day, which is 45 percent of the total oil production. There is increased usage, a reduction in domestic production, and we are at the mercy of OPEC.

It is also interesting that in 1999, the tax component of gasoline was approximately 40 cents a gallon, or about 34 percent of the total cost. Interestingly enough, the price component of a gallon of gas, crude oil, and taxes is about equal: 18.5 cents is Federal and 20 cents is the average State tax that is levied on top.

We also find ourselves with additional restrictions and regulations, put on this year, with making some changes in our policy if we are to deal with this increased demand. Obviously, there are a number of things that ought to be done over time.

We ought to take a look at consumption and continue pushing for high-mileage vehicles and reduce demand.

We need to take a look at domestic production so we are not totally dependent on imported energy.

We need to take a long look at the regulations and see if there are alternatives and whether they can be more economical, and whether, in fact, what we are doing has been thoroughly thought through. I am not sure that has been the case.

I have no objection to taking a long look at the pricing of gasoline as well. It is interesting that there is such a great disparity in prices in different parts of the country. Perhaps there is a good, logical reason for that. If so, we should know about it.

I hope our energy policy does not become totally political. The fact is, we have not had an energy policy in this administration. We have held hearings in our committee, not only with this Secretary of Energy, but the previous two Secretaries of Energy. One says: Yes, we are going to have a policy. The fact is, we do not. The fact is, we have not been able to fully utilize coal. We have not been able to take advantage of nuclear power by stalling in getting our nuclear waste stored. There are a lot of things we need to do and, indeed, should do. It is unfortunate we have not had the cooperation from this administration.

SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, I wish to talk about a conversation I heard yesterday on the Sunday talk shows. It is too bad that on the Sunday talk shows the issues are not more clearly defined.

This talk show was on Social Security and options, which are clearly legitimate options. The options separate the points of view of the parties and the candidates. I am talking about taking a portion of the Social Security program, as it now exists for an individual, and putting it into his or her private account and investing it in the private sector in equities or in bonds or a combination of the two. The return stays with this person because it is their account.

Out of the 12.5 percent that each of us pay—and each of these young people will pay in the first job they have, and if something does not happen by the time they are ready for benefits, there will be none. We have to make some changes.

One of the changes we can make, of course, is to increase taxes. There is not a lot of enthusiasm for that. For many people, Social Security is the highest tax: 12.5 percent right off the top.

The second change is we could reduce benefits. Not many people are interested in reducing benefits.

The third change is to take those dollars that are put into the so-called trust fund and invest them for a higher return. Under the law, those dollars can only be invested in Government securities which, in this case, is a very low return.

We are talking about taking those same dollars that belong to you and to me and putting them in individual accounts. They can be invested, and the earnings would be part of that person's Social Security payment.

Yesterday, the implication was that would be a part of it, and then we have to fix up Social Security and replace all the money that is put in these private accounts. That is not the fact. The fact is, they are still part of Social Security, but they are yours. You make a decision how they are invested, and then you get your 10 percent, as it always is, plus the return to the 2 percent on top of that, and that represents your benefits.

The lady yesterday representing the Clinton administration indicated we would have to replace all those dollars and go ahead with Social Security as it is. That is just not the fact.

This is an opportunity for us to increase the return, to ensure those dollars and those benefits will be there when the time comes for someone to receive them, and to do that without increasing taxes, without reducing benefits, but by simply taking advantage of the opportunity of a better return on the investment.

A couple of Senators are going to be here shortly. In the meantime, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

GAS PRICE CRISIS

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I rise today to talk about an issue that has been discussed by Senator THOMAS, and others, just before I came to the floor. It is also an issue that every American who drives a car has on his or her mind.

No one could fail to see the impact the high price of gasoline at the pump is having on hard-working Americans and American families at the end of June who are looking to take their family vacations. They hope to do it by car. I hope they can, too. But we have a situation with regard to gas prices that has occurred for a number of reasons. And because Congress and this administration have not acted, we have a worse situation than ever.

