

share this with my colleagues because it is an indication of what is going to happen. If we just wait and have some political courage for a couple of days instead of running off and doing something that I think is damaging—as I said, a dagger to the heart—to a balanced budget in this country, the average price of west Texas intermediate crude on April 26 was \$23.80 a barrel. The price of west Texas intermediate crude at the close of business on May 3 was \$21.36 a barrel.

That is a 10-percent drop in 1 week—a 10-percent drop per barrel of crude oil in this country in 1 week, from April 26 to May 3.

Mr. President and all of my colleagues, I suggest that if you just hang around here a little bit longer, you will see that drop in the price of crude by 10 percent is going to be reflected in the marketplace. If we believe in the marketplace, which I think we should, that is going to be reflected in the price of a gallon of gas at the pump. I think that is the way this country ought to address this problem.

What we have before the Senate is a political idea that does not work, and political ideas that do not work are bad ideas, and sometimes I think too often politics makes bad policy, and this is an example, I think, of exactly that.

I yield the floor.

Mr. GREGG addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

UNDERMINING THE LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I believe it appropriate at this time to review where we stand because there has been some discussion that has occurred since the majority leader came to the floor and outlined a proposal. Maybe his proposal has been obfuscated a bit because it was such a clear and fine proposal that people are trying to undermine it. But the fact is that what the majority leader suggested was you can have your vote. You can have your vote on minimum wage. You can have your vote on repealing the gas tax.

All we are asking is that in this process of having those two votes, we also have a vote on something called the TEAM Act, which is not, as the Senator from Massachusetts said, all that big a deal because so many companies have already signed off on it.

Yet now we hear from the other side that they essentially intend to filibuster an attempt to increase the minimum wage and to reduce the gas tax, to roll it back, simply because of this TEAM Act proposal. That is pretty outrageous.

In a moment, I would like to talk a little bit about what that proposal is because I think you need to understand that basically what we are hearing is a party has been captured by a constituency and is allowing that constituency to stand in the way of good policy.

But let us talk about the gas tax first. Why should we not repeal this

tax? To begin with, it was sold under false pretenses. Three years ago, when this administration proposed this gas tax, they began by proposing a Btu tax, if you remember that, where they were going to tax all energy consumption in this country. States like New Hampshire and other States that depend on oil to heat our homes would have been hit with this tax at the home heating level and at the gasoline pumps and throughout the system that delivers energy to their communities.

That was such an outrageous idea that even Members on the other side rejected it. So the administration backpedaled and said, well, no, we will not do the Btu tax; we will do a gas tax. But at the exact same time we were hearing from the other side of the aisle that the taxes in the package which the President proposed 2½ years ago or 3 years ago were only going to affect the rich. In fact, the present Democratic leader, who was not the Democratic leader at that time, came to this floor and said this tax package is only going to affect people earning more than \$180,000 or companies that make more than \$560,000 a year.

That was the tax package that was sold to the American people, that was passed on to the American people's back and which included \$295 billion of new taxes, the largest tax increase in history delivered to us by this President and Members on the other side of the aisle when they were in the majority 2½ years ago.

Nobody on this side of the aisle bought that. We did not buy it for fairly obvious reasons. No. 1, a gas tax is not a tax on people who earn \$180,000 a year. When you pull into your gas station, your attendant does not ask you, "Do you make \$180,000 a year?" before he hits you with the tax. He has to collect that tax whether you make 10 bucks a year or whether you make \$1 million, whether you are in a small struggling company driving a pickup or whether you have a fleet of trucks. He still has to hit you with that tax.

So this was not a tax on the wealthy. This was a tax that was actually targeted in, as was pointed out by the Senator from Texas, on low- and middle-income people disproportionately because they have to pay the same rate of tax as people in the high incomes, and 23 percent of this tax falls on people with incomes, I believe, as the Senator from Texas said, under \$20,000, or something like that. A very low percentage comes out of people with higher incomes. So it was a disproportionately unfair tax when it was put in place and remains so, and it should be repealed.

So why is the other side resisting repealing it? Why? Because big labor is upset, the Washington big labor leadership, the big bosses here in Washington are upset. That is why they are opposing repealing the gas tax.

