

arbitrarily kick Head Start students out of class or rob college students of their Pell grants—both cuts resoundingly rejected yesterday—and I mean cuts that don't pull the plug on renewable energy jobs or cuts that fire thousands of workers at community health centers across the country. Republicans should be willing to look at our country's substantial budget and find cuts more worthy than those that would weaken law enforcement and border security to keep us safe. I hope they will.

I hope they will join Democrats in saving money by attacking waste, fraud, and abuse. I hope they will join us in making tough choices and avoiding the temptation to make counterproductive cuts. Let's come together to cut in a way that strengthens our economy and doesn't weaken our economy. Let's cut in a way that makes our neighborhoods, our schools, and our borders stronger, not weaker.

As the negotiation process begins anew, I remind my Republican friends that time is short. I also remind them that the deadline we face—a week from tomorrow—is the deadline they set. We didn't set it. Democrats warned from the start that the process would take a month. Republicans would agree only to a period half as long as that—2 weeks. Those 2 weeks are up, as I said, next Friday.

So my message is this to my Republican colleagues: You set the deadline, and the responsibility of meeting it is as much yours as it is ours. Both parties also share a responsibility to be reasonable. So let's get to work. We cannot negotiate this in the media. We cannot negotiate this if we are unwilling to give any ground. We cannot be stubborn and expect a solution. It is time to negotiate in good faith, it is time for all political posturing to end, and it is time for pragmatism, which is long overdue.

I would also say to my friends in the House that the Senate has produced two very strong jobs bills. One is the FAA reauthorization, which is long overdue. That was a bipartisan bill. It passed overwhelmingly here in the Senate and would save or create 280,000 jobs—a pretty good step in the right direction. Just in the last 24 hours, we passed the patent reform bill. That will create 300,000 jobs. These two jobs bills need to be completed by the House of Representatives so we can send them to the President. These two jobs bills are important. The House should focus on jobs, not these arbitrary cuts they have been making. So I hope the House would right away work on the jobs bills that have already passed the Senate—patents and, of course, the FAA bill.

#### RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

#### DOMESTIC ENERGY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, throughout the week I have pointed out that our Nation faces a day of reckoning on entitlements such as Social Security and Medicare, and I have expressed my disappointment about the White House's failure to lead on reforms that would save these programs at an opportune moment like our own.

The best time to solve the kind of fiscal crisis we face is when the two parties share power in Washington. Everyone knows we either address these problems together or they won't be addressed at all. Everyone knows the President has to take the lead. That is why Presidents from both parties have done just that during periods of divided government in the past. That is why many of us are calling on this President to do the same for the good of the country now.

But when it comes to job creation, the President isn't just failing to lead; in many cases, he is actually blocking the way. Nowhere is this more evident than in the area of energy exploration.

Americans looking at the price of gas at the pump these days are justifiably upset. What they may not realize is that some in the administration are actively working to prevent us from increasing our own oil production here at home. So this morning, with gas prices on the rise, I would like to step back for a minute and quickly review what the administration is doing to inhibit energy production right here at home. Taken together, it would be a pretty long list, including delays and suspensions and revocations and outright cancellations of lease permits, which translates into higher prices and fewer American jobs. So I will just list a few of the highlights.

The administration started by canceling oil and gas leases for domestic exploration. Immediately after taking office, the Secretary of the Interior, Ken Salazar, canceled 77 oil and gas leases in the State of Utah. One year later, the administration suspended 61 more leases, this time in Montana. Shortly after canceling the Utah leases, Secretary Salazar extended the public comment period to renew offshore drilling by another 6 months, dragging out an already lengthy process even further.

Then, immediately after the gulf oil spill began last April, the administration imposed a 6-month moratorium on offshore drilling in the gulf even as it canceled energy exploration that was set to take place thousands of miles away from the spill in the gulf up in the Arctic. Two Federal courts on three separate occasions have declared the moratorium in the gulf unjust. The administration has ignored them. It has kept the ban in place despite these rulings, forcing the drillers who have been affected by it to relocate their rigs—and the thousands of good-paying jobs they supported—to other parts of the world.

So if one is wondering where the jobs are, a good place to start is the admin-

istration's efforts to block American energy exploration. Senator MURKOWSKI points out that U.S. oil reserves at just three sources in Alaska—just three sources in Alaska—could replace crude oil imports from the Persian Gulf for nearly 65 years. Three sources in Alaska, currently shut down, could replace crude oil imports from the Persian Gulf for 65 years. Yet all three are off limits due to decisions made by or continued by this administration.

Behind all these actions is a complete disconnect. At a time when gas prices are climbing higher and higher, pinching pocketbooks and threatening an economic recovery, Democrats in Washington would rather ignore the fact that Americans will remain dependent on fossil fuel for decades to come. But we shouldn't be surprised by it. Two months before the President was elected, the man he ended up choosing as his Energy Secretary told a reporter how he would go about reducing America's dependence on oil. He said: "Somehow, we have to figure out how to boost the price of gasoline to the levels in Europe." And if that was the strategy, Secretary Chu seems to be getting his wish. And the administration is doing just about everything it can to keep them there.

Now is the time to be asking what we can do to increase domestic energy production, not proposing ways to squeeze American families even more. That is why all of these actions by the administration, along with the tax hike on energy production some have proposed that will only be passed on to consumers in the form of even higher gas prices, are the very last thing Americans need right now. We should be looking for ways to lighten the burden on American families, not saddling them with a minivan tax.

There is a better approach. Rather than squeezing the public and killing jobs with artificially higher prices, we should be looking for ways to increase domestic production even as we promote alternative sources of energy for the future. An all-of-the-above approach to energy production—and the jobs that come with it—of the kind Republicans have been advocating for years would capitalize on the abundant resources we already have right here at home while at the same time looking for alternative sources of energy and new technologies that will free us from dependence on fossil fuels down the road.

This is a responsible approach. It protects existing jobs and creates new jobs at a time when Americans need them. It would reduce our dependence on foreign sources of oil. It honors the concerns Americans have right now about the rising price of gas, and it respects the reality that most of the cars in this country will run on gas for many years to come. But higher prices at the pump and fewer American jobs is the wrong answer.