I will talk a little bit about some of the causes of this. But I do not think we have to dwell on the causes all day because I think we can do something proactive that will begin to be a solution—both a short-term solution and a long-term solution.

First, the causes. Clearly, we have an incredible dependence on foreign oil today. Seven years ago, we had about a 46-percent dependence on foreign oil; today, it is 56 percent; and it is projected to be 65 percent of our oil needs by 2020. So I think it is incumbent on all of us in public office to try to take short-term steps to solve the immediate crisis, particularly in the Midwest, but not without taking long-term action as well.

We have a bill that is pending at the desk today. It is the National Energy Security Act. It would take some steps, putting some things on the table that would make a difference for our country and for the working people of our country who depend on gasoline.

Let's look at some of the causes for the gas price crisis now being seen in the Midwest and elsewhere. The Congressional Research Service has attribute 25 cents of every gallon of gasoline at the pump in certain parts of the Midwest to the reformulated gas phase 2 requirement that the EPA is insisting on imposing beginning June first of this year. These additional costs are the result of the added expense of adjusting the refining process for the new gasoline requirement, particularly when the gasoline is required to be blended with ethanol, as is the case in the Midwest. In addition, there are added costs of transporting the ethanol, which cannot be moved via pipeline, to the sites where the gasoline is blended and distributed. Other additives, such as MTBE, are readily available at the refineries and so you have reduced transportation costs. You can put the MTBE—which was the requirement in the past—in at the refinery and send it to places such as Illinois, Wisconsin, and Michigan—the places that are suffering right now—but the ethanol has to be carried from the agricultural areas, where it is grown, put into a new system in the refineries, and then shipped back to the Midwest. So

you are talking about time, shortages, and costs that have added 25 cents per gallon. CRS estimates that an additional 25 cents of the increase in Midwest gas prices is attributable to recent problems with oil and gas pipelines that feed the upper Midwest, which have come at a time when gasoline stocks nationwide are particularly low and when the demand for gasoline is on the rise.

With regard to the EPA requirements, we had hoped the EPA would say, OK, we are facing a crisis right now, so maybe for this summer we can relax those new EPA regulations and go with what has been the regulation of the past.

Secondly, it is very important to realize that each State and many local governments impose additional taxes on gasoline at the pump. It just so happens that many of the midwestern States and cities within those States have higher taxes than the average in the country. The average combined federal and state gasoline excise tax is about 40 cents per gallon. In Chicago, Illinois, however, it is 61.3 cents per gallon. In Milwaukee, Wisconsin, it is 47.2 cents per gallon. So we can see that there are wide differences across the country in taxes of gasoline.

I commend the Governors of these States who are seeing the crisis and responding immediately. The Governor of Indiana has put a moratorium on the State sales tax on gasoline. The Governor of Illinois is calling a special session of the legislature to review taking similar action.

The Federal Government should assist these and other States by repealing, for a time, the 18.4 cents-per-gallon Federal gas tax. If we suspend this Federal tax through Labor Day of this year, that will give relief in addition to the State taxes selected States are giving, and it will give us time to catch up with the EPA regulations and some of the other transportation problems that have caused the rise in gasoline prices. We should follow the lead of these midwestern Governors. That may also encourage other States to follow suit by responding in a similar fashion and giving the American people some much needed relief at the pump.

I would not for one minute suggest we should take the money from that gasoline tax and take it away from the highway trust fund. We need to keep the highway trust fund whole so we can continue to make the improvements in safety and highway construction necessary for the States that depend on those funds.

The on-budget Federal surplus is estimated to be about $60 billion this year. The estimates are going up because in fact we are getting more and more of a surplus. We know we want tax relief for hard-working Americans, and this is in fact tax relief for hard-working Americans, including truckers who are suffering under the increases in diesel fuel costs.

We read stories about our own Coast Guard not being able to patrol the waters, where they are supposed to be doing drug interdiction and patrolling for summer safety. They can't afford the fuel because the prices have gone up so much. We need to give relief across the board, and we need to give tax relief for hard-working Americans.

