report language. The subsequent report, which accompanied the fiscal year 2004 CJS appropriations bill, stated the following:

As in past years, the Committee expects NOAA and the Department to adhere to the direction given in this section of the Committee report, particularly language regarding consultation with Congress, and to observe the reprogramming procedures detailed in section 605 in the general provisions of the accompanying bill. Unlike past years, however, the Committee intends to enforce congressional direction ruthlessly.

The reason I am referencing that report is to demonstrate the extent to which committees can go in imposing report directives. I am not trying to suggest the DOD appropriations report accompanying the pending bill includes comparable threats, but I am concerned about a line in the bill language that I believe should be eliminated because it would have the effect of authorizing projects that are merely listed in the report, thus giving provisions in the report the force of law.

Section 8042 of the bill states:

The Secretary of Defense, notwithstanding any other provision of law, acting through the Office of Economic Adjustment of the Department of Defense, may use funds made available in this Act under the heading ''Operation and Maintenance, Defense-Wide'' to make grants and supplement other Federal funds in accordance with the guidance provided in the report of the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate accompanying this Act, and the projects specified in such guidance shall be considered to be authorized by law.

Let me repeat the last phrase: ''and the projects specified in such guidance shall be considered to be authorized by law.''

Mr. President, the projects referred to are not included in the legislative language, and we should not be suggesting that it is acceptable to authorize provisions by reference. In this particular case, it would result in the authorization of about 30 projects. But imagine what is next. I can envision the conference report of this or another bill to include a line stating that all the projects in its report ''shall be considered to be authorized by law.''

The language that allows certain projects to be ''considered authorized by law'' is a dangerous precedent, and I believe it should be eliminated.

I appreciate that the bill managers have agreed to accept this amendment, and I trust that they will work to ensure that the final conference agreement is free of language that would allow provisions in the joint explanatory statement to have the force of law.

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, recently the Senate Appropriations Committee approved the fiscal year 2007 Defense appropriations bill. As a member of the committee, I supported this measure, and it is now being considered by the full Senate.

The bill provides $453.5 billion in new discretionary spending authority for the Department of Defense. Included in this amount is $50 billion for contingency operations related to the global war on terror.

I have repeatedly called upon the Bush administration to be frank with American taxpayers about funding levels for ongoing operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. For far too long, the Bush administration has relied upon emergency supplemental spending measures, as opposed to the annual budget process, to fund our efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan. I believe that is wrong.

In his budget proposal, President Bush finally submitted a $50 billion request for a bridge fund to support military efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq for the coming fiscal year. The Senate Appropriations Committee funded this request, but I remain concerned that this level of funding will be insufficient, and once again Congress will need to consider another emergency supplemental appropriations bill.

Furthermore, President Bush's continued insistence on maintaining tax breaks for the extremely wealthy has made it incredibly difficult to fund important domestic spending programs. In fact, the President's budget reduced funding for critical programs including No Child Left Behind, the Perkins Career and Technical Education Program, and firefighter assistance grants.

Consequently, Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman THAD COCHRAN was forced to reduce defense spending by $9.1 billion to meet urgent domestic spending needs. As a result, our servicemembers received a 2.2 percent across- the-board pay raise, a reduction of nearly 1 percent from last year's level of 3.1 percent. In addition, the Bush budget recommended funding for only 333,000 Army National Guard personnel, well below the National Guard authorized end-strength of 350,000. This proposal was opposed by the National Guard and Reserve, and I am pleased that the Senate was able to provide sufficient funding to support an Army National Guard end strength of 350,000 soldiers.

While some shortfalls remain in the bill, it is important to note that it provides an additional $340 million for National Guard and Reserve equipment above the President's request. The bill also provides $735 million for body armor and personal protection equipment, as well as $1.5 billion for the Joint Improvised Explosive Device Defeat Organization.

Furthermore, I am pleased that the bill reported out by the Senate Appropriations Committee provides funding for a number of important South Dakota projects. Due to my seat on the Appropriations Committee, the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology received funding to develop a number of important defense related projects. Researchers at the school will receive over $3.3 million to establish and staff a nationally competitive polymer and composites processing laboratory in South Dakota; they will work to develop new transparent armor for the Army's Future Combat Systems; and the school will develop a control system for laser powder deposition.

