

Mr. COONS. That is right. I have gotten immediate response from Twitter, e-mail, et cetera, in my office account. I got a tweet from Jason, who wrote:

Kudos . . . for introducing jobs-creating legislation. Good to see detailed plans rather than partisan bickering.

Another tweet said this:

If AGREE is a jobs act that can get passed, I, an American that cares about the unemployed, say "thanks."

Mary June from Delaware City wrote:

I think it is great to see a bipartisan approach to solving the jobs crisis in the United States. Thank you for getting past party lines and coming together to provide commonsense solutions.

Maria from Middletown wrote:

I think it is time for both parties to come together as you and Senator Rubio have to bring our country back to where we have people working again and families striving to achieve the American dream. The same dream that I had when I was growing up. The dream I thought my sons and granddaughter were going to live. The business as usual in Washington has to stop, and through this bill you will both prove to your fellow Senators that if you all work together, anything is possible.

To be clear, as Senator RUBIO said, there are real differences, real things that divide the parties. There is time ahead before the election to resolve those fundamental differences in values, approach, and priorities. But, while we can, we should come together with commonsense proposals that demonstrate to the American people that we can take ideas, Republican and Democrat, House and Senate, put them in a package and pass them on to the President, because 12 months is too long to wait.

As we all wait for the outcome of the supercommittee this week, I know confidence is one of the major issues we have concerns about—confidence in the marketplace, the confidence to take risks and invest, and the confidence to grow. In my view, this bill, this initiative shows that both parties can and do have confidence in American inventors, American investors, our veterans, and America's entrepreneurs.

I am grateful for a chance to work on this. I ask the Senator, what is the next step and where do we go from here?

Mr. RUBIO. The next step is to get as many people in this Chamber and in the House to sign on to this legislation and to get this done. We are open to suggestions about how to improve it. Maybe there are some things that should be in there. Maybe there are questions involving particular measures. We are open to suggestions. We need to get the ball rolling. Our time is about to run out.

I want to recognize that one of the ways to lose credibility is to exaggerate. The differences between our parties about the role of government, about the Tax Code, and about the debt situation are real. We will debate those. To my friends on the right and left—both sides—we have real dif-

ferences, and this is the place to deal with it. We are blessed to live in a republic where we can debate our points of view as to the role of government. We do agree on certain issues, and we should work on that.

Today is an open invitation to our colleagues to join us, look at this bill, analyze it, and see if there is something you would like to add or maybe that we left out that should be in there. The more the merrier. To those who think there are things that maybe should be changed or improved in this bill, we are open to that as well. We want to get this done and deliver something to the American people as soon as possible that shows that here in Washington, DC, we can agree. I believe that would be a positive first step in the right direction.

Our time has expired.

With that, I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from California.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Madam President, what is the parliamentary status now?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senate is still in morning business. The Republicans control 6 minutes 25 seconds.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Madam President, we will yield back the Republican time so that we can move ahead and report the bill.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

ENERGY AND WATER DEVELOPMENT AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2012

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 2354, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2354) making appropriations for energy and water development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2012, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Reid amendment No. 957, in the nature of a substitute.

Reid amendment No. 958 (to amendment No. 957), to change the enactment date.

Reid amendment No. 959 (to amendment No. 958), of a perfecting nature.

Reid amendment No. 960 (to language proposed to be stricken by amendment No. 957), to change the enactment date.

Reid amendment No. 961 (to amendment No. 960), of a perfecting nature.

Reid motion to recommit the bill to the Committee on Appropriations, with instructions, Reid amendment No. 962, to change the enactment date.

Reid amendment No. 963 (to (the instructions) amendment No. 962), of a perfecting nature.

Reid amendment No. 964 (to amendment No. 963), of a perfecting nature.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from California.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Madam President, it is my understanding that Senator

BINGAMAN would like to speak on an amendment he has filed and Senator MURKOWSKI may well come down to speak on that, which is fine.

I will yield to Senator BINGAMAN to do that now.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from New Mexico is recognized.

Mr. BINGAMAN. Madam President, I appreciate the opportunity to speak briefly about an amendment Senator MURKOWSKI and I have filed.

There is a provision in the Energy and Water appropriations bill, which we are considering in the Senate, that we would like to see stricken or deleted from the bill. It is a provision in the legislation that mandates the sale of \$500 million worth of oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, or SPR, as it is called. The bill also ends the Royalty-in-Kind Program. That part I am not disputing at this point.

The language in the bill that we are concerned about is on page 41. It says in that part of the bill:

Notwithstanding various other provisions, the Secretary of Energy shall sell \$500 million in petroleum product from the reserve not later than March 1 of 2012, and shall deposit any proceeds from such sales in the general fund of the Treasury.

In the words of the Department of Energy:

The Strategic Petroleum Reserve exists, first and foremost, as an emergency response tool the President can use should the United States be confronted with an economically threatening disruption in oil supplies.

The SPR is our Nation's insurance policy against oil supply disruptions, and keeping it well stocked and operational is important to our energy security. I believe that is a view shared by Democrats and Republicans.

The SPR became filled to its maximum capacity of roughly 727 million barrels for the first time in its history in the year 2009.

The President, in the budget he submitted—the 2012 budget—proposed a sale of oil from the SPR that would generate \$500 million in revenue for the Federal Treasury. The administration explained that because the SPR was at maximum capacity, it needed to sell off some oil for operational purposes. They needed extra space in the SPR in order to move oil around within the system and to refurbish some of the underground salt caverns in which the oil is stored.

However, this past June, there was an emergency drawdown, and there was a sale of 30 million barrels of SPR oil. I understand that the emergency sale generated more than \$3 billion. This indicates to me that more than six times the amount of oil that the President thought was necessary to be sold for operational reasons has now been sold.

Clearly, the President's proposal from February to create a little free space in the SPR is no longer necessary. The concern we have is that the SPR sale provision in this legislation remains part of an appropriations bill,