cause a significant reduction in the amount of gasoline consumed in this country, it needs what Minnesota provided—a mandate; a mandate such as this bill contains; a gradual, graduated, achievable increase over a decade. With that mandate, ethanol providers and would-be providers will know there is a reliable and growing market nationwide for ethanol.

Opponents have made much of the fact that one company—Archer Daniels Midland—produces 41 percent of this country's ethanol. What they don't tell you is that 25 years ago ADM produced almost 100 percent of this country's ethanol. ADM's market share has gone down every year for the last 25 years, and it will continue to go down as more companies, and farm Coops, make it possible and profitable to produce ethanol. For unlike gasoline, ethanol's raw products are available all over this country. They can be grown in most parts of this country. Where there are large markets, like California or New York, refineries will locate there. Just as California, as it population grew, declined to depend on milk and cheese from Minnesota and Wisconsin, and developed its own instate industry which supplies, actually oversupplies, its State's entire need.

If ethanol must be transported by truck, or tanker, or rail from one part of this country to another, it is far shorter and thus less expensive than importing oil, gasoline, and MTBE from all over the world. Seventy-five percent of California MTBE currently arrives by barge, the majority of it from Saudi Arabia. That is why the price per gallon increases which have been used on this floor defy common sense. And they are wrong.

The alternative to doing nothing with ethanol is doing nothing at all—nothing except increasing our national consumption of gasoline and oil. If world prices remain the same as today, and if world and domestic supplies can reliably satisfy our nation's ever-growing demand, then that ''continue the status quo'' strategy will continue to be less expensive than a transition to 10 percent or 20 percent or 50 percent ethanol.

But those who live by the sword, die by the sword. Those who want to bet this Nation's entire transportation sector on the status quo continuing indefinitely are taking a big gamble. Anyone who believes the United States can continue to get 25 percent of the world's entire oil production at today's prices are making a hugely optimistic assumption.

Yes. There will likely be an incremental cost to a transition to ethanol nationwide. There is always a short-term cost to diversification. A business that has one produce line incurs a cost to developing a second or a third product. As long as the first product continues to sell, overall profits will be slightly down. But when that product falters, and the others come on line, the company will prosper and grow, rather than decline.

Someone who owns only one stock incurs a short-term cost diversification. But someone who is betting their entire future on that one stock is a foolish person to do so. For the United States to bet our country's entire energy future on uninterrupted consumption of our ever more traditional energy sources is to make a very unwise bet.

We can afford the small incremental costs of transition if they lead to really substantial alternatives. That is what ethanol and biodiesel would do—replace 20 percent of today's diesel fuel over this entire country.

I am a Senator from a corn- and soybean-producing State. Is ethanol production an economic boon to many Minnesota farmers? Yes; it is. I hope it will continue to raise market prices for these agricultural commodities, which will reduce the need for and the amount of taxpayer subsidies. However, I would not stand on the floor of the Senate today and advocate ethanol as an alternative fuel for the entire country if I did not believe—if I were not certain—that it would be good for the entire country.

It will take the decade which this bill uses to increase ethanol production to an amount where it can be used as a consistent 10 percent blend nationwide. That is what Minnesota uses today. That would be 10 percent less oil-based gasoline. And that is twice as much oil alternative as ANWR would produce at that point in time.

It will take another decade to increase ethanol production to replace up to 50 percent of our current gasoline consumption. We should hope we have that long as a nation before a significant increase in the price of gasoline or a lack of supply causes a serious disruption in our economy and in our lives. If, however, at that point in time we are using 50 percent less gasoline, we will have a real alternative fuel at a lower cost and a more reliable supply based right here in the United States.

If we don't undertake this transition, then we will have nothing—nothing that we can do. That is what the amendment that strips this bill of any fuel alternative will leave this country in the future—nothing, no alternative. That is a very bleak future.

Thank you. I yield the floor.

(The remarks of Mr. MCCONNELL and Mrs. FEINSTEIN pertaining to the introduction of S. 2194 are located in today's RECORD under ''Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.'')

