go to the farmers' lunch near the Russell Building. They are serving a $10 lunch for 39 cents because farmers are here, 2,000-fold, saying: This is our share of the food dollar. It is not enough. We cannot make a living. We need help. We don't need charity. We need a little attention from Congress, better trade agreements, a better farm program, a little action on the antitrust front to deal with the concentrations of monopolies that exist, and a little understanding that we matter to America's future. We produce food. It is a hungry world. Food matters. Congress, pay attention. That is all they are saying.

With that, I will have lunch with friends of mine.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ROBERTS). The distinguished Senator from West Virginia is recognized.

Mr. BYRD. Before the distinguished Senator goes to lunch, would he agree with me that Oliver Goldsmith, writing in ''The Deserted Village,'' must have had our family farmers in mind when he said:

Ill fares the land, to hastening ills of prey,
Where wealth accumulates, and men decay;
Princes and Lords may flourish or may fade;
A breath can make them, as a breath has made;
But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,
When once destroy'd, can never be supplied.

Is there anything more fitting by way of poetry than Oliver Goldsmith's words in ''The Deserted Village'' when he talked about the bold peasantry?

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, as always, the Senator from West Virginia has captured in just a minute, with verse that comes from memory, something that I have not been able to say in 45 minutes. He is absolutely correct.

Again, let me thank him for being on the floor as I made the presentation.

Mr. BYRD. I thank the distinguished Senator.

ELEVEN-MONTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE TRAGEDY AT COLUMBINE HIGH SCHOOL

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, today marks the 11-month anniversary of the tragic school shooting at Columbine High School in Colorado. On April 20, 1999, 2 boys walked into their high school, armed to the hilt, and killed 13 students and faculty members before taking their own lives. Despite the horrible nature of this crime, and those that have followed it in Georgia, in Michigan, in the District of Columbia, and in other places throughout the country, the Congress has shown precious little leadership in exploring ways to help prevent mayhem in our schools.

Last May, in response to the Columbine shooting, this Senate passed the Juvenile Justice bill by an overwhelming bipartisan majority of 73–25. Despite this strong show of bipartisan agreement, the legislation is bogged down in a morass of election year politics. Despite the fact that the American people are crying out for some leadership on this issue, the Congress is proving itself to be uncaring, if not irrelevant.

There is plenty of controversy to go around anytime any measure comes before the Congress which deals with gun violence. We have all heard repeatedly the cautionary slogan chanted by some, ''guns don't kill people, people kill people.'' But increasingly in recent years it has been children who are wielding guns against their classmates. Perhaps the slogan should be changed to ''guns don't kill children, children kill children.'' Sadly, that slogan now has the ring of reality, but, I doubt that anyone will be lobbying for gun rights with those words imprinted on their lecture.

The Senate-passed legislation contained a number of important provisions to not only crack down on violent juvenile offenders, but also to reduce the potential for weapons to fall into the hands of children who may not understand all of the dangers that the weapons pose.

The Senate legislation is a compromise between the rights of the individual to keep and bear arms and the safety of the public to be protected from those who should not have those guns. The bill would require that every handgun sold must have a trigger safety lock or secure container. It would require background checks on all buyers at gun shows. The legislation would ban the youth possession of semiautomatic assault weapons and their high-capacity ammunition clips. And it would bar anyone convicted of a violent felony as a juvenile from possessing a gun. These are commonsense provisions on which I hope parents and gun owners alike could agree.

Last week, the Nation's leading gun manufacturer, Smith & Wesson, imposed upon itself many of the provisions contained in the Senate version of the Juvenile Justice bill, including trigger locks and background checks. If Smith & Wesson can see the wisdom of balancing public safety with private ownership rights, why can this Congress not do the same?

The last time—and, in fact, the only time—that the conference committee on the Juvenile Justice legislation met was last August. Time is of the essence. I urge the conferees on both sides of the hill to meet and to settle their differences. The longer they wait, the longer the delay, the better the chances are that some further tragedy will come along and steal the lives of more innocent children. We might make a difference. We might save a life. Why not have the courage to try?

Mr. President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BREAUX. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

The Senator may proceed.

Mr. BREAUX. Mr. President, I am pleased to follow the distinguished Senator from West Virginia, who always has most interesting remarks. I am pleased to associate myself with his comments as well.

