

this shortage. If we don't have an adequate supply, it will affect the economy across the board. It is already affecting the chemical industry in my State, and the fertilizer industry. It is going to affect people's quality of life. This is so important. We need the whole package. We need more production. We need new technology. We need clean coal technology. That is just one example. We need more conservation of a responsible nature. We need to look at alternative fuels. I think a lot of these alternative fuels are, quite frankly, not very legitimate. But it is legitimate to try to find alternative fuels.

I urge my colleagues, let us work together. Let us get this done, get it into conference, and let us produce a national energy policy.

I think this issue is more important than any issue Congress is considering at this time. It is urgent that we get this work done.

I wanted to speak in support of the Bond-Levin amendment. I know very good work has been done on this amendment. I worked last year with Senator BOND and Senator LEVIN. They have given a lot of thought to how this should be designed. It bases decisions on these CAFE standards on science and solid data. I believe this idea of just plucking a number out of the air and saying that number is achievable is irresponsible. It may not even be achievable. Based on what? It makes somebody feel good? And what about the choices for the American people? What about the sacrifices in safety that we are asking them to make?

When you just pick a number, such as 32 miles per gallon or 37 miles per gallon, I don't think that is a wise decision, unless it has been based on thorough study and solid data. Of course, the organization to make that determination is the NHTSA. They have the expertise to analyze the numbers and consider all that should be involved, including the jobs that might be affected, the technology, how this improved fuel efficiency could be obtained, and, yes, safety. There are proposals out there which would adversely affect all these areas, including jobs, employment, consumer choice, and safety.

The National Academy of Sciences CAFE report declared there will be more deaths and injuries if fuel economy standards are raised too fast without proper consideration given to how that is being done and what impact it might have.

This amendment is supported by a broad coalition: labor, the UAW, the AFL-CIO, the Chamber of Commerce, the National Association of Manufacturers, the Farm Bureau, automobile dealers, and over 40 other organizations. That ought to tell you something. That type of broad support indicates that people are concerned about what might be done with this CAFE standard.

Yes, we should continue to work to improve fuel efficiency. We should have

incentives to move in that direction. But I am very worried we are going to cause some real damage. What about the choice made by Americans? This is still America, isn't it?

Is the Federal Government going to mandate that every driver drive an automobile like the one in this picture? Last year, I talked about the "purple people eater." Shown in this picture is a version of the "purple people eater." That might be fine around town in Washington, DC, but I can tell you, on some of the back roads in my State of Mississippi that will get you killed. That is not practical and people will not choose to drive it. They want an SUV or they want a pickup truck. And they don't want to be penalized by the Federal Government saying to them: You have to do this. And, by the way, if you don't do this, we will make you pay some kind of a price. This is ridiculous.

In my own case, my family is growing. We have our children and grandchildren. It is a wonderful deal. Then, in August, when we take our annual family vacation, I have a choice. I can have a bigger automobile with the three seats in it, where we can securely carefully fasten our grandchildren in these safety seats. We can take two automobiles, each being an SUV, or we can take three automobiles. Now, how much fuel is saved? And how much safety is given up?

Mr. President, this is ridiculous. It continues to be. It was last year. The American people are speaking with their choices. They are voting with their feet and their cash. They can buy these more fuel-efficient automobiles, but they are not doing it.

What percent is actually buying these smaller automobiles? I think, any way you slice it, not more than 14 percent. The American people are making other choices.

So I think what we are doing is very important. I think there are a lot of very substantive issues involved, and the least of which is not the American people's choices.

I do not think we should be forced to drive that automobile shown in the picture. I don't know who makes that automobile. I don't know where it is made, but it is probably reposing somewhere in France or Germany. I like the bigger vehicle shown in the picture behind it.

The American people have a need for vans or SUVs or pickup trucks. I understand there is going to be an amendment offered that will pick on particularly light trucks. Goodness gracious, light trucks use less fuel. Why pick on a light truck versus a heavy truck? This makes no sense.

I oppose the amendment that is going to be advocated by Senator MCCAIN and, I think, Senator FEINSTEIN. I oppose the Durbin amendment.

This amendment by BOND and LEVIN is bipartisan. It makes common sense. It moves us in the right direction. But it is based on commonsense science and

solid data. So I urge that we adopt this amendment, and let's leave the choice in the hands of the American people and not have the "Grand Poobah Government" tell us what we have to do in one more area. Don't make the American people drive this little grunt of a car shown here.

Mr. President, do I have any time remaining?

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has 3½ minutes remaining.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I yield the remainder of my time to the Senator from Missouri, keeping in mind that Senator BOND would have 2 minutes to close at the end of the debate on this section, I believe.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. TALENT. Mr. President, I doubt I will use the full 3½ minutes. It is just that I ran out of time before when I was in the middle of ranting and raving on this subject. I would hate to close my remarks on that tone, anyway.

Let me explain to the Senate why this is so important to me personally. I recently visited the Kansas City Ford plant where they make the new Ford 150 truck. It is a triumph of American engineering and the productivity of American workers.

The workers there are proud of that truck. And they should be proud of it. It means many people will be able to travel in this country safely and with comfort. I drive an SUV. I don't drive it because I am trying to hurt the environment or affect our energy independence. I drive it because we have small children. I used to drive a hatchback, but if we got in an accident in that hatchback, it would fold up like an accordion. That is why I drive an SUV. That is why millions of people do.

The Senator from Mississippi is right to say it is wrong to disparage these vehicles. People who make these vehicles in Missouri and around the country are proud of what they do. They are satisfied with their jobs. Let's not gamble with their jobs. We are trying to come out of a recession. We are trying to create jobs in this country.

Vote for the Bond-Levin amendment. It is a good, modern amendment and moves us forward. It protects people's jobs. I urge the Senate to support the amendment.

I thank the Senator from Mississippi for yielding me a few extra minutes. I yield back whatever time remains.

#### EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF PRISCILLA RICHMAN OWEN, OF TEXAS, TO BE UNITED STATES CIRCUIT JUDGE FOR THE FIFTH CIRCUIT—Resumed

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, notwithstanding the provisions of rule XXII, there will now be 1 hour of debate equally divided between the Senator from Utah, Mr.