Now we come forward, and we on our side of the aisle say, OK, we will accept your proposal on the minimum wage,

we will accept the Kennedy language as proposed to increase the minimum wage. We ask that you accept our proposal to repeal the gas tax at the same time. We allow you to divide the votes. Just give us the chance to get both on a majority vote instead of having to have a filibuster around here where you have to get 60 votes.

What does the other side say? Nope. Sorry. We will not take the deal. We cannot accept that deal any longer. We are not that interested in increasing the minimum wage that we are going to stand in the face of the big labor bosses here in Washington who do not want this little thing called the TEAM Act. So we have the opposition, the other side of the aisle, saying essentially that two major points they consider to be, I suspect most of them, good policy—one, repealing this incredibly regressive gas tax that was put on 2½ years ago and, two, raising the minimum wage—are going to be held up because of what was described basically by the Senator from Massachusetts as an inconsequential amendment dealing with a minor point of labor law. Why? Because they have gotten the telephone calls from a couple streets over that said under no circumstances is TEAM Act going to pass this House.

But what is this horror called TEAM Act? It is not much, folks. TEAM Act just simply says what used to be the law and what most people think should be the law and what was the law up until 1992, I believe it was, when something called the Electromation was passed by the NLRB, the National Labor Relations Board.

Essentially, it says that people can get together in their workplace—what a radical idea—people can get together in their workplace and they can talk about issues that involve quality and productivity and efficiency. I think most of us have heard of things like TQM, the philosophy of management that basically grew out of the Deming approach which essentially revolutionized Japan and made them competitive in the world.

TQM is where you have a Deming approach, you have a team approach to managing the workplace. That is basically what TEAM Act does. It says you can have a TEAM Act approach operating in the workplace.

Now, you cannot do it under this bill, under TEAM Act, in any way that would undermine the independence of the collective bargaining effort. You cannot establish a company union. The specific language says that you cannot establish sham unions. But you can get together to discuss things like smoking policy; you can get together to discuss things like productivity: How do you make the place work better? Workers happen to be the best source of good ideas in many instances, and probably in most instances actually, certainly in large companies. The chance to bring them together in working teams works for Japan. It produces products in a much more efficient and effective way

there. And it works here. It works very well here. It was working here quite well, extraordinarily well, until 1992 when, as a result of this NLRB decision, that policy was brought into jeopardy.

So this bill simply clarifies the policy. It says you cannot set up a sham union, cannot set up a company union, you cannot use this to undermine collective bargaining, but you can allow people to get together to talk about how they can make the workplace work better. This concept of team effort in the workplace is what is holding up repeal of the gas tax and increasing the minimum wage.

When people are cynical about Washington I guess sometimes they have a right to be, because what you have here is a money talks situation. The big labor bosses here in Washington have committed publicly, it has been reported across this country, \$35 million to defeat members of the Republican Party running for reelection to Congress—\$35 million. That is a lot of money. And money appears to talk, because the phone calls come in and the decision has been made to take down two items which, at least on that side of the aisle, although there are some on our side of the aisle who have reservations about some of these proposals—take down two items which have pretty much universal support and which were viewed as good policy: repealing the gas tax, which is regressive, and raising the minimum wage, simply because it affronts the big labor bosses here in Washington that we would try to make the workplace have a more cooperative atmosphere.

It is pretty outrageous but that is where we stand today. That is where we stand after the majority leader's proposal was rejected. Not only did the majority leader propose that, he went even an extra step. He said not only am I willing to give you a vote on repealing the gas tax, increasing the minimum wage, and also the TEAM Act issue, but I will let you even divide the question. He went so far as to say you can have your up-or-down vote on the minimum wage and you can have your up-or-down vote on gas tax. And that was rejected. That was exactly what has been asked for here for months by the Senator from Massachusetts.

Yet, suddenly we see the priorities. We see the priorities of the liberal side of the aisle. It is not this low-income worker about whom we have heard so much, it is not the person who has to pay that extra amount at the gas pump who is maybe having trouble making a living but maybe has to buy gas to get to work—it is not that person the other side of the aisle has as their No. 1 priority. No, it is some guy sitting in some building here in Washington who happens to have a big labor job. So that is what this is down to.