HIGH FUEL PRICES

Mr. BREAUX. Mr. President, it is hard to pick up a newspaper or turn on a television set or read any kind of political commentary or watch one of the Sunday morning talk shows without having the subject very quickly turn to the high price that we in this country are paying for gasoline. There is a certain amount of deja vu when you look at some of these situations: Here we go again. Many Members remember quite well the problems this country faced in the 1970s when we had the long lines at our gas stations around this country. People were screaming and hollering about the lack of gas for their automobiles and were also complaining about the price of that gas if they were lucky enough to get it.

Here we are in the year 2000, and basically the problem is very similar to what it was back in 1973. It is interesting to me to see so many people wringing their hands, struggling to find out exactly what is causing this problem. It is not, indeed, a mystery at all. The problem is one of supply and demand. We are using far more gas and oil in this country than we were in the past decade, than in the past 5 years, in fact, more than we used last year. Yet we are producing substantially less than we are using.

During the 1970s oil embargo, many of us, particularly those from oil-producing States, were saying the problem would only get worse unless we did something to become energy self-sufficient. In those days, the 1970s, we were importing about 36 percent of the oil we consumed in the United States. When the OPEC nations just slightly tightened their valves and started producing a little bit less, that 36 percent brought this Nation to its knees and created the long lines at the gas stations.

Many of us at that time said it was only going to get worse unless we concentrated on trying to be more energy self-sufficient in this country; we would have to concentrate on making sure we were producing, in an environmentally safe manner, the necessary energy to run this Nation.

I wonder what people would say if we imported 50 percent of all the food we needed to feed the citizens of our country. I bet that if we were 50-percent dependent on foreign countries for food in this country, there would be long lines marching in Washington, people clamoring for our Nation to get its act together and become more self-sufficient, producing the food we need. I wonder why it is any different when it comes

to producing the energy this country needs.

If food is important to our Nation and to our Nation's economy, to our Nation's well-being, to our security, certainly energy, which runs this country, is important to the security of this Nation. Yet in the year 2000 we are not importing 36 percent of the energy we use, as we were in the last major crisis back in the 1970s. Today we are importing 55 percent; 55 percent of all of the energy from oil and gas that we use in this country is coming from other countries. We cannot depend on many of these countries to give us the supply of energy we need in this country.

So I question why there is so much difficulty in figuring out why we have this problem. In the last 13 years, our domestic oil production has fallen by 2.7 million barrels a day. In the past 2 years, domestic production has fallen about half a million barrels per day. In the last decade, there has been a 17-percent decline in the domestic production of oil and gas in this country, while at the same time our domestic oil consumption has increased by 14 percent. It does not take a rocket scientist to figure out that we have a huge problem. We are producing less and less and we are consuming more and more. We are depending more and more on foreign sources for the energy we need to run America.

Whether you are a farmer in Louisiana or in Kansas or any other part of the United States, or whether you are a housewife taking the children to school, whether you are a small businessman who is dependent on deliveries, or whether you are an independent trucker anywhere in America, you are starting to feel serious economic pressure because of the dramatic and rapid increase in the price of oil, in the price of gas at the pump.

The reason I bring this to my colleagues' attention is not any mystery. I have outlined why I think the problem is as it is. When you become over 50-percent dependent on other countries for something that is so important to your domestic survival and economic security, as we are dependent on oil, our country is facing very difficult times.

Some may ask: Senator, that is all fine and good. I understand what you are saying. But is there any oil for us to produce in this country?

The answer is: Absolutely. The problem, however, is that so many of our Nation's most valuable energy areas have been arbitrarily shut off from any potential exploration and development by actions of Government, actions by the Congress, actions by the previous President, actions by this President. They have all said: There are certain areas we are not even going to look for oil and gas. We would rather depend on OPEC to be generous and give us all the oil we need at the price we want.

In fact, that is not happening. On the chart I have here on the floor, the orange shows the areas in the Outer Continental Shelf around the United States where we have said, by Presidential edict or by acts of Congress: You cannot even look for oil and gas.

From Maine to Florida, from Washington State to the Mexican border, we have said we are not going to look or explore or even offer for lease these areas where there are known quantities of oil and gas.

The distinguished Senator from Alaska, Mr. MURKOWSKI, talked about the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and the fact that it has been closed to any kind of production. An interesting fact is, our own Department of the Interior has estimated we have enough oil in that area to replace the amount of oil we are getting from the country of Saudi Arabia. Yet that area has been closed to even looking to see if oil might be there and in recoverable quantities.

I remember the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge issue very well. I was in the House of Representatives when Congress made a decision as to how to handle that area, which is located right next to Prudhoe Bay, which arguably has been one of the largest oil deposits anywhere in North America.

