

No. 3, we must create an incentive for more States to get into the business of offshore oil and gas production through revenue sharing. We must expand that policy which we started 2 years ago in new production in the gulf.

No. 4, the last thing we should do if we want to increase domestic energy production is tax it at higher and higher rates. Let us not pass a new windfall profits tax by another name. Let us not discourage the domestic energy sector and discourage domestic energy production, when we all profess that we want to do the opposite.

I will be fighting for these four key priorities. We can accomplish all of them in the next 10 days. Let us show the American people we do get it, that we are responsible, that we can come together and work together, and that we can act in positive ways for their benefit.

I yield the floor and 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. NELSON of Florida. 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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.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. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak in morning business.

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

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, I want to bring to the attention of the Senate a little known fact, as the clock continues to tick for us to take up drilling legislation off the Outer Continental Shelf, in particular, the proposal that has been cast by the so-called Gang of 10 as a compromise, which is looking at a comprehensive approach, which I applaud, that includes revenues. But it also includes tax incentives for alternative fuels and so forth.

The part the two Senators from Florida extremely object to is the fact of intruding in the military mission, the only testing and training area that is the largest for our U.S. Department of Defense, and all other agencies, including for classified and black programs that go on for testing and evaluation in this training range.

But what is particularly egregious is that in opening up all of that area that is now closed pursuant to the statute we passed 2 years ago, the 2006 statute—that we closed all of that area to drilling because of the military—in the opening of that area, and in the so-called giving of revenue to the adjacent State—in this case Florida—well, lo and behold, all the revenue allocated to the State does not go to the State of Florida, even though it is the waters of the Gulf of Mexico off of the State of Florida.

What happens in the complicated formula that is there is that 10 percent of

all the revenues from the leasing of Federal lands for oil and gas production goes to each State on the gulf. That would include Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama. In other words, the revenue does not go to the State of Florida, even though it is off the coast of Florida. Forty percent of that State revenue due to the State would go to the other States instead of Florida.

That is simply not fair. When I explain that to Senators, they are surprised, and in some cases aghast, because common sense would tell you it is not fair. That is another reason this Senator has put his foot down that we are not going to let Florida, nor the Department of Defense, be the sacrificial lamb for some kind of proposal so people can say we are drilling out there.

I want to drill. I want to drill offshore. But I want to drill where it makes sense. The formula that has been concocted certainly does not make sense.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

#### HURRICANE IKE

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about the devastation inflicted by Hurricane Ike. It is the worst hurricane to hit Texas in almost 50 years and probably the fourth costliest hurricane of all time.

Last week, when Hurricane Ike entered the Gulf of Mexico and started moving toward Texas, State, local, and Federal officials came together and moved into action. We had reason to fear the worst. In the year 1900, the island of Galveston was destroyed by a hurricane that claimed over 6,000 lives, the deadliest natural disaster in U.S. history. I was born on Galveston Island. I was raised in Galveston County. When I was growing up, I heard stories about 1900. There have been books written about that hurricane of 1900. And we also faced on a yearly basis hurricane warnings. Of course, some of them hit.

While preparing for this storm, the people of Texas had fresh memories from Hurricane Rita, another violent hurricane that came ashore around Sabine Pass in 2005. While Hurricane Rita only caused seven direct fatalities, the evacuation and recovery efforts along the gulf coast were not without difficulties, and for that rea-

son, everyone who could possibly be helpful in this wanted to improve the emergency preparedness in advance of the next storm.

So in the days leading up to Hurricane Ike, Texas was prepared. Over 1 million Texans successfully evacuated from their homes. However, when the skies cleared on Saturday afternoon, it was clear that Hurricane Ike had caused an appalling amount of property damage. From the early estimates, the cost of Hurricane Ike could reach almost \$30 billion. Forty-nine people are now confirmed dead. That number will surely rise. Thousands are homeless. Many communities remain under water and are completely inaccessible due to the significant amount of debris. Yesterday, 2.2 million Texans still lacked electricity. Emergency workers are struggling to distribute food, water, and ice. Offshore oil platforms are damaged and many refineries are without electricity. So it is likely that before the region's oil and gas industry return to capacity, we will see some shortages in gasoline and, therefore, some higher prices.

