

Costco in Minneapolis just to save some money.

Even the senior Senator from New York got in on the act, though mostly as an excuse to go after the 2001 and 2003 tax cuts. I am not sure how this was relevant to gas prices. Maybe he thought people would feel better if they realized they'd be even worse off if we hadn't cut their taxes.

But to all our friends on the other side who have spoken about the crushing effects of high gas prices, I would simply add that they are right on target. High gas prices do affect everything. High gas prices do hurt. And I would also add this: Democrats in Congress have no plan to lower them.

In a month when gas prices have hit record highs, Democrats have proposed three things: a massive carbon tax, a tax on energy companies, and allowing trial lawyers to sue our trading partners. This isn't an energy plan. It is a caricature. It is a caricature of a party that seems incapable of conceiving any solution to any problem that doesn't involve taxation or litigation.

With gas prices causing unprecedented pain at the pump for working Americans, Democrats have responded by trying to raise taxes that we know will be passed onto consumers. Ignoring the iron laws of supply and demand, they insist that high gas prices must be the result of some corporate plot instead. But the current crisis is a supply and demand problem—not a supply and demand and litigation problem, not a supply and demand and taxation problem, a supply and demand problem.

It is fairly straightforward: at the moment, there's greater demand than supply. And last year, Republicans joined Democrats in addressing demand by passing the first increase in national fuel efficiency standards in more than 30 years. We have also tried to address the supply problem by increasing production of American energy. At every turn, we have been blocked.

Since 1991, the Senate has voted a dozen times on allowing limited exploration in a small portion of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. A Democrat President has vetoed it or Democrats have blocked it every single time. When he did it, incidentally, gas at the pump was \$1.06 a gallon.

Last year, the Senate voted on proposals to expand refinery capacity, invest in coal-to-liquid technology, and open up more domestic reserves. Democrats blocked each one.

Last year, Republicans proposed allowing Virginia to go forward with deep sea exploration off its coast—something that Virginia, under a Democratic Governor, wants. Democrats in Congress said no.

Republicans have tried to allow the use of oil shale from Western States as an alternative to foreign oil. Democrats imposed an oil-shale ban in last year's Omnibus Appropriations bill.

Last month, Republicans tried to increase production of American energy again, along with an increase in sup-

port for clean energy technology and plug-in hybrid vehicles. Democrats said no.

And just last week, I offered an amendment to ensure that if the Boxer climate tax bill caused gas prices to go up, we would suspend its provisions. Democrats blocked that too.

For years, Democrats have blocked every effort to increase the production of American energy and help bring gas prices down. They have said no to States that want to allow for deep sea exploration off their shores. They have blocked the use of oil shale. They have blocked a dozen efforts to open a small portion of ANWR for environmentally sensitive exploration, which—if it had not been vetoed 13 years ago—would be providing a million barrels of oil a day to American consumers right now.

That's twice as much as the senior Senator from New York wants us to beg from the Saudis. And now, they want to raise gas prices even more through higher taxes.

It should be abundantly clear by now to anyone who is paying attention that our friends on the other side have no serious plan for lowering gas prices. As the record suggests, their primary concern is blocking increased production, which has inexorably led to record gas prices.

If people are being forced to change their lifestyles, if the price of goods is skyrocketing, that is apparently all right, according to our friends on the other side. Their Presidential nominee even admits it. He says the high price of gas isn't the problem. The problem, he says, is that prices went up too quickly. If he had his way, he would have raised prices much more slowly.

He would have preferred that gas prices go up more slowly than the \$1 increase we have seen under the new Democrat Congress over the last year.

He would have preferred they go up more slowly than the astonishing \$1.73 increase per gallon of gasoline we have seen just in the 17 months since Democrats took over Congress in January 2007.

As the Democrat nominee put it in an interview earlier this week, he would have preferred a "gradual readjustment" in gas prices, presumably so Americans wouldn't notice the shock of it.

We used to think \$4 a gallon gasoline was unthinkable. Our friends on the other side were apparently thinking about it all along. "I think I would have preferred a gradual readjustment."

Those are the words of their nominee.