I remember when we were doing the National Alaskan Interest Lands Conservation Act in 1980. We were not sure about what to do with that area because not enough was known at that time, some said, to make a decision on whether or not we should explore for oil in that area.

The House of Representatives—and it was also adopted in the Senate—said: All right, we are going to take this area and set it aside, and we are going to study it.

A lot of times, when Congress does not know what to do, it studies something and delays it by having a study.

We required the Department, working with industry, to do a study about whether, No. 1, there were resources there, and, No. 2, whether they could be environmentally, safely produced by actions of industry if we allowed them to do it. That was in 1980.

In 1987, the studies were completed and the results were in. The Department of the Interior looked at the results of that study and recommended the area be leased for exploration and development. But Congress would not let them do that. The administration would not let them do that. Even though the Department of the Interior, based on the study we required them to do in this area, recommended the area be leased for exploration and development, there has been no exploration. We will not even look to see whether there is any oil in that area for use by the people of this country. Yet the estimate is that there could be as many as 16 billion barrels of oil sitting there. By governmental action, by Presidential order, we are saying we are not even going to look there.

Some say: Senator, are you advocating we have oil production in a refuge? I only point out, we have oil production in my State of Louisiana in practically every wildlife refuge. In the congressional district I represented, which is on the coast of Louisiana, we had oil and gas production on every single one of the wildlife refuges.

The test is whether it is compatible with the purpose of the refuge. The question is whether they can be done together in an environmentally safe manner. The answer has clearly been shown to be yes, it can, in most circumstances. The wildlife refuge benefits from some of the royalties from that oil and gas production, and the country benefits because we are producing oil where it is found. We can do both at the same time.

The Department of the Interior said that in 1987 after this extensive study Congress required. People in Congress said: We will study it because we think the answer will come back no. But when the answer came back, yes, it can be done, Congress said: We are going to say no anyway.

If one looks at the map on the chart, they will notice that from Maine, up to the Canadian border, down to the middle of Florida, we have 25 leases. That is it—25 leases. In the Gulf of Mexico off Louisiana and Texas, we have over 10,000 leases—oil that is being produced on the Outer Continental Shelf that is being used by everybody in the United States. About 75 percent of our Federal oil comes from off my State and the States of Texas and Mississippi in the Gulf of Mexico. Over 10,000 leases are producing oil every day, ensuring economic security for this country.

We cannot do it by ourselves. Selfishly, I could say: Look, I hope they do not do it anywhere else. It is great for Louisiana if we have all the production and we get all the benefits, all of the jobs, all of the construction; that is fine for my State. But it is not good national policy to say we are only going to do it off one State.

On the other hand, look at the west coast. There are a lot of cars on the west coast. There are a lot of SUVs on the west coast. There are a lot of people hurting who want prices to be lower on the west coast. Yet the entire coastline from Canada to Mexico is off limits. There are only 83 leases from Canada to Mexico, and these are old leases which have been there for years and years.

With regard to this orange area on this map, we are saying: No, don't look at it; don't touch it; don't consider it. Are they saying that because we do not need it when we import 55 percent of our oil, or are they saying things have to be done perfectly to proceed and, unless things are done perfectly, we are never going to proceed?

It seems to me we have to have a balanced approach to energy development in this country. We cannot continue to send our Secretary of Energy—which is where I understand he is this week—to meet with OPEC hat in hand, saying to these foreign countries, please, please, give us more oil, when at the same

time we are not doing nearly enough to develop the legitimate resources in our own country.

If we had an aggressive development and production program in our country, we would not be importing 55 percent of the oil we need to run America. Yet when we say we are not going to do anything between Canada and Mexico and between Canada and Florida and we are only going to do it off Louisiana, Texas, and Mississippi, that is not a balanced approach to energy development in the United States.

Some say: We don't want to have it off our coast because it may pollute the environment; we may have an oil spill from an offshore platform. The truth is, it is far more dangerous to import oil in tankers every day than it is to produce in offshore waters. There was a study done by the National Academy of Sciences—and it is on the minerals management web site—which talks about where oil is coming from that is polluting the waters of the world. Does it come from offshore production? No. Offshore oil and gas development is actually 2 percent of the oil that is found in offshore waters around the world. A little less than 2 percent comes from offshore development.

Where does it come from? It is no surprise: Importing oil and moving oil around the oceans of the world in ships. Marine transportation accounts for 45 percent of all the oil that is found in the ocean waters that is not supposed to be there. Municipal and industrial waste and runoff, which comes from when it rains and the rain runs off the streets and works its way ultimately to the oceans of the world, accounts for another 36 percent. Atmospheric fallout is about 9 percent, and natural seepage, which comes up from the ocean floor, is about another 9 percent. But less than 2 percent of the oil that is found in oceans comes from drilling for oil and gas off the coast of the countries where oil can be found.