Gulf refineries and ports are the source of 50 percent of the fuel and crude used in the eastern half of the United States. Disruption of that infrastructure underscores the urgent need for us to expand refinery capacity. Indeed, we need to expand our entire energy supply so that America's economy is never undermined by acts of nature or foreign adversaries.

On Sunday, I joined with Senator JOHN CORNYN, my colleague, and the Secretary of Homeland Security, Michael Chertoff, and many members of our congressional delegation to survey the hardest-hit regions. We came to listen to the concerns raised by the mayors and the county judges, after we had been on the telephone with them for the 4 days before, trying to determine that people were as prepared as they could be in an instance such as this and, of course, we wanted to try to correct any concerns that had been raised. Some were raised. I will say that the mayors of our cities and the county judges have done a terrific job of representing their constituents at the local level. I met with Mayor Bill White of Houston, Mayor Lyda Ann Thomas from Galveston, Harris County Judge Ed Emmett, I talked on the phone with the mayor of Port Arthur, Beaumont, the county judge of Orange County, trying to help in every way we could from the Federal level.

Yesterday, I joined with the members of the Texas delegation who were here. Many were still in Houston touring with the President to see the damage and determine what more could be done. I talked to Senator LANDRIEU and Senator VITTER yesterday about their concerns about Hurricane Ike which hit them very hard. We all know Louisiana has suffered so much in the last few years with Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Texas joined them in suffering from the evacuees in Katrina and then

Rita, and now we have Ike. We jointly must have the support of all of our colleagues in Congress to help our constituents. We are working together—our Texas delegation, our Louisiana delegation—to have a supplemental appropriation so that FEMA will be fully funded to address the concerns.

The Corps of Engineers will have repairs to make throughout the gulf coast. There are shelters that are going to be needed for families who have nothing to go back to. As I passed over Bolivar Peninsula and I saw what used to be a wonderful group of homes on stilts, today they are stilts. The homes are completely gone—completely gone—as if there was never anything there but sticks. It was amazing to me because I have been there so many times and seen these communities. So we are going to come together and we are going to help the people who have been afflicted.

I wish to speak for a moment about the people of Texas. We are known, I guess, around the country for being a hearty bunch and usually a happy bunch and always resilient. We have a great spirit in Texas. I never have seen it any more so than right now. Colleagues in Galveston and Bolivar Peninsula, Port Arthur, Beaumont, Orange, Harris County, Houston, many are down because they have not been able to get back in to see their homes. On Galveston Island the health conditions are so bad that they are not letting people come back on the island, so people have not even seen their homes. They are very frustrated.

But the generous spirit of Texans is surrounding those who are afflicted. The spirit, the pride, the resilience is there. I have seen our citizens do everything they can on a personal level. One of my regional directors of Harris County, Jason Fuller, has 12 Texans living with him right now, including three new dogs and a cat. He is doing his part on a personal level. He is also going out to the shelters and representing our constituents and trying to make sure that the points of distribution are open, things he can do. Some communities that don't have power organized block parties and they are having barbeques and cookouts because they have no electricity in their homes. Local churches, the Baptist Men, the Second Baptist Church in Houston has an incredible outpouring. The local churches are providing staff support. Volunteers are distributing the water and ice and food to surrounding communities. There are so many good things happening. Neighbors are coming together to help neighbors.