While Americans are reeling over high gas prices, increasingly demanding that we increase our production of American energy, Democrats haven't let us turn over a single shovel for exploration here at home. And now they have got what they wanted.

We all agree that the key to our energy future is clean energy technologies and alternative fuels that

move us away from oil. What the other side refuses to acknowledge is that it will take some time to get there. We are moving in that direction as quickly as we can. We have worked in a bipartisan fashion in both the 2005 and 2007 energy bills to accelerate the process of moving to clean energy technologies and alternative sources of fuel.

But the facts are clear: in the short term, America will depend on fossil fuels to drive our economy. For the foreseeable future, our choice is the same as it's always been: either import our energy from people like Hugo Chavez and from Saudi Arabia or use more of our own. But our friends on the other side have removed the option of increased American energy created by increasing American jobs. They have made sure we have only one option. They have put domestic energy off limits. And now we're paying the price.

Republicans have been willing to work with Democrats to address both sides of this problem. Republicans enthusiastically support conservation.

Last year, we supported the first increase in automobile efficiency standards in more than three decades. We have supported investments in alternative energy. We know this problem requires action on both the supply and the demand side. And we have shown it. But we're still waiting for our friends on the other side to show the same commitment to actually address the problem.

For the sake of all the American people, who will today make hard choices at the gas pump, we need to work together to lower prices now, and that means that as the third largest oil producer in the world, America needs to increase its own domestic supplies in an environmentally responsible way so we are less reliant on Middle East oil and so our people finally get some relief.

21ST ANNIVERSARY OF "TEAR DOWN THIS WALL"

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, today is the anniversary of an important event in recent world history that demonstrates the impact that words—well-chosen words—can have.

June 12, 1987, marks the day that President Ronald Reagan issued a challenge to Soviet Premier Mikhail Gorbachev to make unmistakably clear his commitment to lessening Cold War tensions and increasing freedom in Soviet-dominated Eastern Europe.

Speaking before the Brandenburg Gate in what was then West Berlin, President Reagan stood only 100 yards away from the Berlin Wall, which had divided the free people of West Berlin from the captive Germans in Soviet-controlled East Berlin for decades. An estimated 20,000 people gathered to hear him, including West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl.

"There is one sign the Soviets could make that would be unmistakable,

that would advance the cause of freedom and peace," President Reagan said.

Addressing the Soviet Premier directly, he then continued:

If you seek peace, if you seek prosperity for the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, if you seek liberation: Come here to this gate! Mr. Gorbachev, open this gate! Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!

Two years later, Germans East and West did raze that wall, presaging German reunification and the fall of the Soviet Union. A piece of the Berlin Wall is preserved today in the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library in Simi Valley, CA.

At the time, the Soviet state-run press agency called this historic speech "openly provocative" and "warmongering." But Chancellor Kohl, who was there, knew the truth. "Ronald Reagan was a man who achieved great things for his country," Chancellor Kohl said in 2004. "He was a stroke of luck for the world, especially for Europe."

There we have an example of the power to make walls crumble, by the sound of freedom—all because of the right words, well chosen and linked to the right policy.

We cannot say what national security crisis will confront us in the future, but we can say that confront us they will, no question about it. When that happens, the world must know that America will fight on the side of justice and freedom.

One great leader made that clear 21 years ago today when he said four simple words: "Tear down this wall."

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader.

REPUBLICAN FILIBUSTERS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the remarks my friend, the distinguished Republican leader, made regarding the energy crisis facing us are, as has been this past week, Orwellian. Everyone listening to what he said understands the direct opposite has happened. Everyone knows we are not doing legislation because the Republicans will not let us.

There are 51 Democrats and 49 Republicans, a closely divided Senate. The Republicans have decided they are going to let us do nothing, and that is what they are doing, letting us do nothing. We want to legislate; they want to obstruct.

Let's take the three bills we dealt with this past week. Global warming: No, they would not let us legislate on that bill. We offered two amendments, three amendments, five amendments, eight amendments, relevant, germane—nothing. They did not want to legislate, and we knew that was the case because as we read into the RECORD several times, there was a piece of work that came on e-mail from the Republicans who are devising the strategy for the Republicans in the

Senate, and they said in that memo that there is no legislation going to take place here; we are going to play political games. "Political games" were their words, and that is what they did.

