

times those of traditional fuels, and even when carbon capture is applied which has not yet been demonstrated on a commercial scale emissions are 19–25 percent greater than traditional fuels.

The cost of these plants is exorbitant. MIT estimates that the cost of constructing a coal-to-liquids plant is four times that of a traditional refinery. The same study estimated that it would cost \$70 billion to build enough plants to replace 10 percent of American gasoline consumption.

Finally, I would like to close by saying a few words on another issue that will be coming to a vote later this afternoon. Senators CARDIN and MIKULSKI have introduced an amendment addressing the siting of liquefied natural gas terminals. This is an important amendment, and I am proud to support and cosponsor it. This is a contentious issue in Fall River, MA, where powerful interests are fighting to construct a LNG terminal far too close to a major population center. This proposal is strongly opposed by Governor Patrick and numerous State and Federal representatives. I strongly support Senators CARDIN and MIKULSKI's amendment, which would require state approval of LNG siting decisions. While LNG is an important part of our clean energy mix, it is essential that these facilities be sited in safe and appropriate locations. This amendment guarantees the state its appropriate and necessary role in approving these decisions. I urge my colleagues to support it.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I strongly support the important legislation under consideration. Like many of the bills the Senate has taken up this year, it is the product of Democrats and Republicans working together, and I commend its authors for their hard work.

The bill before us does the things the Nation must do to become more energy self-reliant, starting with raising fuel economy standards for cars and trucks. Over 30 years ago I cosponsored Scoop Jackson's legislation which first established fuel economy standards to improve the fuel efficiency of automobiles. Unfortunately, very little progress has been made since then.

There is no silver bullet for ending our dependence on foreign oil or slowing the rate of greenhouse gas emissions, but raising CAFE standards is the single most important step we can take to make positive changes in this area. Increasing the average efficiency of passenger cars by just over 5 miles per gallon would eliminate the need for American oil imports from the Persian Gulf. The CAFE provision the Commerce Committee reported will increase fuel economy in cars from 27.5 miles a gallon to 35 miles per gallon by 2020. It is the best chance this Congress will have to raise fuel economy standards, and I hope that the Senate will preserve the Commerce Committee's strong provisions.

The bill will make more cars capable of running on biofuels. Ethanol, in particular, has incredible promise as a biofuel, and it will emit far less carbon dioxide than conventional oil. The bill will ramp up production of biofuels over the next 15 years and mandate that a growing number of new vehicles be able to run on these kinds of fuels. It also provides funding to ensure that these new biofuels can reach fuel stations across the country. This provision is particularly important to New England, which has just one E85 pump located in Chelsea, MA. Brazil has shown us the way by producing ethanol from sugarcane in amounts equivalent to 300,000 barrels of oil each day. The United States must invest in biofuels, so that we too can reduce our dependence on foreign oil.

The bill also reauthorizes the Weatherization Assistance Program, which is especially important for low-income families struggling with high energy costs throughout the Nation. In Massachusetts, energy costs are among the highest in the Nation, but this program has weatherized more than 10,000 homes in the last decade. Vulnerable families can't afford to make these expensive improvements themselves, so these wise investments by the government will help families save on energy and reduce the Nation's fossil fuel emissions.

Another critical issue is the inclusion of a strong renewable electricity standard. The RES will provide the certainty the renewable energy market needs to invest in innovative technologies. In April, Senators DURBIN, SNOWE, and REID led a bipartisan letter expressing support for mandating that major utilities generate a percentage of their electricity from renewable sources. I was one of the 50 Senators who signed the letter, and I commend Chairman BINGAMAN for his work on a renewable electricity standard.

I also commend the Finance Committee for its work to provide tax incentives for renewable energy technology, and repealing tax breaks for oil and gas companies. While most Americans are seeing less and less in their paychecks, the Big Oil companies are making money hand over fist. During the first quarter of this year, Big Oil reaped \$29.5 billion in profits. Repealing these tax breaks will save taxpayers billions of dollars in subsidies to Big Oil and allow the Nation to invest in clean energy technologies.