I am today introducing legislation granting a temporary repeal, through Labor Day, of the entire Federal gasoline and diesel tax. The bill will also ensure that the highway trust fund is made whole. This bill will give hard-working Americans immediate tax relief during the peak summer driving months, those who have to drive to work or who are going to take a family vacation this summer. At the same time we in Congress must act to take the longer term steps that we must take to have an energy policy in this country that makes sense.

Let's talk about that for a minute. This administration is not only adhering to the regulations that make it so hard to drill for oil and gas in our own country, causing hundreds of thousands of jobs to go overseas, but they are also insisting on increasing the oil royalty rates. I fought the increase in oil royalty rates last year and the year before because I was very much afraid we were going to add so much to cost that our domestic drillers would go overseas. In fact, that is exactly what has happened. We are continuing, through this administration, to have increases in oil royalty rates at a time when oil prices have spiked to $30 a barrel.

The fact is, we can't survive on $10-a-barrel oil and we can't sustain the economy on $30-a-barrel oil. That does not make sense for our country. What we need is price stability within a reasonable and sustainable range. The numbers show we are more and more dependent on foreign oil because we make it so hard for the little guys, the marginal well producers, to make it in our country. The big guys are leaving our country in droves because it is more efficient to go elsewhere to drill for oil and gas.

As a matter of fact, just to cite a few real numbers, when oil was $10 a barrel, the little oil and gas producers went out of business in droves: 150,000 marginal oil and gas wells closed—that is out of a total of 600,000—65,000 good paying jobs were lost in this country; communities were devastated.

In one example, in Midland-Odessa, the unemployment rate doubled in 1 year from 5 to 10 percent. School district revenues were hit by $150 million, causing a virtual halt to any new hiring, and in some cases school districts were having to let teachers go in the middle of the term because they could not pay their salaries for the rest of the year. They had to close classrooms because of this crisis when the price of oil was $10 a barrel.

For some reason, when we were having that kind of problem, people weren't as tuned in. What has happened is, when we lost the 150,000 marginal wells, we lost the ability in 15-barrel-a-day wells to match the amount of oil we import from Saudi Arabia every day, because it adds up. We can produce 20 percent of the needs of oil in our country with these 15-barrel-a-day wells.

Just to put that in perspective, a well in Alaska produces on average about 600 barrels a day; a well offshore, over 1,000 barrels a day. We are talking 15 barrels a day for marginal wells.

What I would like to do is have a trigger. If the price goes below $14 a barrel for these 15-barrel-a-day drillers, let us have a tax credit so they will be able to stay in business and keep those jobs, not cap the wells, so that when the price goes up to $17 per barrel or more, those people have stayed in business and will keep producing. That is one part of a long-term strategy that would bring us up to 50-percent capacity for our oil needs every day.

This problem is not going to get better. Dr. Daniel Yergin, the Pulitzer Prize-winning author who is probably the most credible independent oil economist, told a group of Senators and Members of Congress just last week that one of the problems we are facing is an increasing demand because of an increasingly hot economy worldwide.

We know our economy in America is very strong, but that is also the case around the world. That causes more demand on our energy resources. So if we are going to have a policy that we would be dependent on foreign oil only 50 percent, we are going to have to produce oil in our own country and we are going to have to have those little barrels that add up, those little wells that produce 15 barrels a day, that add up to hundreds of thousands of jobs in our country, that support our schools. We are going to have to keep those people in business because they can't make it at $10 a barrel, but they can make it on $17 a barrel.

So if we will treat them like farmers and when we don't have markets, or when the prices are so low that a farmer can't make it, we will try to keep them stable and level. That is what we have been doing in this country for a long, long time. I would like to see us treat our small oil producers in the same way because if there is anything that is crucial to the security of our country, it is at least being able to produce 50 percent of the energy needs of our country in order to have some stabilizing effect. When we depend so much on foreign oil, what happens is they can shut down the supply whenever they want to, and the OPEC countries have clearly done that. That causes a spike because of low supply,

high demand, overregulation in our own country, and the unwillingness of this administration to say we are in a crisis. Let's work together to do something about it.