As we have been here—the Senate opened 20 minutes ago—global warming has gotten worse, not better. It is time we decided to take some hard decisions and realize we cannot continue to take all this carbon out of the Earth and put it into the sky. That is what global warming is all about. We have to stop this.

We wanted to do something about gas prices. Of course gas prices have gone up. Since President Bush took office, the price of gas has gone from less than \$1.50 a gallon now to \$4.06 a gallon. As the Republican leader said, diesel fuel is approaching \$5 a gallon. But during this period of time, we have been following the Cheney energy policy. The Cheney energy policy was one devised in the White House in secret. The press, groups around the country have tried to find out what went on, who came, what were the promises made. Obstruct—they would not allow us to find out what went on. The American people to this day do not know what went on. But we do know the Bush-Cheney administration is the most oil-friendly administration in the country. They made their fortunes in oil and they have treated the oil companies accordingly this past 7½ years.

We tried to do something about gas prices. We think it is important that we take a look at OPEC. It is not just Democrats talking about it. Arlen Specter, the ranking member and former chairman of the Judiciary Committee, believes that is an extremely important issue. OPEC is violating the Sherman Antitrust Act. Why shouldn't they be subject to it? That is what we wanted to legislate, and they would not let us.

We wanted to take away the huge amounts of free money the oil companies get. Why should they get all the free money from American taxpayers when they made during the past year \$250 billion in profit—not million, billion. We tried to legislate on that issue saying these subsidies to big oil should be terminated.

We thought it was important to do something about these windfall profits these companies are making. We were stopped from doing that.

The Presiding Officer knows about legislating. He understands that legislating is the art of compromise. Is any one of the pieces of legislation we introduced perfect? Of course not. But it is an opportunity for us to try to do something about these gas prices. In the short term—these are short-term fixes for the gas prices I talked about—they would not allow us to legislate. And yesterday we tried to legislate on doing something about alternative energy, renewable energy. The Sun shines, the wind blows, steam comes out of the Earth. Shouldn't we harness

that for our own benefit? Shouldn't we use that so we do not have to use 21 million barrels of dirty oil every day that is making our lives miserable with global warming, ruining the health of people all over the world? Shouldn't we do that? The Republicans say no. They would not let us legislate on that issue yesterday.

We want to give the American entrepreneurs the ability to invest in renewables. People are waiting to invest billions of dollars if they have the opportunity for these tax credits, but the Republicans say no.

My friend said that Democrats think this is some kind of a corporate plot. We don't think it is a corporate plot. We do think the oil companies are making far too much money. And the sad part about it—my brother for many years was a service station operator. My brother worked for Standard stations. I worked for Standard stations. He became a manager for Standard stations. The Chevron oil company had Standard stations and Chevron stations. Chevron stations were dealers, individuals such as my brother Dale—may my brother Dale rest in peace. He died at the age of 47. He was a Chevron oil dealer. He worked very hard. He didn't make much money with the gas that was pumped. He made money selling water bags, which was a canvas bag people needed to go across the desert if their car broke down, batteries, fan belts, tires. That is where he made his money; not very much, but that is where he made his money, not at the gas pump. And it is still that way. The modern Dale Reids with stations around America are not making much money. The money is going to these massive oil companies.

I don't think it is a corporate plot. I think it is a Bush-Cheney plot. I think these people have done nothing. These two men have done nothing to address the energy crisis facing America. It took 7 years of this man's Presidency before he could say the words "global warming."

My friend has used the name of the senior Senator from New York, Mr. SCHUMER. I am going to defend Senator SCHUMER. Senator SCHUMER is my friend. He does an outstanding job representing the people of New York, and he has done an outstanding job representing all Democrats as chairman of the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee. This is a difficult job, not one people seek. Senator SCHUMER took that job when he could have been Governor of the State of New York. All the editorials said he would be the next Governor of New York. I knew that when I became Democratic leader. I asked Senator SCHUMER, recognizing he could be the next Governor of New York: Will you take the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee? It is important for the country. And he gave up literally the governorship of New York, in my opinion, to take this job. He has done a tremendous job: nine new Democratic Senators last year.