

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

Ms. LANDRIEU. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for 5 minutes in morning business.

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

REMEMBERING DR. DOROTHY I. HEIGHT

Ms. LANDRIEU. Madam President, I come to the floor today to pay tribute to a great civil rights leader of our Nation, a woman who was memorialized today at the National Cathedral here in Washington, DC. Of course, I am speaking of Dr. Dorothy Height, who was a tremendous trailblazer, a true heroine of our time, a great leader of the civil rights movement. She had tremendous courage and tremendous determination that allowed women all over our Nation and, in fact, the world to break through irrational limits set by society at large. She was an inspiration to me and I know to the Presiding Officer and to other women who serve in this Chamber and to women leaders in all 50 States.

She was the chair and president emerita of the National Council of Negro Women. The council was founded, as we know, by Mary McLeod Bethune when she brought 28 women's organizations together to improve the quality of life for women. Dr. Height embraced that vision and continued her work, her crusade for justice. Through her leadership, she changed our Nation by shining a light on discrimination and injustice, which was all too common in the century that has just ended. And we still find versions and, unfortunately, visions of it here today.

She was a member of many other organizations that have come to represent so many good things about America, such as the YWCA. She was a very proud member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority and traveled here frequently with her sorority sisters, who I know are in true mourning for her today as well. Through her dedication and commitment to these organizations, she encouraged women to be leaders in national and community organizations and on college campuses.

She had an extraordinary presence, a very big and warm heart. She was a great intellect. She had a passion for people, and in her own quiet but very forceful way, she brought great change to our Nation.

She has received any number of awards. Many of those were mentioned today and in the past weeks, as we remember her fondly—the Presidential Medal of Freedom Award, the Congressional Gold Medal Award.

I was proud to join many of my colleagues in introducing a resolution honoring the life and legacy of Dr. Height. She will be greatly missed. She will be fondly remembered. There are very few women who will live in this century and have the kind of impact

she has had on so many of us. So our prayers and thoughts are with her family and with her closest of friends. But I wanted to give a moment of honor to her on the Senate floor today.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

OFFSHORE DRILLING

Mr. MENENDEZ. Madam President, I rise today, as I am pleased we are finally moving to Wall Street reform—something I have come to speak about several times on the floor. That is critically important to our country, critically important to our economy, critically important to investors and consumers to have confidence, and I am glad we are moving to that, as a member of the Banking Committee. But at the same time, there is an enormous environmental challenge taking place in our country, one that I think portends the consequences of offshore drilling.

I rise today to discuss the tragedy in the gulf and looming environmental disaster that threatens the gulf.

First, I want to remember those who lost their lives in the tragic fire and explosion of the Deepwater Horizon oil rig in the Gulf of Mexico last week. Our thoughts and prayers are with the workers and their families.

The loss of life and the injuries are truly horrific, but this is also an environmental tragedy, one that threatens to reach historic proportions. Over 1 million gallons of oil have already leaked into the gulf. Each hour that passes without a solution, without a way to stop it, leads us to wonder what the extent of the damage will be. It is a wake-up call to all who are trying to weigh the benefits against the risks of offshore drilling as part of our energy mix. It certainly leads this Senator to wonder about the wisdom and the necessity of drilling off the coast of my State of New Jersey and, I would argue, off the coast of any Senator's coastal State.

As I stand on this floor today—and I show you this picture I have in the Chamber of the fire the Deepwater Horizon oil rig was engulfed in before it sunk—before it sunk—and then had all of the oil spilling into the gulf. As I stand here on this floor today, an oil slick bigger than the State of Delaware—over 4,000 square miles—is drifting toward shore—drifting toward shore. To give you some perspective of what that means, as shown in this other picture, this is how big this oil sheen is when compared to my home State of New Jersey—all of the yellow. If this spill in the gulf were happening,

for example, in Virginia waters right now, my whole State would be holding its breath because NOAA has shown my office how a spill in Virginia waters could easily wash up on the New Jersey shore.

I say to the Presiding Officer, I do not know if you have visited New Jersey, but we have magnificent, pristine beaches. The dunes along the coast are breathtaking. Wildlife is abundant. Tourism depends on it. It would all—it would all—be in jeopardy.

The next photograph I want to show is what happens to wildlife in these oil slicks. This is a photograph in the aftermath of the Exxon Valdez spill. We hope and pray the spill in the gulf stays offshore, but the reality is, it could make landfall any day now and this photograph could be repeated a thousand times.

Now we learn the spill from the Deepwater Horizon is worse than it was originally reported—far worse, at least five times worse. The Coast Guard and NOAA have revised their estimate of the leak. They now say it is not 42,000 gallons per day but 210,000 gallons a day. Imagine if the leak continues for 2 months, which seems like a real possibility at this point. In 2 months, it will have exceeded the amount of oil spilled in the Exxon Valdez disaster. Let's keep something in mind: The Exxon Valdez was a tanker with a finite amount of oil aboard. This is virtually a bottomless pit of oil.

When asked to compare this spill to previous spills, the Coast Guard compared it to the IXTOC I spill. On June 3, 1979, an exploratory well called the IXTOC I blew out in the Gulf of Mexico. It took 9 months—9 months—to cap, to seal, and the resulting spill was the second largest in world history, over 10 times larger than the Exxon Valdez spill. As my colleagues can see from this map which has Texas, Louisiana, and the gulf, the spill traveled 600 miles from its center—600 miles—blanketing the coasts of Mexico, Texas, and Louisiana, causing extraordinary damage.

Now we are debating the wisdom of expanding oil production on the Outer Continental Shelf; in essence, all along the coastlines of our country. Some think the way to expand offshore drilling reasonably is simply to create some type of a buffer zone off the coast as if a little more room can protect our shores; as if the ocean is in neat, little boxes that could somehow be confined. Frankly, I think this graphic of the IXTOC spill shows that oil spills don't respect State borders or buffer zones.

In the wake of what we are seeing in the gulf, I am deeply concerned that the current 5-year plan recently announced by the administration would allow oil drilling less than 100 miles from Cape May, NJ. Cape May is a great historical place in New Jersey with beautiful beaches—some of the greatest beaches in the Nation. Cape May, where Delaware Bay meets the Atlantic, is the epicenter of bird migration on the entire East Coast and