

He may as well call his plan what it is, a plan to shift jobs overseas. Basically, it is unilateral economic surrender. To what end? Many experts agree a climate policy that does not include massive energy consumers such as China and India is essentially meaningless. The damage to our economy would be anything but meaningless. Ironically, those are the very types of countries that stand to benefit economically from our loss. Nations such as these will probably take our jobs, keep pumping more and more carbon into the air, and what will we have to show for it? That is a question the President needs to answer today.

Americans want commonsense policies to make energy cleaner and more affordable. The operative word is commonsense, because Americans are also deeply concerned about jobs and the economy. That is what the President should be focused on. Incredibly, it appears to be the farthest thing from his mind.

SENATE GROUND RULES

I have been mentioning on a daily basis the ongoing concern I have about the institution in which 100 of us serve, an institution that has served America well since the beginning of our country. The Constitution was framed back in 1887. George Washington presided over that Constitutional Convention. Legend has it he was asked, What do you think the Senate is going to be like? He reportedly replied it would be like the saucer under the teacup, and the tea that sloshed out of the teacup would go down into the saucer and cool off. In other words, the Founders of our great country believed the Senate would be a place where things slowed down, were thought over, and obviously where bipartisan agreements would be the way to move forward.

Over the period of our history, the idea of unlimited debate has had a lot of support in this body from both parties. In fact, during World War I, it was agreed there ought to be some way to stop a debate. Prior to that, there was no way, actually, to stop a debate. They agreed to create a device called cloture that would allow a supermajority of the Senate to bring debate to an end.

Over the years there have been flirtations by majorities of different parties to fundamentally change the Senate. Those temptations have been avoided. Those temptations arose again at the beginning of the previous Congress and at the beginning of this Congress under the current majority and the current majority leader. There was a lot of discussion about the way forward for the institution that would benefit the institution and not penalize either side. In January of 2011 the majority leader said the issue was settled for the next two Congresses, the previous Congress and this one.

In spite of that, we entered into a lengthy discussion at the beginning of this Congress on a bipartisan basis. As a result of that, the Senate passed two

rules changes and two standing orders. The majority leader once again gave his word that this issue was concluded.

Last January I asked the majority leader: "I would confirm with the majority leader that the Senate would not consider other resolutions relating to any standing order or rules of this Congress unless they went through the regular order process?"

The majority leader said: "That is correct. Any other resolutions related to Senate procedure would be subject to a regular order process, including consideration by the Rules Committee."

The regular order process takes 67 votes to change the rules of the Senate. We did that with the two rules changes earlier this year, thereby confirming, again, that is the way you change the rules of the Senate.

The majority leader, in spite of having given his word, not once but twice, continues to suggest that may not be a word that is going to be kept and has continued to flirt openly with employing what is called the nuclear option.

My party, when it was in the majority some time ago, 8 or 9 years ago, flirted with it as well, but good sense prevailed and we moved backward. We moved into a position where we are today, which is it takes 60 votes when you have a determined minority to get an outcome.

The threat has been related to nominations and nominations only, as if somehow breaking the rules of the Senate to change the rules of the Senate would be confined to nominations in the future. The way that would be done, of course, is the Parliamentarian would say it was a violation of Senate rules to change the rules of the Senate with 51 votes. The majority would simply appeal the ruling of the Chair and do it with 51 votes. If that is ever done, the Senate as an institution we have known is finished, and it would not be confined to nominations in the future.

Senator ALEXANDER and I laid out a few days ago the kind of agenda we would probably pursue, almost certainly pursue, were we in the majority. It was an agenda that would in many ways horrify the current majority, such things as completing Yucca Mountain, repealing ObamaCare, national right-to-work—I mean, things I believe probably every single Member of the majority party would find abhorrent. But that is the point.

The supermajority threshold is inconvenient to majorities from time to time. It requires them to engage in negotiation in order to go forward. It is frustrating from time to time. It is important to remember—every Senate majority should remember—the shoe will someday be on the other foot.