The South Dakota School of Mines and Technology is not the only organization conducting critical defense-related research in South Dakota. The Rosebud Sioux Tribe will receive $5 million to continue their efforts to establish the Advanced Electronics Rosebud Integration Center. The center will research, develop, test, and demonstrate advanced electronics integration and fabrication technology on the Rosebud Sioux Tribe reservation in South Dakota. In addition, funding was provided to RPM & Associates to facilitate their efforts to use LENS technology for aerospace applications. Likewise, the Batcheller Consulting Group will move forward in developing innovative on-board sensor systems to assess the wear-and-tear to military vehicles and weapon systems.

Finally, the South Dakota National Guard will benefit from defense-wide funding increases I championed. For example, the Senate Appropriations Committee included nearly $35 million above the President's request to meet the urgent needs of our National Guard and Reserve. This funding will help procure additional M22 Automatic Chemical Agent Alarms, Improved Chemical Agent Monitors, targeting pods for F–16 aircraft, and helmet mounted cueing systems.

Mr. President, while I continue to have deep concerns about the spending priorities of the Bush administration, I do believe that the funding included in this bill will go a long way toward providing our troops with the resources they need to defend our country.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, in behalf of the leader I ask unanimous consent that there be a period for morning business with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

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

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

Mr. DEMINT. Mr. President, this is that time of year when Congressmen and Senators go back to their States and report to the people about what we have done and what we plan to do. I am looking forward to going back to the State of South Carolina. I know the people are going to be interested in things that are much simpler. They want to know if we are going to help make the future better than the past, if we are going to make them safer, if

we are going to make them more prosperous, if we will do the things in Congress that will protect the values they believe make this country great.

As we think about how we have made this country safer, we can all be thankful there has not been an attack by terrorists in this country since September 11. A lot of that can be attributed to the President, his firm stand against radical Islamic terrorists around the world, and his effort, along with Republicans, pushing the PATRIOT Act to give our Government the tools it needs to track down terrorists.

Unfortunately, as many Americans know, our Democrat colleagues have made it very difficult for the President and for Republicans to do those things that are necessary to protect our people. The minority leader was bragging, boasting, that they had killed the PATRIOT Act. Fortunately, we were able to overrule and get that bill passed so our country will be safer.

Our colleagues on the other side have also criticized the President for using technology to track communications of terrorists and to trace their finances—on every turn, criticizing.

Perhaps the biggest problem we have is our Democrat colleagues do not even appear to know the enemy we are fighting. They seem to believe that if we withdraw from Iraq that somehow this global war against radical Islamic terrorists will just go away.

Most of us who are thinking clearly know that Afghanistan and Iraq are just two fronts in this battle on terror. It is a global war. We see it now in Lebanon. We see it in many places around the world. We have even been able to stop some attacks in the United States. The right is right: We are facing an enemy that is spread around the world. If we allow them to win in Iraq, we will never defeat them anywhere. We are making this country safer. We are doing it despite the obstruction of the other side of the aisle.

South Carolinians and Americans will ask how we are protecting values. Unfortunately, again, I have heard too many of my Democrat colleagues say we need to be dealing with important things and not messing with these value issues. They have tried to block a number of things, but we were able to pass the Child Predator Act, we were able to pass the Child Custody Act, and we were able to get some good judges approved so we can stop the activist courts from overturning our values and our beliefs in this country. We have made progress.

I want to talk specifically tonight about helping Americans make ends meet. I know I have heard this around South Carolina, and my colleagues are telling me they are hearing it all over the country, that despite a good economy, many Americans are still having trouble making ends meet. As we say sometimes back home, there is too much ''month'' at the end of our money. People have gotten raises, but they have also seen more taken out of their paycheck for health care. They have seen the cost of gasoline continue to rise.

We know our Democrat colleagues, for decades, have blocked new energy supplies in this country. They have blocked the generation of electricity with nuclear power. They blocked the development of new oil reserves in Alaska more than 10 years ago. If they had not stopped it then, we would now have an additional 5 percent supply of oil at a time we desperately need it. The point is, my Democrat colleagues have raised the cost of living for many Americans. We have to stop that.

This week we started off well. We passed a new energy bill that will open new exploration in the gulf. We know there are huge reserves of oil and natural gas that will lower the cost of gasoline and make it easier for our businesses to compete in this country. That is something we passed despite Democrat obstruction.

On Friday this week we will take up one of the most important bills of the year. This gets at the recent calls for prosperity that the American people are asking for. We call it the Family Prosperity Act. I call it, raise your standard of living and lower the cost of death.

This bill includes a number of things. It increases the minimum wage but, more importantly, it provides a number of research and development tax credits, tax credits for welfare to work, a lot of tax incentives to expand our economy, increase jobs and help everyone increase their income in this country, not through a Federal mandate but by just letting businesses and individuals keep more of their own money and reinvesting in our economy. That is the way to help increase income. This bill includes all of that.

