

we get ready for a new President, to work together, Democrats and Republicans, to address this critical question.

I will close with one last comment. On the floor last night were Senator LANDRIEU and Senator CRAPO. I am very honored to have both of them as cosponsors of the Healthy Americans Act. We were talking about older workers. Today one of the worst spots to be in is if you are 57 or 58 years old and you are laid off from your job, because if you are laid off at 57 or 58, you go off into the broken individual health insurance market. You better not have any illnesses. It is going to be hard to get coverage. It is going to be very hard to afford it because you are going to be out on your own rather than in a group. And finally, you are not going to get the tax break, if you are all on your own, that you would get if you were with an employer health plan.

The Healthy Americans Act addresses each of those three concerns and, boy, those are not abstract questions for anybody in Colorado or Oregon or Idaho. Ask the GM retirees who got clobbered a few days ago. If you are 57 or 58 and you are 8 years away from Medicare, you have a lot to worry about.

Our bipartisan coalition is working, I think, effectively and in the bipartisan fashion it is going to take to address those concerns as well.

I hope colleagues will reflect on what Dr. Orszag said this morning with respect to cost containment. We will have a lot more discussion in the days ahead about the concerns of older workers, as we started last night with Senator LANDRIEU and Senator CRAPO. We are especially thrilled that the distinguished Senator from Colorado is a member of the Finance Committee and I know we will have a chance to work together on those issues as well.

ORDER FOR RECESS

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, before I yield the floor, on behalf of the majority leader I ask unanimous consent the Senate stand in recess from 2:30 to 3:45 today.

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

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Idaho is recognized.

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business for up to 15 minutes.

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

ENERGY

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, I came to the floor on June 19 to address my colleagues and the Senate about energy prices, as many of us have, because there is no question that the Senator from Colorado and I, when we go home on the weekends, hear as the No. 1 concern on the part of Coloradans or Idahoans their energy bill—the price of gas at the pump.

We are big western States. We travel long distances. When you roll into a gas station with your Ford F-150 and you start filling it up and you drive away, because it has dual tanks on it, having paid over \$100 to fill it, you have a problem. You have a problem because you had bought that vehicle to facilitate your ranch or your farm or your job and you had anticipated that the most you would probably ever pay was \$25 or \$30 to fill up. That is what you budgeted. That is what you understood the economic impact of that vehicle, necessary to your job or your business, would be on your job or your business. But in less than a year, that changed.

That is the working man or woman's side of it. What about the soccer mom who travels around all over the community every day, dropping off her kids and going to the store and picking up goods and services and coming home and all of a sudden having an energy bill in the family budget that she and her husband had never anticipated would be there. We all know their salaries or their jobs are not going to compensate them because they are going to spend \$500, \$600, \$1,000 or \$2,000 more this year on their energy bill. That is only at pump, let alone at the meter that monitors the electricity at their home that is going to be going up; and the natural gas that is going to go through and into their heating systems and their stoves. That is going to be going up. There is no way for them, other than taking money from something else in their life, to offset that impact.

Those people such as myself who spend a good deal of time, and have for 28 years, on the issue of energy, were very fearful that a day such as today would come, a day of reckoning, a day when our country that, almost 20 years ago, decided it would no longer be a producer but because of environmental policy and political attitude, we began to change. We decided we would try to offset production with conservation and, in large part, we said to the energy-producing segment of our economy it could no longer drill in America, go elsewhere.

I will never forget meeting with the President of Amoco in Los Angeles about 15 years ago. He opined to me that the day would come when his company would have to leave this country because it could no longer produce in this country—and that is what happened. And doggone it, that is the truth. You can document it. You can see it happening. It happened. We put millions of acres off limits for one reason or another but largely because of an attitude in this country that somehow we were going to muck it up a little bit environmentally and we ought to leave it alone and it ought to be pure and it ought to be pristine. And, oh, by the way, energy is cheap. It was inexpensive at the time and we could buy it from somebody else. So basically we set the rest of the world to

producing and we became increased consumers and increased buyers of foreign oil.

During that last 20-year period, something else began to happen. The oil we were consuming was no longer owned by companies we had interests in, it was owned by nations. It was owned by nations that were sometimes friendly to us, sometimes not so friendly to us, but nations that began to recognize they could gain the wealth of America by selling it oil because America no longer wanted to produce. We grew from about 35 percent dependent upon oil when I came to Congress in 1980, to, today, nearly 70 percent dependent. And those nations have us right by the gas nozzle today. They can do what they want. They are reaping our wealth at unprecedented rates—\$1.2 billion a day—and they are turning around and buying back our companies and buying back our real estate with our money. But it is now under their ownership.

The greatest wealth transfer in the world is taking place as we speak, as America drains itself dry for the need of energy, and a Congress unwilling to act responsibly and having failed to act responsibly for the last 20 years. It is a dilemma unparalleled in American history.

When I came to the floor on June 19, I said there is an old country western song that says “a little less talk and a lot more action.” That was June 19. Now we are into mid-July. Oil prices went up nearly \$15 more a barrel during that period of time and gas went from about \$3.90 on average to \$4.11 on the pump nationwide. Guess what. We still got a lot more talk but very little action.

Why is America angry today at their politician? Because their politician is fearful of action.

I once voted to lock up ANWR. I once voted to put off limits drilling out on the Outer Continental Shelf. It was for all my environmental friends. How do I change? How do I shift the political gears to meet the American people today who are saying simply go where the oil is, explore and develop and bring it on line. We need it desperately. It is draining our pocketbooks dry.

That is the domestic economics side. What about the national security side, when we are 70 percent dependent on foreign oil? So it is a national domestic economic issue and it is a U.S. national security issue. Guess what, folks. A lot more talk and hardly any action. So when the President stepped up a month ago and said why don't you in Congress lift the ban on Outer Continental Shelf oil drilling, I turned around and called the White House and said: Why don't you, Mr. President? You did it by Executive order a couple of years ago for the politics of Florida. Why don't you act?

He did act. He acted last week, in a responsible fashion, to lift the Executive order that limited the exploration