Senator LOTT, Senator MURKOWSKI, Senator DOMENICI, Senator NICKLES, Senator BREAUX, Senator BINGAMAN, and Senator LANDRIEU have all been very proactive in trying to put forward a program that would give us short-term relief and long-term relief for energy in our country. I do want the short-term relief of the 18-cent Federal tax to be paused until after Labor Day for our independent truckers, for our families going on vacation, and for the working people of our country who must use cars to go to and from work. I want that relief, but we must tie it to long-term relief because, if we don't, if things stabilize for the short term, we are still going to be under the thumb of foreign interests; we are still going to face the possibility that another crisis will come. Why not anticipate it and do something proactive now that will provide long-term relief as well as short-term relief?

I am introducing legislation that will provide the short-term relief. We must tie that in with the long-term relief if we are going to do what is right for this country. The National Energy Security Act is pending before the Senate. I hope we will take the action that has certainly been called for with the crisis we are facing. But let's take a longer-term view. Let's try to put some long-term energy policies in place because, certainly, this administration has failed to do so.

If this administration would step up to the line and say: Of course, we are not going to increase our royalty rates at a time like this and say we need a little more time before the phase II ethanol regulations take effect in the major cities—let's try to tamp down this crisis. Let's help the Governors of the Midwest, who are taking State taxes off gasoline for this summer, and take the Federal gasoline tax off as well, make the highway trust fund whole by giving tax relief to hard-working Americans, and let's realize that the security of our country depends on our being able to provide for our own energy needs. It is clear that no matter what we do for our neighboring countries that supply most of the oil and gas we consume in this country, they don't seem to pay back. I think the fact that they will not up their production to meet the demand is wrong; nevertheless, I am not going to whine about it. I am going to take positive action that puts America in charge of our own destiny. That is the responsibility of this Congress, and that is what this Congress must do.

Hopefully, the President will follow our lead and we can do something that is right for America, even if other countries we have helped in the past will not give us a break. We can do what is right for ourselves, and I hope we will.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. COLLINS). The Senator from New Mexico is recognized.

Mr. DOMENICI. Madam President, I note the presence of the Senator from Alabama. I am sure he is here because he would like to speak as in morning business. I know we are going to go to an appropriations bill. I think the bill is open to amendment. In any event, I don't think the Senate would object.

I ask unanimous consent that I may have up to 20 minutes to discuss two matters and, following that, Senator SESSIONS have 10 minutes as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DOMENICI. Madam President, the first thing I want to do is congratulate the distinguished Senator from Texas for her speech today. Before she leaves, I say that I summarize the problem we have today in a way that maybe down in your country, with Texas in mind, they might say it this way: The chickens have come home to roost.

The truth is, we have no energy policy, and until something like a crisis occurs, nobody seems to worry about it—in particular, this administration. We have had a ride economically—up, up, and away. Part of it is because oil prices from foreign countries was so cheap, and America was reducing some of its own, and we just decided that there was no worry about becoming more and more dependent on foreign oil.

Look at the facts. While we have had this booming economy, I might suggest to everyone that the unit utilization of petroleum products that make this economy go has come down—not because of anything we did but the high-tech industry uses a little bit less. Nonetheless, we have grown so much that we use far more—as much as 14 percent more—petroleum products now than we did a few years ago. Guess what happened. The foreign countries became our source of supply in ever larger proportions. We were happy-go-lucky when Mexico was starving on $11-a-barrel oil that we were buying from them. They could not pay their debts; we were just gobbling it up, and the American producer was disappearing. The price was so low we closed down the opportunity to drill.

The litany of what this administration has done so we will produce less domestic oil is as long as this sheet of paper; from saying that in big areas in which you could look for oil 10 years ago, you can't look for it anymore because something is more important. Not very much is more important than our growing dependence, as the greatest industrial might in the world, upon the dictates of foreign countries who sell us that tremendous product, without which we fail. At least from what I can tell for the next 35 or 40 years, there is no substitute for it.