It also reduces this death tax and gives some permanency out there. It makes absolutely no sense in this country when people pay taxes their whole lives, and when they die we are going to take more of it. We have not been able to overcome the Democrat obstruction to completely eliminate the death tax, but we have come up with a good compromise.

All week we have heard the Democrats in the Senate talking about this death tax, with lots of misinformation about what it really means. The death tax does provide revenue to the Federal Government—last year, about $24.8 billion, which is a lot of money, there is no question about it. But if you look at what keeping that money in our economy would do if we were able to eliminate the death tax completely, a number of economists say this would add $847 billion in capital investment and create over 100,000 new jobs a year.

Simply leaving that money in the economy, rather than bringing it here to Washington, where every American knows we don't necessarily spend it in the most efficient way, it would add over $10 billion in growth per year to our gross domestic product. This economic activity and the tax revenues associated with it would more than offset the loss of revenues from eliminating this death tax.

Let's look at it another way. This really gets back to the American family and what this means to us as a Nation. This death tax provides less then 1 percent to the Federal budget as far as tax revenues. What it does to an individual family, a small business, a farm—I have heard all week this is just the richest people in America. That is absolutely not true. The people who work for these small businesses and farms are not rich. Many times when a person dies, their estate has to sell the farm or sell the business in order to pay, sometimes, over half of what that business is worth. A family may have to work their whole lives to build up this business. There is no reason when they die that we will take half of that value and put it in the Federal Government.

Only the Democrats are going to try to make America believe that somehow we are better off as a Nation, somehow the lower income people in this country are better off if we take money from a family farm or small business or car dealership, if we take that money and put it into Government. Somehow America is better off and this will help the little guy.

What this does, it takes his job, it diminishes our economy because this money will not work as hard in our Government to create jobs and to raise personal income as it will if we leave it where people are investing and hiring people, creating jobs, building our economy, all across the country.

Unfortunately, again, our Democrats are obstructing one of the most important things we can do for the American people at this time. We can keep talking about a good economy, but lower and middle-income Americans are not increasing their incomes as fast as the cost of gasoline and health care is increasing. We have tried to put a small business health plan on the floor of the Senate this year that we think would lower the cost of health care to small businesses to around 20 percent, but it was blocked. We hope to bring it back.

Too many Americans do not have health insurance. Those that do are paying more and more every year. If they get a $25 a week raise and their employer has to take $50 more a week out of their paycheck for their health insurance, they are worse off than they were before. When they stop by the gas station, if it costs $25 more to fill up their car than it did a year ago, they are worse off than they were.

This bill we will be voting on—the motion to proceed—on Friday, we will bring it to the Senate floor to debate and work on it in September. We can send a signal to the people of South Carolina and the people of this country that we care about the problems they are having making ends meet and we are not going to stand for the Democrat obstruction that continues to keep

the cost of living higher by blocking new energy production, keeping taxes high and fighting the things that will actually lower the cost of living such as lowering the cost of gasoline and lowering the cost of health care.

The Family Prospect Act includes the first increase in the minimum wage in almost 10 years. It includes a reduction in the death tax so small family farms and businesses will not have to be sold. It includes tax credits for college tuition, welfare to work, and many other things we know will create jobs. It is truly the Family Prosperity Act.

I call on my colleagues to stop obstructing what we are trying to do. We believe we can raise the income of every American and that we can lower the cost of living if we just work together.

I hope all of our colleagues, Republican and Democrat, will see the individual family in America is much more important as far as their income than the Government. By passing this bill, at least moving on to debate at the end of this week, we will have done a lot to reassure Americans that we do care about lowering the cost of living so they can live more prosperous lives.

GULF OF MEXICO ENERGY BILL

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, I take this opportunity to comment on S. 3711, the Gulf of Mexico energy bill. I believe this legislation strikes an appropriate balance between our need for new sources of oil and natural gas, with the concerns of the coastal States.

I do support passage of S. 3711, but I do not support the bill passed by the House of Representatives earlier this year. The careful compromise that is the Senate bill cannot be found in the version passed by the House. I will not support any legislation that opens South Carolina's coast to drilling for oil.

I am supporting the Senate bill, but I wish that it went further to address our energy dependency issues. According to the International Atomic Energy Agency, IAEA, the world's demand for energy is expected to double in the coming years. This should be a call to intensify our efforts to become energy independent as soon as possible. We must continue to fund research into alternative sources of energy such as hydrogen. Where suitable we need to use solar power and potentially wind. We must expand production of ethanol beyond corn so that all regions of the country can produce ethanol efficiently.

