

Senator from Tennessee (Mr. CORKER), the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ), the Senator from Arizona (Mr. FLAKE), the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE), the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON), the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO), and the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. SASSE).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER) would have voted “yea.”

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY), the Senator from Maryland (Ms. MIKULSKI), the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS), and the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) are necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. DAINES). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 84, nays 2, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 6 Ex.]

YEAS—84

Ayotte	Feinstein	Murphy
Baldwin	Fischer	Murray
Barrasso	Franken	Paul
Bennet	Gardner	Perdue
Blumenthal	Gillibrand	Peters
Blunt	Graham	Portman
Booker	Grassley	Reed
Boozman	Hatch	Reid
Brown	Heinrich	Risch
Burr	Heitkamp	Roberts
Cantwell	Heller	Rounds
Capito	Hirono	Schatz
Cardin	Hoeven	Schumer
Carper	Johnson	Scott
Casey	Kaine	Sessions
Cassidy	King	Shaheen
Coats	Kirk	Shelby
Cochran	Klobuchar	Tester
Collins	Lee	Thune
Coons	Manchin	Tillis
Cornyn	Markey	Toomey
Cotton	McCain	Udall
Crapo	McCaskill	Vitter
Daines	McConnell	Warner
Donnelly	Menendez	Warren
Durbin	Merkley	Whitehouse
Enzi	Moran	Wicker
Ernst	Murkowski	Wyden

NAYS—2

Lankford Sullivan

NOT VOTING—14

Alexander	Inhofe	Rubio
Boxer	Isakson	Sanders
Corker	Leahy	Sasse
Cruz	Mikulski	Stabenow
Flake	Nelson	

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

Mr. CASSIDY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Under the previous order, the President will be immediately notified of the Senate’s action.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume legislative session.

ENERGY POLICY MODERNIZATION ACT OF 2015—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana is recognized.

Mr. CASSIDY. Mr. President, in this Energy bill we are considering, we are going to offer an amendment regarding the renewable fuel standard—also called the RFS. The RFS requires that fuel sold in the United States contain a minimal amount of renewable fuels. You know it because when you go to the gas pump, it says: contains 10 percent ethanol.

The RFS is outdated. It was created in 2005—a time when American energy consumption relied heavily upon foreign imports. It was thought that the renewable fuel standard will be good for the environment by decreasing the carbon footprint, but in the last 10 years our energy landscape has changed dramatically. We now have more domestic oil than almost ever before, and the drawbacks of the RFS greatly outweigh its benefits.

For example, the Congressional Budget Office projects that Americans will be forced to pay \$0.13 to \$0.26 more per gallon if the RFS is not repealed. For a mom and dad with two teenage sons, this would be \$400 a year, but it doesn’t stop at the pump.

Over the last 10 years, the price of corn has drastically fluctuated. Corn costs have approximately doubled since before the RFS began. The corn price increasing has increased the cost of food as much as 7 percent to 26 percent it is estimated per year. It also raises costs all the way down. For example, your chain restaurants are estimated to spend \$3.2 billion more for the food they purchase and serve to their customers because of the RFS.

Perhaps paying more at the pump, paying more at the grocery store and more at the restaurant will be worth it if there are environmental benefits. Unfortunately, there is not only no environmental benefit, there is tremendous environmental harm.

To begin with, an increase in corn production means that there is an increase in fertilizer use across the Midwest. That fertilizer runs into the rivers, goes down into the Mississippi River, hits the Gulf of Mexico, and causes algae blooms because of the high nitrogen and phosphorous, and that decreases the oxygen in the water, thereby devastating the fish population. If you look at maps of the dead zone in the Mississippi River, they have continuously increased in size since the RFS was put into law.

But it is not just about our water quality. Let’s talk about carbon footprint. One of the original rationales as to why we should have renewable fuels: The Union of Concerned Scientists state that certain types of ethanol have a worse carbon footprint than gasoline. So now we have something that not only increases the cost of food and hurts the water quality in the Gulf of Mexico and the rivers that feed it but also has a higher carbon footprint than the gasoline it dilutes.

By the way, it is not just the Union of Concerned Scientists; the National Academy of Sciences says that the renewable fuel standard has little or no environmental benefit and actually increases the particulate matter and sulfur that is in the atmosphere and harms water quality.

Let’s just say that with the abundance of our domestic oil and increased vehicular efficiency standards, there is no need for the RFS. It is time to repeal the renewable fuel standard so that our farmers, anglers, ranchers, and consumers can reap the benefit.

In addition to this, I wish to mention another amendment I am offering with Senator MARKEY. This amendment would save taxpayer dollars and preserve oil reservoirs in the Strategic Petroleum Reserve. The Strategic Petroleum Reserve is located in my home State, in Harahan, LA. This amendment gives the Secretary of Energy the ability to sell Strategic Petroleum Reserve quantities of crude oil when the price goes up. Right now, he has been instructed to sell the oil to raise \$5 billion but without regard to price. We clearly don’t want to sell it when the price of oil is at \$30. We want to wait until the price of oil goes back up and sell it then so we can reap multiple benefits. It will allow for more supply so consumers will have lower prices at the pump, and it will also get more money for the oil we do sell, which will be good for taxpayers who bought the oil in the first place.

America is blessed with an abundance of oil. Taxpayers invested in this emergency oil stockpile. Yet some must be sold, and it should be sold at the highest price possible to get the best deal for the taxpayers.

I urge my fellow Senators to support both of these amendments. They are important to American families, critical to America’s energy security, and in the case of the RFS, it is critical to our environmental hopes.

I yield back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

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

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

HOMELAND SECURITY AND THE THREAT OF VIOLENT EXTREMISM

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss for a couple of moments the issue of homeland security and the threat of violent extremism in the United States.

In the last 2 months in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, we have experienced two very concerning incidents of violent extremism—first, in December, the arrest of a 19-year-old man in Harrisburg, PA, who allegedly used social media to propagandize and facilitate on behalf of the terrorist group ISIS. At the time of his arrest, law enforcement officers found ammunition and other signs that he might be preparing for an attack. Thank goodness