I heard recently that this administration has somewhat of a defense because they are going to say: We asked you for some renewable energy research money and you didn't give it to us. I say right here before the Senate that we will take every single proposal this administration has made for renewables—wind, solar, and the like—and submit it to experts. And we will ask them: Would that have changed the crisis of dependence on foreign oil? And, if so, how much? Do you know what it would be? Zero. We don't use those kinds of energies in automobiles anyway.

Frankly, we are getting answers that the way for America to go is to put more in renewable sources and the like. We ought to do that. But if anybody thinks that is a solution to America's growing dependence on foreign oil, they had better take a long sleep because when they finally wake up, they are going to be absolutely surprised that our dependence grew while they took a nap.

The truth of the matter is we had better sit down with the President and decide how we are going to start fixing this.

I want to say right now that it is in the worst condition it could be—less American production; more of our land taken out of production; and more demand from the foreign countries; and they have finally found out how to enforce their agreements. They did not cheat the last couple of times on each other; that is, if Saudi Arabia agreed to X number of millions of barrels, they didn't sell it to someone on the side to flood the market, nor did Mexico, nor did any country in South America.

They are putting just so much oil on a world market that demands more. What do you think happens? The price goes up. It is now past $30 a barrel. It was as low as $10 a barrel. But, in the meantime, nothing is being done for the American producer—large and small—to substantially increase their domestic production.

I am informed enough not to want to leave false impressions. We do not have the wherewithal to totally eliminate dependence. Look at our great Nation. We are going to be dependent on Saudi Arabia, Mexico, and a few other countries that produce for a long time after I have left the Senate, if I am successful in staying here 2 more terms. I don't know how long my good friend, the Senator from Texas, expects to be here. But we are going to be dependent.

Let me predict the next thing. We are going to have brownouts in America, which means the electricity supply to a region of the country cannot quite supply enough because we are exchanging

it between areas. Then there will be another hue and cry: Who did that to us?

Just like the answer of this administration today—that it is gouging. They may find some gouging. But that is not going to fix this energy problem.

We are going to have brownouts because we have not been producing enough electricity. We are scared to death to produce it anyway, other than through natural gas, which is the cleanest fuel around. Yet it is a carbon dioxide producer and is a small portion of the problem that we have in the ambient air and the so-called greenhouse effect.

While we hide under the desk and don't want to even discuss nuclear power—which currently supplies 21 percent—it has literally zero greenhouse gases. Eighty-four percent of France's electricity is nuclear. Their ambient air is as clean as a whistle. They are not frightened one bit to have interim storage of nuclear waste.

Here sits the greatest industrial Nation on Earth in a total logjam over the issue of moving forward with just a little bit of the nuclear energy and saying let's temporarily store it, while Europe is doing it without any difficulty and no fear.

Where are we going to get the electricity in the future?

The problem with greenhouse gases is so severe, according to some, that we aren't going to be able to build any coal-burning plants until we clean it up more. Are we going to do every single one in the future with natural gas? Then the citizens are going to wake up and say: What did you do to natural gas prices? Our bill went up in our homes, and now we are coming to Congress and asking them to do something about it.

If you decide to produce all the electricity needs in the future with natural gas, you are going to put a huge demand on American natural gas. Who knows where the price will go? Yet we have literally an abundance of natural gas in the offshore regions of America. We are frightened to death to drill any more wells. Those who do not want to change that one bit because they are scared of environmental things have won their way, and we are not open to the production of natural gas as much as we should.

I close today by saying I believe 7½ years of doing nothing has ''come home to roost.'' We are just going to get around the corner maybe with this election. But I submit this great Nation is in for two big problems: Where do we get our electric-generating power in the future? What do we do about nuclear energy?

We ought to do much about it instead of falling under the table when a small percentage will raise their concerns. We ought to increase the domestic supply of oil so that the world knows we haven't gone to sleep by opening as many areas as we can.