As a cochair of the Senate Manufacturing Caucus, I voted for this legislation to increase our supply of natural gas for manufacturers. According to a study by the Congressional Research Service, 24 percent of our natural gas is consumed to generate electricity. While it is very easy to generate electricity from gas, it is a very inefficient use of the resource. Instead of electricity generation, natural gas should be utilized for industrial and home heating use.

For electricity generation, we need to continue encourage a renaissance in nuclear power. This involves reducing the regulatory redtape involved in constructing new plants, opening Yucca Mountain, and proceeding with spent nuclear fuel recycling. Nuclear power is an efficient zero-emission source of energy that can address both our energy and climate concerns.

I applaud the ongoing work of Senator DOMENICI and others to help increase the supply of critical energy resources. This bill is a small step in the right direction, and I look forward to working to further this effort beyond what we are accomplishing today. I also encourage my colleagues in the House that if they are truly serious about passing a bill to increase the supply of natural gas and oil this year, S. 3711 needs to be passed by the House as soon as possible.

STRENGTHENING CFIUS

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I rise today to express my support for this Chamber's efforts to strengthen our CFIUS process—a system of screening foreign investment to make sure our national security is not compromised. In light of recent concerns about investments that did not receive adequate scrutiny, I think is imperative that we review this process and improve upon it where needed. It is important, however, that we do not modify the process in such a way that we create a system that unnecessarily discourages companies from investing in the United States. In order for our country to maintain our competitive advantage, we must make sure that we continue to be the worldwide choice of location for businesses. Although we have passed legislation out of the Senate intended to strengthen CFIUS, this legislation did not have the benefit of floor debate. I encourage the chairman of the Banking Committee, Senator SHELBY, to continue to solicit the views of the Members of this Chamber and address concerns that may be raised about the impact on direct investment before we begin to conference with the House on the measure.

WHITE PINE COUNTY CONSERVATION, RECREATION, AND DEVELOPMENT ACT

Mr. ENSIGN. Mr. President, yesterday my colleague from Nevada, Senator REID, and I introduced the White Pine County Conservation, Recreation, and Development Act of 2006. This bill is the product of bipartisan cooperation and it represents a fair compromise on a number of issues relating to the protection of White Pine County's natural resources. While not perfect, this measure strikes an appropriate balance between economic development, privatizing Federal lands, and designating wilderness areas. On whole, the White Pine County Conservation, Recreation, and Development Act of 2006 is a good piece of legislation and it should be passed.

White Pine County, NV, with fewer than 10,000 residents, is in rural eastern Nevada. The county has seen more prosperous times. The closure of mines has been hard on the local economy. Additionally, the Federal Government manages a high percentage of land which makes it difficult to foster growth. The bill seeks modest changes to the land ownership pattern to allow White Pine County to grow and increase its tax base, and gives residents some modest tools they need to prosper. We have also provided the same tools to the Ely Shoshone Tribe. We accomplish these goals through land disposal, natural resource and wildlife conservation, tourism development, additional protection for the wondrous Great Basin National Park, recreation opportunities, Nevada State Parks expansions, wilderness designation, and a study to determine if off highway vehicles should have a designated route through the county.

The White Pine County Conservation, Recreation, and Development Act of 2006 is modeled on an innovative law that I coauthored as a member of the House of Representatives with former Senator Richard Bryan. That measure, the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act of 1998, SNPLMA, is widely regarded as a huge success. Two successor laws I wrote with Senator REID and Congressman GIBBONS, the Clark County Protection of Lands and Natural Resources Act of 2002 and the Lincoln County Conservation, Recreation, and Development Act of 2004 followed SNPLMA.

These county bills for Nevada can and should be replicated in every county in Nevada. Many other Western States with large public land holdings may benefit from our Nevada model. The premise is simple: not all land is suitable for public ownership, and other public lands are suitable for increased protection. We settle longstanding wilderness issues by designating permanent wilderness areas and release wilderness study areas to multiple use. Years of disagreements between developers, multiple use advocates, governments, environmentalists, conservationists, and other stakeholders are settled by these land bills. Bringing together people from diverse interests has actually proved to be a very healthy exercise in Nevada; it has fostered a spirit of cooperation that will benefit generations of Nevadans to come.

The White Pine County Conservation, Recreation, and Development Act of 2006 also proposes significant amendments to the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act of 1998. In some instances, we revise provisions in current law that need improvement. We add new expenditure categories for