The institution has served our country well. We have had some big debates this year in which we have had amendments, discussions on a bipartisan basis, and bills moved forward. We saw it on the farm bill. We have seen it on other bills. We may well see it on the

bill that is on the floor of the Senate now.

The fundamental point before the Senate is we need to know if the majority leader intends to keep his word, because in the Senate your word is important. In fact, it is the currency of the realm here in the Senate.

I am going to continue to raise this issue because we need to resolve it. Senators need to know that words will be kept. The word on the ground rules of how we operate here in the Senate needs to be kept. We are not interested in a majority that says the definition of advise and consent is sit down and shut up, do things I want to do when I want to do it, or I will threaten to break the rules of the Senate to change the rules of the Senate. This is no small matter, and I will continue to address it until we get it resolved.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business for 1 hour, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with the majority controlling the first half.

The assistant majority leader.

ENERGY

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, in deference to the Presiding Officer, I am going to forgo my speech on the Stanley Cup playoffs until another Member is presiding later in the day.

Instead, I wish to address the speech made by the Senate Republican leader on the issue of our environment.

Senator MCCONNELL of Kentucky tells us if we are going to discuss the state of our environment in America, it is a war on coal and a war on jobs.

I think he is wrong. I think the Republican approach to the environmental issues is a war on science. It is a denial of the overwhelming scientific evidence that the weather affecting us on this Earth is changing. We know it. Storms, extraordinary storms, are more frequent and more violent than they have been. We know the polar ice cap is melting. We know the glaciers are disappearing. We know the impact this will have on humanity as well as wildlife. Yet from the other side there is a complete denial of science. This is a war on science.

Their position is also a war on public health. Twenty-five million Americans suffer from asthma. Nearly one in five children with asthma went to an emergency department for care in 2009. To

ignore the state of air pollution and the public health challenges it presents is to ignore the reality of the state of our environment and its impact on public health.

Finally, the public approach when it comes to this issue is a war on this Earth we call home. Unless and until the United States shows leadership when it comes to the environment, it is difficult, if not impossible, to convince other nations to do the same.

Today the President is going to make a speech which will be controversial about what to do with our environment. I think he is on the right track to engage us in a national debate, a debate about the legacy we leave our children and grandchildren when it comes to this Earth we live on.

Senator McCONNELL's State of Kentucky is just south of mine. He has coal reserves in his State, as we do in Illinois. We have seen the use of those reserves, because of some of the contamination and chemicals that are associated with that coal, diminish dramatically over the last several decades.

I haven't given up on coal if it is used responsibly. This administration has invested in clean coal projects. One is called FutureGen 2. It is a project to capture the emissions coming out of smokestacks from coal-fired electric powerplants and to bury them deep beneath the Earth, a mile beneath the Earth. It is capture and sequestration of these emissions. It is an energy research experiment which we are engaged in right now in central Illinois which I believe holds promise for the use of coal in the future in a much more responsible way.

How much can you store below the Earth in Illinois? We can store the emissions of over 50 coal-fired electric power plants operating for 50 years. Let's engage in that research. Let's find responsible ways to use coal.

This notion that moving toward energy efficiency and reducing pollution is going to cost us jobs isn't borne out by the evidence. We are seeing dramatic investments being made in manufacturing for solar, wind, and geothermal. We are seeing dramatic investments creating new American jobs because we are setting new standards for more fuel-efficient cars, for example. This is good for every family, every business in America. It is good for the environment, and it creates jobs. To suggest that dealing with the environment costs us jobs—exactly the opposite is true.

Let me also say a word about the Republican leader's concern about working families living paycheck to paycheck. Time and again on this side of the aisle we have offered to the Senator and his colleagues a chance to reduce the tax burden on working families in America by asking those who are doing quite well to pay a little more, and they have consistently said no. Again, we have asked the Republican leader and his colleagues to join us in raising the minimum wage and

they have said no. So this concern about families struggling paycheck to paycheck should be borne out by some of their votes. That, to me, is essential.