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. NELSON of Florida). The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BINGAMAN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, may I be recognized as in morning business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The Senator from Florida.

DRILLING IN ANWR

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, I congratulate the Senate for the tremendous vote we had today on basically dispensing with the attempt to amend the bill of the Senator from New Mexico to drill in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. The vote ended up being a lot stronger than a lot of people expected. For us just to talk about the sensitive environment and the drilling is certainly a very important component of the question. But the question is so much more comprehensive. It is a question of when is America going to be energy reliant, and are we going to ween ourselves from our dependence on foreign oil, and how are we going to produce that energy?

As the chairman of the Energy Committee has reminded us many times, the biggest part of our energy consumption is in the transportation sector. And if we don't ever address the enormous consumption of energy in the cars that we drive, then we will remain dependent on all that foreign oil. There is an easy way to do that, and that is to use this beneficence of American ingenuity called technology and apply it to the problem and increase the miles per gallon in our automobiles and SUVs and light trucks, which we can do so well.

Already we have hybrid vehicles that, because of a computer, go back and forth between an electric generation and gasoline generation, and you cannot tell the difference as the driver and the passenger, with all the creature comforts that we enjoy in our automobiles.

So I congratulate the Senate and I congratulate the chairman of the Energy Committee—who now graciously has offered to take the Chair so that I might make these few remarks—for an extraordinary effort. I hope that now he is able to proceed with the energy bill and finally get it passed out of this body.

I also want to take a moment to state, with a sober and heavy heart, what we are facing in the Middle East. From the standpoint of the United States, it is very clear what is in our interest, and that is peace in the Middle East, a cessation of firing, a creation of an environment where the parties can come together.

A week and a half ago I was in Damascus, Syria, and met with the new young President who took over after his father died, President Assad. We said: President Assad, now is the time for leaders outside of the Palestinians and the Israelis to emerge in the area and to realize that it is in your interest that there be peace in the Middle East.

We thanked him for his help and his intelligence network with regard to

our efforts in going after the al-Qaida terrorists.

We said: President Assad, you have to go after the groups, such as Hezbollah, that you are offering facilities to, which are also fostering terrorism.

Of course, he rejected that. His point of view was that they were freedom fighters. There is a lot of politics in it.

It will take leaders such as Assad and the leader of Lebanon, with whom I met yesterday, the Prime Minister of Lebanon, Rafiq Hariri, to emerge as leaders in the Arab world and say: We have to change the old ways; we have to do it differently, and violence and killing is not in our interest.

Those Arab leaders are going to have to say vigorously to their colleagues that it is in their interest that they create an environment where they can solve this violent situation in the Middle East and bring the Palestinians and Israelis together. As the Good Book says, ''Come let us reason together.''

I am very grateful that the Senator took the Chair so I could come to my desk and make these remarks.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. NELSON of Florida). Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Nevada.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, we are waiting, as I have indicated, for Senator MURKOWSKI. As I indicated an hour or so ago, he had to go to a funeral in Arlington. We are going to hopefully agree on bringing up an amendment he has dealing with Iraq. That will probably take about 45 minutes, and then we will move to the border security matter. So those Senators wishing to speak in morning business, the time may be limited today.

We certainly have time for Senator CORZINE to speak for up to 10 minutes. I ask unanimous consent that Senator CORZINE be allowed to speak for up to 10 minutes as in morning business.

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

The Senator from New Jersey.

SOCIAL SECURITY TRUST FUND, THE SECURITY AMERICANS NEED

Mr. CORZINE. Mr. President, today I rise to speak out on a subject that is both timely and extremely important to the American people. A few hours ago, the House of Representatives, showing an unimaginable indifference to the retirement security of American families, and further undermining the integrity of the Social Security trust fund, made permanent the tax cuts that were enacted last year.

The bill they passed really frames a stark choice for the American people: Do we take payroll tax revenues that working people, working Americans, thought were being dedicated to the Social Security trust fund and use them instead to pay for this huge new tax cut, a tax cut that really goes to the wealthiest of Americans or should we be using Social Security revenues, payroll taxes, for their intended use, securing the Social Security trust fund for this and future generations?

