

think that, while we have come a long way, we have a long way to go to make sure we have civil rights for everyone in America.

THE HIGHWAY BILL

Madam President, we were disappointed, as I indicated yesterday, at not being able to invoke cloture on this highway bill. I was satisfied yesterday that the Speaker of the House indicated that he thought the best thing to do, at least as I read the reports, would be to take the Senate version of a bill, if we can figure out a way to pass one, and then they would use that—he would bring it to the floor for a vote. I hope that is the case. The press doesn't always get things right, but I hope in this case they did.

Senator MCCONNELL's staff and my staff are exchanging paper as we speak. I hope we can work our way through this bill. I think it is unfortunate that we are going to have to have votes on a number of amendments that have nothing to do with this underlying piece of legislation.

This is one thing the American people really do not like. At our townhall meetings, our visitations with people throughout our States, I have come to the realization that they hate what they call riders—things that have nothing to do with bills. The Senate rules allow them in most instances, so if it takes this to get this bill done, then we will have to move forward in that way. I hope we can do that. As I said, we are going to exchange paper, and I hope both sides will react positively. I am confident we will over here, and I hope we can work something out.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

GAS PRICES

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, last week I came to the Senate floor to speak out on an issue that is on the minds of a lot of Americans these days: the rising cost of gas at the pump and how the administration's policies are actually making matters worse.

The President may try to take credit for production gains that are entirely the work of others, but more to the point is the fact that production is up on private lands and down on Federal lands. The property the President and the Interior Secretary actually manage is the property upon which production is down.

In fact, when it comes to the rising cost of gas at the pump, it is my view that the administration's policies are actually designed to a purpose: to bring about higher gas prices. That is a view which should not be the least bit controversial given the fact that the President's own Energy Secretary has sug-

gested on a couple of occasions now that his goal certainly is not to drive gas prices down.

For the President's part, he often says that Americans should judge him not only by his words but on his deeds. So when it comes to gas prices, I have pointed out that the President continues to limit offshore areas to energy production and is granting fewer leases on public land for oil drilling, has encouraged countries such as Brazil to move forward with their own offshore drilling projects, continues to impose burdensome regulations on the domestic energy sector that will further drive up the cost of gasoline for the consumer, has repeatedly proposed raising taxes on the energy sector, which we all know would only drive gas prices even higher, and, finally, has flatly rejected the Keystone XL Pipeline.

All of these help drive up the cost of gas and increase our dependence on foreign oil. So the President simply cannot claim to have a comprehensive approach to energy because he doesn't—he simply doesn't—and anytime he says he does, the American people should remember one word: Keystone. Keystone.

Another thing they might want to do is play a clip of the press conference the President held just yesterday. Asked about whether he actually wants gas prices to go up, the President's facetious attempt to deflect the question only served to confirm the premise. But it was the President's admission that rising gas prices hurt the economy that really betrayed the administration's attempt to have it both ways on this issue, because if higher gas prices hurt the economy, then why in the world is the administration calling for higher taxes on energy manufacturers? We know these taxes would drive up the price at the pump and send jobs overseas. The Congressional Research Service said that. If the President wants to drive prices down, he should stop calling for these increases in taxes.

Look, if the President wants Americans to think he is serious about lower gas prices, he has to do more than simply say—and this is what he said yesterday—"No President would want higher gas prices in an election year." "No President would want higher gas prices in an election year." What about other years? Would they want them in other years? It is only in election years that it is a problem? He has to get serious about changing his policies, and he might want to consider an Energy Secretary who is more committed to helping the American people than in helping the administration's buddies in the solar panel business—and that brings me to a larger point.

The President likes to talk a lot about fairness. We have heard a lot about fairness, but when it comes to rising gas prices, the American people don't think it is particularly fair that at a time when they are struggling to

fill the tank, their own tax dollars are being used to subsidize failing solar companies of the President's choosing, not to mention the bonuses executives at these companies keep getting. I think most Americans are tired of reading about all the goodies this administration's allies are getting on their dime even as the President goes around lecturing everybody about fairness.

I will tell you what is not fair. What is not fair is that it costs about \$40 more to fill a 20-gallon tank with gasoline than it did when this President took office. That is not fair. Yet this administration continues to pursue policies that would make it even worse.

Earlier this year the White House launched a campaign in support of the payroll tax holiday, asking Americans what \$40 a month would mean to them. Yet, now, when it comes to gas prices, they are doubling down on policies that are taking away that \$40 a month given by the payroll tax holiday to fill the gas tank. Once again, they are trying to have it both ways, and, frankly, the American people have had it.

TRIBUTE TO JOHN RABUN

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I would like to pay tribute today to a friend of many decades, a Kentuckian who is a hero to many and a personal hero of mine for his work on behalf of children that has had a national impact. In his 28 years of service with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, John Rabun has saved literally thousands of lives and averted tragedy for thousands of families.

As the very first employee of the national center since its creation back in 1984, he has been the heart and the soul of that organization. His dedication and passion for the issue will continue to shape the national center long after he leaves it. Frankly, for John, saving children was not just a job, it was his mission. That is why it is such a blow that after 28 years of service, John Rabun will retire from his work at the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children this Friday, March 9. I cannot say enough how much this man will be missed.

John and I have a history that stretches back almost four decades, dating to his time as a social worker in Jefferson County, KY. Of course, Jefferson County contains the city of Louisville, my hometown, and in the late 1970s and early 1980s, I served as the judge-executive for Jefferson County. What that is, I say to the Presiding Officer from New York, is like the county executive for the county. It was in this capacity that I got to know John Rabun.

John earned his bachelor's degree from Mercer University in Macon, GA, and his master of science in social work from the University of Louisville. As a social worker, John managed the company's group home for kids and was one of the first in town to identify