Let me close by saying this: I believe the environment is a challenge we must face head on. To ignore it is to ignore reality. Lake Michigan, when measured just a few months ago, was at its lowest depth in any measured time in recent history. What we are seeing in global warming is the evaporation of our Great Lakes. It is a scary thing to think about what this will ultimately do to us.

The President is going to face the issue head on. There are some who want to run away from it. They can do that if they wish. But their war on science, their war on health, their war on those destructive forces that are affecting the Earth is shortsighted. We need leadership on this, bipartisan leadership.

Let me close by saying—and then I will yield to my friend from Maryland—that I will come back shortly after morning business to speak about this historic immigration bill. The 67-to-27 vote on the floor last night—bipartisan vote—is an indication that we have finally come up with a historic measure and one that is important for the future of this Nation. We will do many things around here, and important things, but hardly anything as important as fixing this broken immigration system. The fact that we can do this in the Senate on a bipartisan basis is a tribute to this institution getting back on its feet and putting aside some of the political battles of the past. I only hope our friends over in the House are watching this and understanding that only through bipartisanship can we cure and solve some of the problems our Nation faces.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. Before my friend from Illinois leaves the floor, I wish to congratulate him on his incredible leadership on the immigration bill. The Senator from Illinois brought many issues to the compromise that was reached, but I particularly wish to thank him on behalf of the children for the DREAM Act that is incorporated in this legislation that will help so many young people.

I told a story on the floor of the Senate about a person who lives in Maryland who was offered a scholarship and had to turn it down. We found out he didn't have legal status in the United States. What a disappointment it was to him. I also told about a lot of other young people who have had the courage now to step forward, and the Senator's legislation will give them hope, in a very relatively short period of time, to be able to accomplish the dream of being in America.

So I wanted to applaud him and all the Senators who were involved—Senator SCHUMER just left the floor, his incredible work with Senators BENNET

and MENENDEZ, and the Republicans the Senator from Illinois worked with, Senators McCAIN, GRAHAM, FLAKE, and RUBIO.

The Senator is absolutely right. If we want a major bill done, it has to be done in a bipartisan way. It is not the bill the Senator would have written; it is not the bill I would have written, but I think the Senator from Illinois has done a great service, and I thank him.

Mr. President, I have cleared it on our side, and I ask unanimous consent that I be permitted to speak for up to 15 minutes.

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

IMMIGRATION REFORM

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, yesterday was good news. It was good news for the eventual passage of S. 744, the comprehensive immigration reform bill. It is good news the Senate is on the verge of being able to pass this legislation because 11 million people who live in the shadows will now have hope they will be able to stay in America, work in America, and one day become citizens of this great country.

But the real winners of immigration reform are the American people and our government. We have a broken immigration system today, and this bill will allow us to replace that broken immigration system with a balanced approach on how to deal with immigration in this country. It is balanced first by recognizing border security is important. We have to make sure people coming to this country come in lawfully; that they come in through a door, not over a fence, and this bill clearly deals with the issues of border security.

The bill also deals with E-Verify for employers, to make sure employers only hire those who are legally present in this country. It also provides a way in which those who are currently here can come out of the shadows, get legal status, and earn a pathway to citizenship.

I say earn a pathway to citizenship because those individuals have to comply with our laws, pay our taxes, learn English, and then wait for the entire working backlog within the immigration system to be cured before they can apply for citizenship. So it is a way in which individuals who are currently here, who are law-abiding and are prepared to comply with our laws have a reasonable pathway to citizenship.

It also deals with realistic numbers for people who want to come to America, who want to make America their home, for family reunifications, as well as those who want to work in this country. By having reasonable numbers, we can get the skilled workers we need and we can get the seasonal workers we need.

The bill replaces a badly broken immigration system. As I mentioned to Senator DURBIN, it includes the DREAM Act. This gives children who