

In addition to all of that, the ethanol industry paid \$11 billion in Federal taxes in 2010. I want to emphasize that point. In 2010, the ethanol industry paid \$11 billion in Federal tax. So it is an important industry to our country and we need it to continue.

The point of the discussion today, though, is how best to do that. So for this discussion today, how do we create the right environment to stimulate private investment so we have that growing economy, we have more jobs, we have more energy, but we also generate more tax revenues with less government spending so we both grow our way out of this debt and deficit, we get this economy going, we create a better energy future for these young people and young people all over our great country.

That is why I have sponsored legislation, along with Senator THUNE and Senator KLOBUCHAR, that will reform the ethanol tax credit. It will provide deficit reduction and set us on the right path for alternative fuel development in our country for the long run. The legislation is called the Ethanol Tax Reform and Deficit Reduction Plan.

It is the right way to transition from the current VEETC, the volumetric ethanol excise tax credit, rather than the amendment today to simply do away with VEETC. This is the right transition for us to make from the VEETC to creating the right environment to stimulate investment and energy growth in biofuels for the future. The ethanol tax reform and deficit reduction plan provides \$1 billion in deficit reduction right away—provides \$1 billion in deficit reduction. But it also provides the right transition for ethanol by providing the right kind of energy policy. Specifically, we provide incentives for things such as blender pumps that offer consumers choice. We provide the right kind of incentives for research, development, and deployment of second-generation ethanol, specifically cellulosic ethanol, so that instead of making ethanol from food products, we make it from stover and wheat straw and other sources.

By combining blender pumps, flex fuel vehicles, and commonsense regulation on the part of the EPA that encourages higher fuel blends, we create the business environment that will foster growth in the ethanol industry.

What does that mean? That means, No. 1, we avoid the ongoing cost of subsidies such as the VEETC. Second, we set the ethanol industry up for long-term growth. Third, we gain jobs. We gain jobs at a time when we badly need them. We produce more energy, which reduces our dependence on foreign oil, and we gain tax revenues. We gain tax revenues to help reduce our deficit.

So we not only spend less directly, helping to reduce the deficit, we grow our economy, and that growing economy builds on the \$11 billion that the industry is already paying in Federal taxes, and we grow that base while we

are growing our jobs. That is the right way to move forward, to move out of our deficit situation in this economy, to get our economy going and also to produce more energy.

This is a market-based approach that will give customers more choice and also reduce their fuel costs. For example, you go into the station, there is a blender pump there. You have a flex fuel vehicle. You can dial up whatever blend you choose, anywhere from 0 percent biofuels all the way up to 85 percent, whatever works best for you, whatever works best for your pocketbook, whatever works best for your vehicle.

We have blender pumps in my State. We have an incentive for blender pumps in my State. As a result, we have more blender pumps than any other State in the country. The reality is today, if you buy fuel in North Dakota, almost all of the fuel you buy will have ethanol in it and you do not even realize it. Why? Because at a 90–10 percent blend, every vehicle can use it, and it is the lowest price gasoline at the pump, so dealers want to sell it. Consumers buy it. They simply buy it because they pick the lowest priced fuel at the pump. It is a 90–10 blend.

That is where we are going with this, a market-based approach. That is how it can work for the benefit of our economy, for the benefit of our energy future, for the benefit of reducing spending, and for the benefit of growing our tax revenues. That is the choice we have today. That is the right way to approach job creation and energy development in our country. We are reducing spending. We are improving and creating an environment for private sector investment that will help us build a probusiness climate for energy and economic growth in our country.

I urge my fellow Senators to make that progrowth choice.

I yield the floor.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. TESTER). Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF CLAIRE C. CECCHI TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE DISTRICT OF NEW JERSEY

NOMINATION OF ESTHER SALAS TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE DISTRICT OF NEW JERSEY

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to consider the following nominations which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read the nominations of Claire C. Cecchi, of

New Jersey, to be United States District Judge for the District of New Jersey, and Esther Salas, of New Jersey, to be United States District Judge for the District of New Jersey.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will be 1 hour for debate equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees.

The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, today is a distinct honor for me to have the opportunity to fulfill the constitutional commitment that each of us has to assure the public at large that justice is being administered as it should be. We fulfill this commitment by making sure vacancies on the Federal bench are filled with individuals who have the proper experience and will provide the kind of fairness and balance in decisionmaking that confirms America's basic tenets.

Mr. President, during a 2-year hiatus that I took from the Senate, I was honored with the naming of a Federal courthouse in Newark after me, and I was so pleased to have that association with the justice administered in our society. Before the building was dedicated, I asked that an inscription that I authored be placed on the wall. It reads exactly as I labored to write it. It says:

The true measure of a democracy is the dispensation of justice.

As a matter of fact, when I shared that moment with my dear departed colleague, Senator Ted Kennedy, who questioned whether I wrote it because he knew I wasn't a lawyer, we joked about it, and I confirmed it. That is the way I saw things.

The sentiment behind that quote underscores how seriously I take my role in recommending New Jersey District Court nominees to President Obama. That is why I am so proud to come to the floor today and urge my colleagues to confirm President Obama's nomination of Judge Claire Cecchi and Judge Esther Salas to the U.S. District Court for New Jersey. Both are well qualified for the court, having devoted their careers to upholding the rule of law.

Throughout her career, Judge Cecchi has demonstrated her ability to navigate complicated legal matters and manage complex cases. During the confirmation process, she showed her temperament and diligence, she let us know something of her candor, and displayed the kind of character that she brings to the bench.

For the past 5 years, Judge Cecchi has served as a U.S. magistrate judge in the District of New Jersey, where she has presided over hundreds of civil and criminal cases.

Before joining the bench, Judge Cecchi spent 14 years in private practice, focusing on complex civil litigation. One of her passions is to encourage young people to pursue a career in the law. She has hosted Bring Your Child to Work Day programs in the district court, as well as a mock trial for