

through a parliamentary procedure that is permissible in the Senate, is make it impossible for the minority to offer amendments that they want and, of course, the minority's reaction to that is to not let a bill without any of their imprint succeed.

With regard to the substantive issue that is before us, the Los Angeles Times, certainly not anywhere near a conservative newspaper, in criticizing both sides on the gas price issue, this morning had this to say about the proposals my good friend and most in his party are advocating—windfall profits tax and the effort to sue OPEC. This is what the L.A. Times had to say this morning:

Exhibit A in the case against congressional Democrats as wise stewards of the energy economy is which failed to advance Tuesday after it got too few votes to head off a filibuster. It would have imposed a windfall-profits tax on oil companies and allowed the U.S. attorney general to sue OPEC on anti-trust grounds, among other things.

They are describing the central provisions of the bill we decided not to go forward with yesterday. And this is what they had to say about those two proposals:

Trying to find an economist who thinks a windfall profits tax is a good idea is like searching for a climatologist who thinks global warming is caused by trees.

This is one of the most liberal editorial pages in America. Let me say it again. This is what they said about the windfall profits tax:

Trying to find an economist who thinks a windfall profits tax is a good idea is like searching for a climatologist who thinks global warming is caused by trees. Such a tax unfairly targets the oil industry, which is already amply taxed and whose profits aren't far out of line with other U.S. industries when considered as a percentage of sales. It also would discourage oil companies from investing in new supply, which is precisely what happened when Congress imposed a similar tax in 1980. The result might be even higher oil prices.

We have been there and we have done this. We know what happens.

That's nothing compared with the lunacy of taking the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries to court, though. That would invite retaliation by OPEC members, which could seize the assets of U.S. companies doing business overseas. More likely, there would be a subtler response, such as production slowdowns that would cause oil prices to skyrocket.

One of the most liberal editorial pages in America about what my good friend the majority leader is suggesting is somehow, some way, the solution to higher oil prices at the pump.

This is a debate we welcome. We intend to participate vigorously today. There is no way—I repeat, no way—to get a handle on this issue without taking greater advantage of the oil production we have within our shores that we can explore for and develop in environmentally sensitive ways. I think it is noteworthy, for example, that there was not a single reported example of spillage in the gulf during the Katrina hurricane. I mean, that had to be, quite

possibly, the most devastating hurricane to ever hit the United States of America. I am unaware of a single reported example of any spillage in the offshore drilling that is going on in the gulf.

We know how to do this, Mr. President. We know how to exploit our resources in an environmentally sensitive way. So I welcome the debate. We are happy to be on the subject, and many of my Members, of course, will be looking forward to discussing it during the course of the day.

I yield the floor.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, first of all, my friend's statement about the L.A. Times is as Orwellian as his statement about wanting to cast votes. Understand, everybody, that he means just the opposite. They do not want to cast any votes, so that is why they are preventing us from debating this legislation. He said we are making it impossible. That is Orwellian. They are the ones stopping us from debating.

I would suggest to my friend that the L.A. Times is not some liberal newspaper. It has been purchased by one of the most conservative men in America today. He owns a chain of newspapers. He announced yesterday he is going to cut the news of the L.A. Times by 50 percent because the newspaper is going broke. So it is not a liberal editorial page.

But assuming that we understand the Orwellian-speak from the Republican side, let me read a little more from the same editorial he talked about.

Republicans are just as short of good ideas. Their big strategy on oil is to open up the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to drilling. A recent report by the Energy Information Agency showed that there is anywhere between 5.7 billion and 16 billion barrels of "recoverable" oil in the refuge. Depending on where the actual number falls in that range, it could eventually reduce the price of oil by between 41 cents and \$1.44 a barrel. Given that oil is trading at about \$135 a barrel, that's not much—and the price reduction wouldn't occur until 2026. In fact, it would take at least a decade to extract a drop from the refuge even if drilling were approved tomorrow. The land is more valuable as a pristine home for threatened species.

So, Mr. President, again, everything we have heard this morning, as I have indicated, everything we have heard from the minority is just the opposite factually.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, of course the editorial was critical of both sides, which illustrates the point. In order to function in the Senate, the majority leader is not going to be allowed to say: Oh, I will allow you amendments, but I get to pick them. Every time we have had a serious issue come before the Senate, the best offer we have had in recent months has been: Oh, sure, we will have amendments, but I want to see them first and there are going to be a limited number. I can't think of much major legislation that has been able to go forward that way unless it enjoys overwhelming support on both sides of the aisle—for ex-

ample, the supplemental to provide funding for our troops in Iraq and Afghanistan, where we have such broad support that there is widespread cooperation going forward. Normally, the way the Senate legislates is to let the Senate legislate.

I mean, my goodness, I mentioned this last week, and I will mention it again. The last sort of major, huge piece of legislation related to the environment was the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990. We had 180 amendments in the Senate, and it was a 5-week debate. It was a big, major, significant proposal in which both sides participated. It was a time in which Senator Mitchell was the Democratic leader and there was a Republican named Bush in the White House. That is the way we used to do business around here on major environmental legislation.

And I would say to my good friend that I understand the demands he has within his conference to protect his members from bad votes and the great desire to try to shut down the minority, but it just doesn't work that way in the Senate. And I think we ought to, on these big issues where there is a broad difference of opinion, go to these bills in a freewheeling and open way and explain to Members on both sides—I will explain to mine and he can explain to his—that the price for moving legislation in the Senate is that once in a while you have to cast a vote on something you wish you didn't. That is the price for doing major important legislation. I wish we could get back to that. It is obviously not going to happen today.

I yield the floor.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, remember the Orwellian-speak from the other side. Everything that my friend has said, just the opposite is factual. We would love to take votes. They won't let us take votes. As with global warming, we offered two amendments, three amendments, six amendments, germane, relevant. We tried every possible procedure, and they said: No, you can't do that.

Mr. President, that is how we feel about this legislation. We believe and we have acknowledged that our legislation is not perfect, but it is good legislation. If we could get to it, we believe it would allow for debate on how to lower gas prices in the short term and, with the alternative renewable energy, that it would allow us to look down the road and do something that is very significant for the long term. But they won't let us legislate on anything. For them to come and say: We don't want to take tough votes, well, we will take tough votes, easy votes, medium votes, anything. They won't let us. That is why we have 75 filibusters, and the number keeps going up.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.