

to act on this crucial issue for all American families.

Again, this is not brain surgery. This is economics 101, supply and demand. It is not either/or. We need to do everything we can to lessen demand, and I support those measures to increase efficiency, to increase efforts at conservation, to increase new technology efforts that will lead us to new fuel sources. That is absolutely necessary. But it needs to be coupled with action to increase supply, particularly domestic supply, by tapping those vital reserves, particularly on our Outer Continental Shelf.

I join the Senator in Texas in asking, if we are not going to do it now at \$3.76 a gallon, when are we going to act? Are we going to wait for \$4? Are we going to wait for \$5? We need to act now. This is a serious issue for all Americans. This hits the pocketbook of every American family. We need to act now. We need to act not with political demagoguery, not with pure rhetoric. We need to act with measures that have an impact, both on the demand side and the supply side. I hope the Senate and the Congress move to do that.

#### ISRAEL'S 60TH ANNIVERSARY

Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, I wish to also speak on Israel's 60th anniversary. It is a very important date for a truly remarkable country and a remarkable people who, in a mere six decades of existence, have built a vibrant, successful, modern democracy out of almost nothing.

When I was still a student, I had the opportunity to visit Israel with my sister. She had a college friend who had moved to Israel after graduation. Even back then—I was very young—I couldn't help be impressed by the determination and perseverance of all the people I met and their effort to build a vibrant, democratic state, to create a safe, secure homeland for all Jews, no matter where they may have originally been from around the world.

I had a second opportunity to visit Israel as a Member of Congress many years later. It was a very different sort of trip, very different itinerary, a very different set of meetings than when I was a student. But I left with the same strong feelings of respect and admiration for all the people of Israel, the same recognition of their determination and unflagging faith in their nation and countrymen. Their belief in the importance of their mission had not faded at all in the years between my visits.

What makes today especially notable is it is the 60th anniversary of the founding of the State of Israel. There is wonderful hope in this celebration of the 60th anniversary, and there is also sober appreciation of the challenges that remain.

On the hopeful side, on the impressive side, is that in a mere 60 years, as I have said, Israel has created a nation characterized by strong democratic

principles, a compassionate and determined people, innovative industry, especially in technology, medicine, and science, a competitive global economy.

In a mere six decades, Israel has built all that tremendous innovation, tremendous economic prosperity and progress virtually out of nothing, virtually out of the sands of the desert. It has become a beacon of freedom and democracy in a region that has very few examples to speak to. Israel is the only fully developed democracy in that sense. It represents to all peoples what can be achieved when people come together in a common cause, set aside differences, work together in a very determined way to make life better for them and their children. I recognize this important anniversary.

I yield the floor.

#### CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is now closed.

#### PUBLIC SAFETY EMPLOYER-EMPLOYEE COOPERATION ACT OF 2007

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 980, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 980) to provide collective bargaining rights for public safety officers employed by States or their political subdivisions.

Pending:

Reid (for Gregg-Kennedy) amendment No. 4751, in the nature of a substitute.

Hatch amendment No. 4755 (to amendment No. 4751), to provide for a public safety officer bill of rights.

Alexander amendment No. 4760 (to amendment No. 4751), to guarantee public safety and local control of taxes and spending.

Leahy amendment No. 4759 (to amendment No. 4751), to reauthorize the bulletproof vest partnership grant and provide a waiver for hardship for the matching grant program for law enforcement armor vests.

Corker amendment No. 4761 (to amendment No. 4751), to permit States to pass laws to exempt such States from the provisions of this act.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I see my friend and colleague, Senator ENZI. I will now make a comment about the pending legislation. I thought we did have some good discussion and debate on yesterday. A number of important issues were raised. I will try this morning at least to respond to some of those matters to clear up what I think are some questions we had. Obviously, we are interested in moving this process forward, considering amendments, and getting to the Senate's business.

Once again, I will mention two organizations that support our Public Safety Employee Cooperation Act: the International Association of Fire-

fighters and the Union of Police Associations. We pointed out this week is set aside in our Nation, and has been set aside since 1962, to give special honor to our men and women in the police organizations who have lost their lives in the line of duty. It is a very special, solemn ceremony in which they participate. We are mindful of their service every day but especially this week. We are grateful for their strong support for this legislation. They have studied it, analyzed it, looked into it, and support it.

The National Association of Police Organizations and a great many other organizations have supported this legislation—our first responders. These are the organizations that speak for firefighters, speak for police officers, speak for the first responders.

Yesterday we had a good debate about the bill. I think we are off to a good start. I would like to take some time today to set the record straight as to what the bill does do and what the bill does not do. Fundamentally, this bill is about choice, who should make the choice whether public safety workers get a union—the Federal Government, State government, or the workers themselves.

Right now we have a system where the Government makes the choice—26 States give workers the ability to form a union if they want one; 24 States deny workers that option. These 24 State governments think they know better than the workers themselves what is best.

I disagree. Our public safety officers are on the front lines every day fighting fires, stopping crimes, saving lives. They know best how to protect the public. They know best how to keep safe on the job. They know best whether they need a union to represent their interests.

The Cooperation Act gives this choice to the workers. It says the States have to provide a path that workers can use if they decide they want a union. If the workers do not want a union, fine, they do not have to walk down that path. But the State has to make it available and let the workers choose, just as it is with the right to vote. Individuals do not have to vote, but they have the right to vote. This is the State making that judgment. We recognize that as a fundamental right there and here.

Under current law, States make the judgment decision. With the Alexander amendment it will allow the States to make the judgment and decision. Under the Corker amendment, that is it. Under our Cooperation Act it is the workers themselves who make the judgment—do they want it, don't they want it—and we abide by the outcome. That is a basic, fundamental difference.

It is not going to be hard for the States to build this path. All they have to do is provide for four core rights: No. 1, the right to form and join a union; No. 2, the right to sit down and