for coming up with a comprehensive energy policy that is being quarterbacked by the Vice President of the United States. It is long overdue to get on with the issue of debating how it is that we are going to confront this energy crisis that is having such a negative impact on the people in my State of Ohio, the people who live in our inner cities, our small businesspeople.

I had a meeting this week with small businesspeople, manufacturers. I asked the question, How many believe we are not in recession? There was not a hand that went up. Part of the reason they are being negatively impacted is the fact that the energy costs are skyrocketing. We have a very large plastics industry. We have more jobs in plastic than any other State. Because of the high cost of natural gas, they are now in a noncompetitive position and are laying off workers. For farmers in our State, natural gas is used in fertilizer. As a result, our corn crop will be 25 percent less this year because of the cost of fertilizer.

Some fertilizer companies are not manufacturing fertilizer this year but selling their natural gas contracts and are making more doing that rather than selling fertilizer.

The point I am making is, the energy crisis is cutting across my State and, I am sure, the State of the Presiding Officer and all other Senators. We owe it to our constituents to make sure we do not duck, take a walk, be unwilling to make the hard decisions we are going to have to make to deal with this problem, including the issue of what do we do with waste from our nuclear energy plants in this country. There are still people who demonize nuclear energy, for example, and fail to recognize our entire nuclear fleet has had not one problem since Three Mile Island, very little problem whatsoever. It is a safe way of producing energy. Europe is into it. We have had it in limbo because of the fact it has been demonized.

More important than that is how to deal with the nuclear waste. It is time we moved on with this. I hope this energy appropriations bill puts in enough money so we can intellectually move forward in resolving that issue. If it is not Yucca Mountain, what are the alternatives? We have to come up with a solution for what we do with our nuclear waste, to take advantage of nuclear energy in this country.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. FEINGOLD). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I have been advised that the Senator from Tennessee, Mr. FRIST, wishes to speak for up to 20 minutes in morning business. I ask unanimous consent that he be allowed to do so.

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

STEM CELL RESEARCH

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I rise to speak to a topic that is very much on the minds of the American people as well as policymakers in Washington, DC; that is, the issue of embryonic stem cell research. The issue of embryonic stem cell research is one that has captured the imagination of people all over the world in the last 2 to 3 years. It wasn't that long ago that the idea of taking cells very early in life and having their potential captured and set in different directions to help treat disease—to help make diagnoses—was really just a pipedream. Literally, it was 2 or 3 years ago.

Now, because of the advances in science, the advances in technology and the tremendous research that is being conducted in this country and, indeed, around the world, a whole new frontier has opened—the frontier of what is called stem cell research. I will mention a little bit about what that is, but what captures people's minds so much is the promising aspect of this research. What has inspired such interest in this is the fact that people with numerous diseases, for really the first time in their lives, can look ahead and say there is the potential for a cell at its earliest level to be channeled in certain directions to make the care of that disease easier, and possibly even cured.

The same hope—I hear it daily—is expressed by people with diabetes, Alzheimer's disease, or Parkinson's disease, and for spinal cord injuries. Indeed, this stem cell research—both adult stem cells and embryonic stem cells—has opened up a new frontier that is full of potential, full of hope, and full of promises.

The issue is being addressed by the leaders of our country. It is being addressed in amendments on the floor of the Senate. It is being addressed by groups considering the ethics among the think tanks. It is being considered by the administration as we speak.

I would like to make four points.

No. 1, in any of these arenas where we are talking about life—and indeed I believe upon fertilization—there is a continuum from a sperm and an egg, to a blastocyst, to a fetus, to a child, to an adolescent, to an adult. That continuum is indeed life.

As policymakers, we will be injecting our own feelings and our own beliefs into this debate as we go forward. Therefore, I wish to make it clear to my colleagues that from my perspective I do value life and give moral significance to the embryo and to the blastocyst and to that full continuum.

I, indeed, am pro-life. I oppose abortion. My voting record on the floor of this body is consistent with that. Those beliefs are based on the very strongly held spiritual beliefs that I have. They are based on my medical understanding, having spent 20 years in the field of medicine, and in science—that medical understanding of this process of life and of living tissues. I do give moral significance to the embryo, as I mentioned earlier.

Second, I am a transplant surgeon. I had the opportunity to serve on committees that looked at the ethical considerations surrounding the use of tissues and the transplantation of those tissues. I have served on committees sponsored by the United Network For Organ Sharing—the registry that oversees transplantation in this country. I have served on the board of local organizations and tissue procurement agencies. I have served on the ethics committees within hospitals. I have had the real privilege of writing scores of peer-reviewed papers in the field of transplantation and scientific papers in the field of transplantation—both basic science and clinical transplantation of living tissues. I wrestle on a daily basis with these decisions surrounding life and death and health and healing. I have had the opportunity to routinely deal with many of these end-of-life tissues.

I have also been blessed with having had the opportunity and the training to transplant tissues myself—to take a beating heart out of an individual who has healthy lungs, a healthy heart, healthy kidneys, and to take that beating heart from that individual that, yes, does terminate the living function of the lungs and the kidneys and the other organs, but to take that heart and give it to another on really a weekly basis before coming to the Senate, and allowing that individual to live in a new life, a better quality of life; an individual who without that transfer of tissue otherwise had no hope.

I mention that, because the ethical construct and ethical and moral decisionmaking that we are having to face today in a much earlier point on this continuum of life is very similar to what we debated and talked about—what our scientists debated and talked about—what our ethicists did—what our medical scientists did about 30 years ago in transplantation. To whom do you give scarce resources? To whom do you not give a heart or a lung because we have this shortage? Which organ tissues are suitable for transplantation?

I have had the privilege—really the blessing—to be able to see the rigorous