Last week, I joined Senator SALAZAR, Senator SMITH and several other Senators in urging the Finance Committee to extend tax incentives for fuel cell technology. Hydrogen fuel cells are an energy storage technology, like batteries, that can deliver clean and reliable power. They have a broad range of uses for vehicles, auxiliary power units, and electronic devices, and they are helping us diversify our fuel supply and find better ways to deliver clean energy. Massachusetts is among the world's major centers of this tech-

nology, with more than 60 companies involved in fuel cell and hydrogen technologies. I commend Chairman BAUCUS and the Finance Committee for allowing tax credits for this important technology.

Overall, this bill brings us closer to a cleaner and more secure energy future for our nation, and I look forward to its enactment.

Mr. President, I yield back the remaining time.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I ask to speak as in morning business.

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

EMPLOYEE FREE CHOICE ACT

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I am here to speak for a few minutes in support of the Employee Free Choice Act, which the Senate will be voting on, we hope, this week. I listened to Senator SCHUMER talk about evening the playing field in the area of energy, where the oil companies have long dominated, and now it is time to give some renewable companies a chance so we can actually have an even playing field for energy, and so we can stop depending on these foreign oil companies and stop spending \$200,000 a minute on foreign oil. I am here today to talk about evening the playing field in another way, and that is with the Employee Free Choice Act.

I support this act because I believe we need to level the playing field for working people in this country, and this bill will do that by protecting the workers and by creating a fair and a smooth process for organizers.

It is getting harder and harder for working families in America to get by. Millions of workers have been left behind in this economy. With only a very small number of people doing incredibly well, millions of workers have been left behind. They are struggling to make ends meet with stagnant wages and declining benefits.

I see this in my State. I go to small towns, and about 100 people will show up in a cafe, and I think, why are all these people here? I realize that when the cost of college has gone up 100 percent in 10 years, as it has in our State, when you are a middle-class person and you can hardly make it day to day, you feel it first. When you have gas at \$3 a gallon, you feel it in your pocketbook. When health care costs go up 100 percent, as they have in our State, you feel it first when you are a middle-class person. That is what we are seeing all over this country.

Unions help all workers, not just those that are in a union. Unions helped build this country and have lifted millions of Americans out of poverty. As we go forward as a nation, unions will continue to be the friend of working men and women everywhere.

But for too many workers, forming unions at their workplace simply is not an option. Approximately 60 million workers—that is 60 million—say they

want to join a union right now, and the reasons why are clear: Union workers earn 30 percent more than nonunion workers; union workers are 62 percent more likely to have employer-provided health coverage; and union workers are 400 percent more likely to have access to pension plans.

For millions of workers, access to fair wages and decent benefits is being denied because the current process for forming unions has become flawed. In my State, we are lucky to have some great companies and honest employers that, to a large extent, treat their workers with the respect and dignity they deserve. But there are those companies across this country that don't play by the rules, where workers considering unionization face intimidation and termination from employers.

According to national labor data, workers are illegally fired in one-quarter of all union organizing campaigns, including one in five active union supporters. When workers are systematically denied rights to fair wages and benefits, we all lose, and we need to take action.

In my last job, I was a county attorney in the largest county in Minnesota. For 8 years, I managed an office of nearly 400 unionized employees. I always believed they should be treated with the same level of respect they showed the people we represented, the victims of crime, the people who needed someone there to stand up for them. This bill creates that kind of respect.

This bill will create a process that will be fair and will even the playing field. This bill will help workers. The Employee Free Choice Act places the decision to form a union where it belongs—it places it in the hands of America's workers.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. President, I yield the floor, and 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.

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

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there be a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

WEST VIRGINIA, WILD AND WONDERFUL

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, today is West Virginia's birthday. Established on June 20, 1863, West Virginia became the 35th star in our national constellation, taking her place between Kansas,

which joined the Union on January 29, 1861, and Nevada, which joined on October 31, 1864. I am pleased to offer West Virginia happy birthday wishes and to take the opportunity to share a bit about my State with the rest of the country.

I urge anyone who has not visited West Virginia to do so, to see and experience for themselves the great natural beauty, the friendly people, the exquisite art, recreation, and cultural sites and events that fill our mountain home.

As a State, West Virginia is a youthful 144 years old. As a unique piece of geography, of course, West Virginia is, of course, much older. The Appalachian Mountains that define West Virginia's geography today are but the worn remains of a once-high alpine plateau similar to Tibet, rising some 10,000 to 18,000 feet high, flanked on the south and on the east by the Allegheny Mountain Range, which may have once exceeded today's Himalaya Mountains in height.

