

that focuses on the tragedy associated with child abuse, but also more constructively and optimistically about what we need to do. That is called Childhelp, stationed in Arizona. Senator KYL is very familiar with it.

One huge disappointment, though, that occurred this week is that we passed another bill 2 days ago, the Child Custody Protection Act, which focuses on a real tragedy that occurs today, and that is young girls taken, not by their parents, across State lines in order to get an abortion without notifying their parents, flouting the law and not notifying their parents or getting the consent of their parents.

We passed that bill overwhelmingly, with 65 votes, on the floor of the Senate. It passed the House of Representatives months ago, and we are ready to go to conference on that particular bill.

It is very important we go to conference to put an end to this tragedy which occurs all too often in this country. We tried to go to conference. The Democrats on the other side specifically rejected our proposal to go to conference. We put forth a unanimous consent request which was denied, and that is a real tragedy.

I will not proffer that unanimous consent request again right now, but we will be doing so over the coming days. The Democrats have made it very clear that they are going to obstruct the regular order of business in going to conference. I am very disappointed, and I think it is absolutely wrong.

ORDER FOR RECESS

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate stand in recess under the previous order, following the remarks of Senator SESSIONS for up to 10 minutes.

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

GULF OF MEXICO ENERGY BILL

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I thank the leader, and I join with him in his excitement in seeing the health care technology bill move. I know how much work he has put into it as a member of the HELP Committee. I have watched that bill for some time, and it would be a tremendous thing. It will save lives and reduce errors. Errors mean people stay in hospitals longer and become disabled more, and many of them die. So reducing errors is a great thing and will help us maintain this fabulous health care system we have, and at the same time, not have costs go through the roof. So I am excited about that also.

Mr. President, I asked the question earlier: What are people objecting to about this Energy bill? We went through the environmental concerns, and I pointed out that we have 4,000 wells which survived some vicious hur-

ricanes, and we haven't had spills. The technology has increased incredibly well. There has not been a significant spill in 26 years, and that one was such that it did not reach the shores of the United States. The last spill that resulted at all from a well impacting the coastal areas was 37 years ago in California, and that ended the drilling off the coast. But we are so much better today. We have so many ways to avoid that, and it is just not happening.

Also, we dealt with the allegation that this is all for big oil companies.

That is exactly wrong.

All of the oil companies will not bid on the lands in the gulf that will be allowed for production under this legislation. Most of them—probably most of them—won't even bid on it. A number will and a number won't. Those who don't bid already have reserves somewhere else, and sizable increases in production of natural gas or oil from the Gulf of Mexico will drive down the value of their reserves. They probably don't even want the oil and gas produced out there, if they already have substantial reserves. That is a bogus argument, the kind that I hope is beyond the Senate. But I hear it is still echoing a bit.

I think some maybe just hate fossil fuels, so they don't want us to have fossil fuels anymore in America. I would like to see us move to nuclear and do some other things, too. Why don't they object to us going down to Venezuela and paying hundreds of millions of dollars to Hugo Chavez for his oil that we bring over here or Saudi Arabia or Iran's oil or Middle Eastern oil in any number of areas or Russian oil and gas. We are not going to stop this. We are going to use oil and gas in America, so why don't we produce it on our lands and keep our money at home.

I would just note that last year, in the balance of payments deficit that we have, the record balance of payments deficit, \$200 billion of that deficit was our money we spent in other countries for oil and gas—\$200 billion. That is a lot. A big part of our trade deficit is on this one resource. So why in the world wouldn't we want to keep that money at home to produce jobs here, to produce incomes to Americans who will pay taxes to the U.S. Government instead of having to go to these other countries.

Oddly, I just have to note parenthetically that we have done something after many years of battling that is important. In the Energy bill we passed last year, we had some improvements in the law relating to nuclear power. Nuclear power can reduce our demands for natural gas significantly. There was a long battle over a number of years. Senator DOMENICI worked on it hard. We made those changes, we put them in the law, and at that time we had not a single preliminary request for building a nuclear power plant in this country. Since that Energy bill passed, there are now 18 out there—18 preliminary requests—to consider building a

nuclear powerplant in America. We haven't built one in 30 years in this country.

What I am saying to the American people who may be listening tonight, and to my colleagues, is that our job is not to help nuclear power companies. Our job is not to help oil companies.

Our job is to try to provide safe and environmentally good energy sources to our people at the lowest possible rate. When the price of gasoline goes up substantially, people who are paying \$150 a month for their gasoline now may be paying \$225 a month. They may be paying \$75 more each month out of their paycheck, money that they want to spend on their children, money they need to repair their vehicle, money they need to pay their rent. People are struggling. We need to be thinking of ways to reduce the cost of energy. Nuclear power is one of those ways.

I have just had a recent meeting with the people at TVA, the Tennessee Valley Authority, created by Government agents, created by Franklin Roosevelt. They are producing nuclear power at about 1.2 cents a kilowatt hour—1.2 cents. Coal is about 1.8 cents. That is 50 percent more expensive. Nuclear power is 50 percent less expensive than coal. And natural gas that is being used quite a bit is about 6 cents—five times as much. So we need more nuclear power and we need to burn a lot less natural gas for electricity and we can burn less coal also because it is not a very clean fuel. We are doing better with coal, but it is still not nearly as clean as nuclear power.

So I say there is a whole host of things we can do to meet the legitimate pleas of our constituents to do something about the high cost of energy.

Natural gas heats a great many homes in America. It provides the energy for all kinds of industrial production. I visited a chemical plant recently. They are exceedingly concerned about the additional costs they have sustained simply as a result of the doubling of the price of natural gas. Trust me. If these wells are producing in the gulf, as will be authorized by this bill, it will significantly impact the price of natural gas in the United States. So that is the kind of approach we are trying to bring to bear on producing more at home.

Then there is one other argument that people have complained about, and that is revenue sharing. They say that States should not get any of the money out of this. We have been trying to expand the gulf drilling for quite a number of years and had no success, really. It is time to get serious about it. I believe we can make a breakthrough this year. We got, now, both Senators from Florida to say they would support this bill. They studied it very carefully, as strongly as Florida is committed to environmental purity along their coast. I respect it, but I am telling you they are very committed to it. They want us to produce our oil and