It is a pretty fundamental choice. It is pretty starkly laid out by the nature of the tax cut that was endorsed by the House Republicans today. It is a choice that will impact all Americans.

I believe if Americans were asked, they might come up with a different answer. I think they would choose security, Social Security, not tax breaks that would take the security out of Social Security.

I want to give one perspective. The tax cut that was implemented today in the House is about $400 billion more in the next decade, and 60 percent of that upcoming tax cut goes to those with incomes over $500,000. That is hard to believe. Of the additional $400 billion, 60 percent is going to people with incomes over $500,000. I have a hard time understanding why we are taking payroll taxes and the Social Security trust fund to fund that kind of tax cut.

The effort to make that tax cut permanent is not only misallocating resources, but in my view it is draining the resources that are badly needed to protect Social Security in the years ahead for those millions of baby boomers who will be retiring in the coming decades. It is really quite substantial.

Right now, Social Security has about 46 million folks retired. In another 20 years, that will be 72 million. So it is a big change in the population. That is what the demographic bubble is all about. How are we going to pay for it if we are going to implement tax cuts that are going to take as much as $4 trillion away from the ability of the American public to have revenues to pay for Social Security in the years ahead in the second 10 years? It is hard for me to understand.

More importantly, I want to consider two numbers. The 75-year cost of the tax cut is $8.7 trillion. That is a lot of money. It will take awhile to count that far. By contrast, the shortfall in the funding to maintain the currently guaranteed benefits for Social Security beneficiaries, of all generations over the next 75 years, is only $3.7 trillion. So we have more than two times coverage by the tax cut that was implemented. If it were to be followed in the way the House did it, we would be giving up those revenues to cover the needs of Social Security. I do not get it. We have the resources, if we have the will, to make sure that Social Security is there for each and every generation.

So that is part of the trouble. Unfortunately, these drains on Social Security revenues that are caused by this tax cut are step 1 in the administration's plan to undermine the security of Social Security. Step 2 is to privatize that program; that is, taking $1 trillion out of the trust fund—it is actually a little more than $1 trillion, but for round numbers, and it is a big number—in the next decade so we can provide funding for these private accounts. That is going to lead to a dramatic cut in benefits which are absolutely necessary.

If one has any doubt about it, they just have to look at the report released by the President's Commission on Social Security. They talk about it themselves. That, when it gets translated into individual lives, as we move to the next chart, will reduce benefits for a 30-year-old about 20 percent when they retire in about 2032.

For those who are a little younger than that, it will be almost 45 percent by 2075, a cut in Social Security benefits, 20 percent for 30-year-olds, 25 percent for people who are starting in the workplace, and about 45 percent for younger Americans.

If one thinks Social Security benefits are lavish, I think we all have another review to go through. That 25- to 45-percent cut, that goes against benefits that average about $10,000 a year for most Social Security beneficiaries. For most seniors, Social Security is their only source of income, about two-thirds of them. I do not know what happens in Florida, but in my State of New Jersey $10,000 is not a princely sum. It is not going to allow our seniors to have a tremendously flush lifestyle.

To the President's commission, that $10,000 looks like too much because they are instituting a program that, in fact, will undermine the ability to maintain those guaranteed benefits at that level. I think that is hard to believe as well. That is step 2.

They do not want us to have the ability to maintain those guaranteed benefits. What they want to do is have that tax cut that I talked about before.

So I have to say that both for myself and for my colleagues, most of us on this side of the aisle, we have a different view about protecting Social Security. We think protecting the security of working American families must be our top priority. We are going to fight long and hard and steady to make sure Social Security is not undermined—not today, as was done through the passage of this tax bill in the House, not tomorrow, or in the years ahead, not ever.

Today's choice that was put in front of us is whether Social Security is really about the security of all Americans in their retirement years. I do not think we should be taking the term ''security'' out of Social Security. We ought to stand firm with it. That is what this debate will be about as we go forward day after day.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.