Of course, that was a long time ago, perhaps 250 million years ago, when the great wedge of coastal sediments deposited during the earlier Devonian and Carboniferous periods were thrust up toward the heavens.

Today, a bit of that alpine experience can be found in Tucker County and in Randolph County, in an area known as Dolly Sods. Filled with upland bogs, beaver ponds, and flat rocky plains, Dolly Sods is a bit of northern Canada transplanted into West Virginia, complete with beautiful fall color and harsh winter weather.

The rock that forms West Virginia's mountains, that is seamed with the State's famous coal deposits, was laid down some 320 to 286 million years ago, when West Virginia was part of a vast complex of coastal swamplands. In this endless tropical forest of primitive ferns and towering, primitive trees formed layer after layer of peat, compressed into coal seams that average 3 feet thick but which can reach 25 feet in thickness.

When one learns that 12 inches of coal requires approximately 10,000 years of continuous peat accumulation to form, one sees a very different picture of West Virginia. The reminders of this different world can still be found in the coal, in the form of lacy, ferny fossil leaves and stems, the last farewell of a lost world.

In other rock layers, there is evidence of West Virginia's earlier days as well, in the sea creatures forever preserved and now exposed far inland and at elevations well above the sea level that they knew in life.

In the New River Gorge, visitors have the opportunity to view rock sequences from those early years, 320 to 330 million years ago. Visitors can also see a more recent phenomenon in the form of the New River Gorge Bridge, the longest single-arch steel bridge in the world, rising some 876 feet above the water below. Beautiful natural stone

works of art may also be seen in the Smoke Hole area and Seneca Rocks in Grant and Pendleton Counties and in many other locations around the State.

West Virginia's natural beauty, as well as its wonderful outdoor activities, can be found in each of West Virginia's 55 counties. From hot air ballooning or soaring to spelunking, from rock climbing to kayaking, hiking, horseback riding, or off-roading, one can be as energetic as one likes. You can also fish, ride a tube down a river, sit around a campfire, or sip lemonade in a rocking chair while you rest and recharge.

West Virginia is not simply for nature lovers, however. The State is full of festivals that celebrate virtually every foodstuff, musical form, and artistic discipline known to mankind. Musical events that range from bluegrass music to symphonies to garage bands, and shopping and sightseeing to please all tastes and interests.

West Virginia is famous, famous for her quilts, pottery, and handmade crafts, but there is also plenty of modern work alongside the homespun favorites.

From rustic campsites to the luxury of the Greenbrier, West Virginia has something for everybody, something for everyone. It could easily take a lifetime to experience everything there is to see and to do. By then, of course, time and nature will have changed a few more things and created new things to see and do.

So as West Virginia celebrates, I hope that you may be inspired to pay a visit. I hope all Senators may be inspired to pay a visit. You "ain't" seen nothing yet like it. The daylilies are blooming in great orangerafts of blossoms above the waves of green leaves, welcoming the day. Butterflies and songbirds delight the eye with color like the ribbons on a birthday present. Cool breezes are blowing, the mocking bird is singing, rivers are tumbling between the mountains, singing birthday songs. And tonight the stars will dance for you as West Virginia celebrates.

I close with a poem about West Virginia, by West Virginian Louise McNeill, from her book titled, "Hill Daughter: New and Selected Poems." Louise McNeill was born in 1911 in Pocahontas County and became West Virginia's Poet Laureate in 1979.

WEST VIRGINIA

Where the mountain river flows
And the rhododendron grows
Is the land of all the lands
That I touch with tender hands;

Loved and treasured, earth and star,
By my father's father far—
Deep-earth, black-earth, of-the-lime
From the ancient oceans' time.

Plow-land, fern-land, woodland, shade,
Grave-land where my kin are laid,
West Virginia's hills to bless—
Leafy songs of wilderness;

Dear land, near land, here at home—
Where the rocks are honeycomb,
And the rhododendrons . . .
Where the mountain river runs.

HONORING CHARLESTON'S HEROES

Mr. DEMINT. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about some real heroes