This is a simple question of money talks. It is regrettable. Hopefully the other side of the aisle will see this more clearly and come to their senses,

because this proposal the majority leader has offered is an extraordinary generous act on his part to try to resolve some fairly complex questions that have been confronting this legislative body.

I yield the remainder of my time and make the point of order a quorum is not present.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. PELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island is recognized.

Mr. PELL. I thank the Chair.

(The remarks of Mr. PELL pertaining to the introduction of S. 1730 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. MOYNIHAN. Mr. President, I ask that I be permitted to proceed as if in morning business for up to 8 minutes.

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

CONGRATULATIONS TO INDIA

Mr. MOYNIHAN. Mr. President, there is good news and better news in the world today with regards to the progress and the stability of democratic procedures around the world. We are, as is evidenced from the day's proceedings, already well into our election season, though the actual election will not be held until next November, as has been our practice over the last two centuries.

It is possible in a country such as ours to take for granted national, State, and even local elections, as a part of the rhythms of our life. Yet, they are rare in the world. In the whole of the membership of the United Nations, some 185 countries now, there are only 7 States which both existed in 1914 and have not had their form of government changed by violence since then.

We are joined in that very special group, by the United Kingdom, four former members of the British Commonwealth—Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa—and Sweden. I would add Switzerland, though it is not a member of the United Nations.

Of the great powers of the world, the newest to begin a process of choosing leaders by elections is Russia, the Russian Federation and other members of the former Republics of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

Yesterday, we learned with understandable anxiety that on Sunday Major General Aleksandr Korzhakov, the close aide and security advisor to President Boris Yeltsin of Russia, stated that it might be necessary to cancel the Presidential elections scheduled for June. He stated that the country was not ready to make a decision. It is clear his concern is that if the country were to make a decision now, it might not choose Mr. Yeltsin.

Mr. President, this will be the second Presidential election in Russian history. To his great credit, yesterday in Moscow, Mr. Yeltsin said that the election would not be postponed; it will take place as scheduled. Mr. Yeltsin went on to instruct General Korzhakov not to get involved in politics and to refrain from making such statements in the future.

On the other hand, in his statement, Mr. Yeltsin refers to his opponent, who is associated with former Communists in Russia and who has a program very much opposed to the economic reforms Mr. Yeltsin has been pursuing, albeit at times erratically, by stating that, "Korzhakov is not alone in thinking that a Gennadi Zyuganov victory would start a civil war."

Now, those are ominous terms, sir. Mr. Zyuganov is the candidate considered to be Mr. Yeltsin's chief opponent, and he represents a revival of Communist thinking and organization to some extent. The word "civil war" takes us back to the events of 1917 when the Bolsheviks seized power from a moderate provisional government, potentially a democratic government. Those events in St. Petersburg in the Winter Palace in 1917 are well-known to us—and were followed by four years of intense, agonizing war across all of Eurasia. A war in which the United States was involved with troops in Murmansk, Vladivostok, and elsewhere, as were the British and the French. The outcome was the triumph of the Soviet Union and the horror that followed for nearly three-quarters of a century, until its final dissolution in 1991.

We can only wish the democrats, or if you like republicans, well in the Russian elections. We should take note of how very tentative these advances can be, and take into account those who are voicing concern over the prospect of an election in which the outcome would result in civil war.

By extraordinary contrast, Mr. President, the Republic of India today concludes the third and final day of the largest election in human history. Some 590 million Indian citizens are eligible to vote in three separate days of balloting: April 27, May 2, and today, May 7. This will be the 11th national election since the founding of the Republic of India in 1947. A very large proportion of the electorate will have voted in some 800,000 polling places.

The task of keeping the polling stations open is formidable, yet the task is being accomplished, and it suggests the magnitude of the achievement. In so doing, India continues to exist as a democracy, in defiance of just about everything that those who profess to know about the subject would argue are required as preconditions necessary for a democratic society. Yet India continues to remain a firm democracy and to exhibit an extraordinary commitment to law and to civic process.

Here is a country with 15 official languages, not to mention English which,