I wish to ask my colleagues to help us. Because we do have an emergency disaster bill coming through for many areas of the Midwest that have suffered from previous disasters, I am going to ask, along with my colleague JOHN CORNYN and my colleagues MARY LANDRIEU and DAVID VITTEK that we be included in this. We don't have the

exact assessments yet, but we know it is going to be big. We know we have given for Katrina. We have given to other disasters. What we ask is to be treated in the same way so we can recover and get our economies going again, get our jobs going again, get our schools open, which are not yet done in many parts of our State, so that we can recover, clean up, and begin contributing again to the economy as we have done so much in the past.

I thank my colleagues for listening. My heart goes out to my constituents who are suffering right now in Texas. I am going to stay in constant contact with them. I wish to say particularly how much I appreciate our Secretary of Homeland Security who has so many responsibilities, who has already been to Texas and Louisiana once, who is going back today as we speak, and will be there to try to solve any problems that have arisen. As well prepared as we were, there were things that had not been done. Some lack of coordination has occurred. He is going down there personally to try to fix that. We appreciate that very much and we want to work with him hand in hand to assure that our communities get up and going and that my beloved Galveston Island will once again be able to bring in tourists because of its beauty and its historic value, its ports and its beautiful beaches. I am going to work tirelessly to make sure that happens, along with all of the other areas of our coast that have been damaged.

Thank you, Mr. President, and I yield the floor. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CASEY). The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

#### THE ECONOMY

Mr. REID. Mr. President, last night, just a short ways off the Senate Chamber, I met with Chairman Bernanke, Secretary Paulson, and others. The meeting came at the request of the administration. These two men expressed their views on the deepening economic turmoil and laid out a plan that has now been reported in the media this morning.

AIG, arguably the largest insurance company in the world, was in the process of going bankrupt. The deadline was 8 o'clock last night. The board of directors met to see if they would accept the offer made by the Federal Government to attempt to save parts of the company. Obviously, the meeting ended with the board of directors approving the bailout. The Secretary and the Chairman promised to provide more details of their plans in the near future, which I believe must address the broader underlying structural issues in the financial markets.

I just completed a press conference with a number of other Senators, and the press was asking question after question: What is the Senate going to do? The answer is very clear: This is a multitrillion dollar problem which has been ongoing for a long time. We are going to have to get some committee hearings underway, which is why we are not going to adjourn. We will be in pro forma session so committees can still meet, though we won't have any activities here on the floor as relates to these markets.

Secretary Paulson has said this will have to take place in the next administration because there is so much to be determined in the direction we need to go. They gave every impression, these two good men, that they are attempting to do the best they can to understand America's financial institutions and the problems with them. But the good intentions of these two decent men cannot escape the reality that the Bush administration's willful neglect of oversight and an overzealous embrace of big business are directly responsible for the crisis we now face.

The most important job of our country is to safeguard the American people from physical and financial harm. This was the role of the great Franklin Roosevelt. That is the role of any President. But it seems this President has focused only on protecting us from physical harm. The financial harm needs to be part of the duties of the President. When it comes to the financial sector, this means ensuring that institutions do not impose systematic risks on the entire system because of the ripple effect that can have on our economy.

Democrats and Republicans who have served before our current President have all understood that providing oversight—oversight of everything but also of our financial sector—is not somehow anticapitalistic. Just the opposite—it helps capitalism flourish. But that all changed with George Bush and DICK CHENEY. When they came to power, there was no more oversight. They are such devout followers of the top-down, big-business-first, Herbert Hoover approach to the economy that they see any oversight as a threat to their greed. They put cronies and ideologues in charge of the most critical agencies, including the Justice Department. Alberto Gonzales is the poster child of that, hiring people who only graduated from certain select religious universities. I repeat, they put cronies and ideologues in charge of our most critical regulatory agencies, who ensured that special interests would always come before the common good. They refused to exercise their regulatory authority over the mortgage industry, allowing massive fraud and widespread predatory lending.

Now, what is predatory lending? Look it up in the dictionary. I did. It is the practice of preying on borrowers with deceptive, dishonest loan offers. This paved the way for the largest