HUMAN GENOMES

Mr. DOMENICI. Madam President, isn't it interesting. I came to the floor today to discuss a completely different subject. I want to do so briefly. It is very difficult to do this because, frankly, there is a great story about it in the United States today.

The National Institutes of Health announced that they have just about mapped the human genome, which means in the future, at a minimum, every known dreaded disease of mankind will be located in our chromosome system by the mapping of the human genome. Where scientists used to take 25 years and devote an entire science department to try to locate where multiple sclerosis came from within the human body, in short order all of those dreaded diseases will be defined in reference to the genetics of the human body, and mutations of that will be discovered as the reason for the diseases. What an exciting thing.

I have not been part of the ceremony, but I started the genome program in Congress. I am very thrilled to find that it has resulted in what we predicted in 1996 and 1997.

I want to tell the Senate a rather interesting story of how the genome got into the National Institutes of Health and how today it is still one-third in the Department of Energy.

A very good scientist who worked for the National Institutes of Health named Dr. Charles DeLisi had been urging the National Institutes of Health to get started with a genome program. He had described its greatness in terms of it being the most significant wellness program mankind had ever seen—wellness. They defied his request and would not proceed. He said: I quit.

He meandered over to the Department of Energy, which had done a lot of research on genetics because they were charged with discerning the effect of radiation from the two atomic bombs that had been dropped on Japan. He joined their department.

He came to see the Senator from New Mexico, who worked for the laboratories hard and long, and said: Why don't we start a genome program in the Department of Energy since the National Institutes will not do it?

I am trying to recap for my future by writing it, and I am putting it together.

But what actually happened was I proposed that the genome program start, and that it start in the Department of Energy.

Guess what happened. The National Institutes of Health heard about it. All of their reluctance disappeared because somebody was about to give the genome project to the Department of Energy. What an easy patsy they became.

They came to the office. Then we went to see Lawton Chiles, the Senator from Florida, who appropriated the science part of this budget. They said: Let's do it together—a little bit for DOE, and a whole lot for NIH. I said: Whatever it takes, let's do it.

Within the next year—1997—we funded the first genome money without a Presidential request. It had come forth, I think, in the Labor-Health and Human Services bill that will be before us today at somewhere around $20 million, maybe $29 million.

We funded it for another year. Finally, the President of the United States funded it in his budget in the third year of its existence. Ever since then, it has been funded in a President's budget and by us. It is up around $129 million or $130 million. I think it is something like that. But they predicted that within 15 years they would map the entire chromosome structure of the human being. Today, they made an announcement. I don't think they are really totally finished. But there is competition afield as to how to use it, and the private sector group is purportedly moving more rapidly.

The NIH and another group of scientists announced at the White House to the American people and the world we have essentially mapped the chromosome system of a human being. We now know the site, the location, the map is there, for discerning what the genes contain with reference to human behavior and human illness.

I predict, as I did at least five times before committees of the Senate from the years 1987 to about 1994, where I appeared more often than any other committee urging we fund the genome project, we are ready today to say the map is there; let's get with it and start using it. We will have breakthroughs of enormous proportions with reference to humankind's illnesses.

I am neither scientific enough nor philosophical enough to know what else it will bring. When we do something of this nature, we bring other questions. There will be problems of abuse, of genetic mapping to decipher people in a society prone to cancer and who therefore will not be hired, unethical research using mutations in ways not good for humankind.

Incidentally, we were aware of that problem from the beginning. Senator Mark Hatfield said: Let's set aside 5 percent—that is my recollection—of the funding to use for education and ethical purposes to try to make sure we are on track. I have not followed that well enough. I am not exactly sure how that is going. We still have some legislating to do in the area regarding uses in research, and legislating with reference to an insurance company taking a whole group of people and saying: We are not insuring you because we know something about your genetics.

Those are serious problems. They are bigger than the problem itself. They could make America angry at this program. We don't want to do that. We