I do not know what the answer is. There is no simple answer. I know the President made some proposals in a radio address this week. I encourage the administration to continue to seek solutions to the problem.

I have a suggestion, and one of the suggestions is right from the minerals management office. They have a chart that talks about the undiscovered resources in areas that are currently under moratorium. They make an estimate of how much oil is in areas of the country that we cannot even enter. Their estimate is probably the most accurate in the world.

For areas under moratorium—either congressional or Presidential moratorium—they estimate there are 15.2 billion barrels of oil sitting out there in areas where we are saying: Don't even go look. And there is an additional 61.5 trillion cubic feet of natural gas that could be found in these areas. But you know what. If we don't look, we will never know. It would seem to me that as long as we have these huge areas where we have x'd out any ability to take a look to see what energy is there, we are not on very solid ground when we blame OPEC for the problems we are facing today.

With 55 percent of the oil used in the United States being imported, OPEC has the ability, by turning that faucet off just a little bit, to bring this country to its knees. Can you imagine what it would do if they turned a full turn and really reduced it?

No nation should ever allow itself—certainly not a nation as strong as the United States—to become dependent on foreign sources for things that are critical to our economic well-being and our national security and, indeed, our survival. Yet over the years we have allowed just that to happen with regard to energy.

We would not allow it to happen in the area of food. We would not allow it to happen in the area of planes or tanks or warships or anything else that we depend on for our national security—except in this one area. We have made a conscious decision to say: It is all right to import over half of the energy we use.

It is unacceptable. It is bad public policy. It needs to be changed; otherwise, every so often we will be faced with what we are faced with today.

In his radio address, the President has made some suggestions which I have noted. One was the creation of an environmentally sound home heating oil reserve for the Northeast. My question is, Where does the oil for that reserve come from? Are we just going to buy it from OPEC at $30 a barrel? That is not going to solve the problem of high energy prices for the Northeast if we are filling up their oil reserve with oil coming from OPEC at $30 a barrel. It would come out of the reserve at the same price.

The second suggestion is to immediately reauthorize the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, which is located in Louisiana and Texas, where we have oil underground. I am all for doing that, but we are going to be putting oil in the Strategic Petroleum Reserve at $30 a barrel because of what OPEC has done to us.

Neither one of these two suggestions domestically produce any additional oil. It will continue to be filled with 55 percent of oil coming from foreign sources at $30 a barrel or at whatever price OPEC determines.

The President has some other suggestions on promoting energy efficiency. We are all for that. He has some suggestions for tax incentives for energy efficiency. I am for that. He has some suggestions on promoting the use of alternative fuels—I am for that—and also support for domestic oil production, which I think is very positive.

But if you have all of these areas that are roped off, if you will, and you say, ''Don't go here,'' when we know some of these areas have as much as Saudi Arabia exports to us—such as, in the Arctic Wildlife Refuge—I suggest that as long as we have huge areas, thousands of miles of areas where we are saying don't even look for energy, then we are never going to address the heart of the problem, which is a lack of energy self-sufficiency for the United States of America. We cannot ever say we are going to be energy self-sufficient just by producing energy off the coast of one or two States.

Certainly, the Congress in the past has accepted the fact that we would let these areas be roped off. I guess the thought is always: Let's produce it somewhere else.

That is what we are doing. We are producing it somewhere else. It is called OPEC. Its nations have formed a cartel. They have done very well in controlling the price. They know they can bring this country—indeed, the world—to its knees simply by turning the valve off just a little bit. They will continue to do that.

I hope they open up the spigot just a little bit, but as long as we are importing 55 percent of the energy for the United States of America, they will always have the ability to bring us to our knees. That is something that should be unacceptable for the United States of America.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 4 p.m. shall be under the control of the Senator from Wyoming, Mr. THOMAS, or his designee.

The distinguished Senator from New Hampshire.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to yield myself 10 minutes on the time of Mr. THOMAS.

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

(The remarks of Mr. GREGG pertaining to the introduction of S. 2249 are located in today's RECORD under ''Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.'')

(The remarks of Mr. GRASSLEY pertaining to the introduction of S. 2252 are located in today's RECORD under ''Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.'')

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GREGG). The Chair, in his capacity as a Senator from the State of New Hampshire, asks unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.