

I approach this matter regretfully and soberly but with apprehension about what the Obama administration is trying to do to our 225-year-old Constitution. I call upon Members of both parties in this Senate to rise in solemn defense of this institution and the constitutional principle of the separation of power.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. SHAHEEN). The Senator from Alaska.

#### THE STOCK ACT

Mr. BEGICH. Before I speak on my formal comments, I just want to say one thing. I know the Senator from New York was here a little bit ago talking about the STOCK Act. She made an incredible presentation to us in the Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee, and I am grateful she is moving forward on that. We actually added a piece to the STOCK Act that I think makes it a lot stronger than it was by making sure that as officials report their transactions, they are done electronically and are searchable. That means anybody in this country can go to the Senate's Web site and find the information about their Senator.

As you know, as a new person in this office, as I am, when we file our disclosure forms, they are sent to the Senate Clerk, and then if you want them, they have to copy them and send it off to someone else. You cannot search for them and you cannot get them, which is unbelievable. So we made sure in the committee that if we do this act—I think it is a strong act; it is something we should do—we make sure it is searchable and available electronically in this age we live in today.

I already put my disclosure form on my Web site. I have put it on there since the day I came into office. I think people need to know exactly what their Senator's investments are. If they have spouses—in my case, all of my spouse's information is on there even though I am not required to do it. I put it on there because I think people need to know the household income of their Senator and where it comes from and where their investments are. We over-report. After I fill out the forms, we have an attorney review it, and he always tells me we are giving too much information. I have to remind him that is what I am doing. That is the way I think it should be done.

Again, I congratulate the Senator from New York who was here for the work on the STOCK Act, and I am glad I could participate in making it even stronger.

#### NOME REFUELING SITUATION

Mr. BEGICH. Madam President, I seek to speak on the floor to speak of my residence of Alaska, a State that constantly overcomes adversity in its tough winters. This year has been an especially tough winter.

Alaska's history is marked by stories of people coming together to overcome extreme hardships and save their communities. None is more memorable than the 1925 Serum Run, when diphtheria ravaged the remote Arctic community of Nome. The needed vaccine was raced to the community by a team of 20 mushers and some 150 sled dogs. They faced brutal February weather and extreme cold, with winds and snowdrifts, and carried their precious cargo—the vaccine—some 700 miles in just 5½ days. It is a speed record that has never since been broken, and it saved the community. The feat is memorialized by the 1,000-mile Iditarod sled dog race known as the last great race on Earth.

This year, the city of Nome faced a 21st-century challenge: the need for energy. The fall fuel barge—the last scheduled before winter set in—was blocked first by a mammoth October storm which swept up western Alaska and then by heavy sea ice. The barge had to turn back, but without the delivery Nome would run out of fuel by March. Nome is not connected by road, and the earliest the next barge would arrive would be this June. Flying in 1.3 million gallons of fuel would have taken 300 flights and would have boosted the cost of an already expensive gasoline and home-heating fuel to over \$9 a gallon. As you can see here, the price of fuel in the community right now is over \$5 a gallon.

The Sitnasuak Native Corporation and Vitus Marine proposed to do what has never been done before: bring over 1 million gallons of diesel fuel and gasoline to Nome in the dead of winter. They contracted with a Russian-flagged tanker, the Renda, which was ice-capable and double-hulled.

To ensure the safety of the delivery, the Coast Guard immediately recognized it had a mission and the right equipment. The Coast Guard icebreaker Healy had just completed a lengthy scientific tour off the Arctic. Rather than return home, they stayed on the job as winter set in, breaking open lanes through the ice to allow the tanker to arrive.

The Healy and the Renda encountered conditions more severe than anticipated, with colder temperatures, stronger winds, and thicker ice. Some days their progress was frozen, literally, but the Healy pressed on through the ice. With the determination that is the hallmark of the U.S. Coast Guard, they succeeded. They did not make it to Nome Harbor, which was frozen solid, but close enough to top off the city's fuel tanks through a half-mile-long hose. Now they are on their way back home but not out of the ice yet. The Healy and the Renda still have several hundred miles before they reach open water.

I take to the floor today to offer my thanks and congratulations to Captain Beverly Havlik and the men and women aboard the Healy for a job well done and also the crew of the charter

tanker, the Renda, and many others who helped ensure that the transfer of fuel was safe, workers from the Sitnasuak Corporation, Vitus Marine, the city of Nome, State of Alaska, and others who have played their part, even the University of Alaska researchers who flew aerial drones to inspect ice conditions in advance of the approaching vessels. Together they proved that winter operations are possible even in the most challenging circumstances.

I speak today not just to congratulate all those who pitched in to help re-fuel this community but to consider its broader implications and lessons.

First, America is an Arctic nation. The residents of cities such as Nome and Kotzebue and Barrow and numerous smaller villages thrive in the often challenging but rich Arctic environment. The Alaska Native peoples have thrived for generations and for thousands of years, living off the resources of the land and the sea.

Second, the Arctic offers much to our Nation. Its offshore oil and natural gas is our most promising energy province, which is actively being considered by industry. Trade routes over the top are increasingly being explored by shippers eager to cut up to 40 percent off trade routes between the east and the west.

Yet, while we are an arctic nation, we lack the basic infrastructure to serve its people, to fulfill our responsibilities and take advantage of its opportunities. But it is not just me saying it. Just today the Northern Waters Task Force released a report calling for a better Arctic infrastructure. The Healy is our Nation's only operational polar icebreaker, and it is only rated as a medium-duty vessel. Our two heavy-duty icebreakers are both idle. The 36-year-old Polar Star is being retrofitted and should be operational again soon, but it has been proposed to send her sister ship, the Polar Sea, to the scrap heap.

Since taking office, I have repeatedly called for recapitalizing the Nation's icebreaker fleet. A comprehensive Coast Guard study recently found that 6 to 10 icebreakers are needed just to meet the Coast Guard's statutory responsibilities. Until we have a firm plan to meet these needs, I have introduced legislation with Senator CANTWELL to halt the dismantling of the Polar Sea until all options can be considered. Without icebreakers, we can neither meet our responsibilities nor take advantage of our opportunities as an Arctic nation. We are falling behind Arctic nations such as Russia, China—which is not an Arctic nation but is building icebreakers—Canada and others as well. Russia is building a year-round Arctic port. Canada is conducting military operations. And, as I mentioned, China is building new icebreakers.

America must build its Arctic infrastructure, such as a deepwater port to maintain our national presence as other nations make their claims to the