regarding the fuel prices. Of course, this is an issue that affects everyone. It is ironic that those who have railed the loudest against high gasoline prices are the ones who indeed are responsible for obstructing rational energy policy in this country that would bring down the price of gasoline itself.

For example, we all know that the global competition for oil and gas is greater with the industrialization and growth of countries such as China, with 1.3 billion people, with the growth and industrialization of countries such as India. But notwithstanding the need to diversify our energy sources to nuclear energy and use the 300 years of coal we have in this country in a clean and environmentally sensitive way, we have been met with nothing but obstruction when it comes to trying to both diversify our energy sources and to undertake policies that would literally bring down the price of gasoline at the pump.

It is no secret the single greatest factor in high gasoline prices is high oil prices. We have simply been denied

every opportunity we have tried to undertake to expand domestic production at home by exploring places such as the Arctic Wildlife Refuge in an environmentally responsible way and drilling offshore in America in a way that can preserve both the environment but also increase the supply of oil and help bring down the price of gas.

Congress can do a lot of things, but we cannot repeal the laws of supply and demand. Without additional supply, we know with additional demand, prices will continue to go up. Because of obstruction and unreasonable regulation we have not seen a new refinery built in this country in the last 30 years.

Our time would be used more productively if our colleagues across the aisle would work with us to diversify and expand the sources of domestic energy so we can help bring down the price at the pump. It would be much more constructively used if we work together rather than attempting to score political points and to place the blame in a political season.

I yield the floor.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF GRAY HAMPTON MILLER TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session for consideration of Calendar No. 602, which the clerk will report.

Under the previous order, there will be 5 minutes for the Senator from Texas.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Gray Hampton Miller, of Texas, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Texas.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Texas.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I take this opportunity to talk about Gray Miller. Senator CORNYN and I are dividing this time because we are both responsible for nominating this incredible person to serve on the Federal district bench from the southern district of Texas in his hometown of Houston.

Senator CORNYN and I have a process. We have a committee made up of Republicans and Democrats, geographically diverse, lawyers respected in their fields, who interview all of the nominees for Federal benches. There were quite a few nominees, probably 15 to 20, for this particular bench. They rank them. Senator CORNYN and I then talked to the top 3 or 4 nominees. It has been a great system. We have gotten extremely qualified judges on the