

wind and risks mortgaging our children's future.

I yield the floor. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Under the previous order, 20 minutes shall be under the control of the Senator from Missouri, Mrs. CARNAHAN.

The Senator may proceed.

Mrs. CARNAHAN. Thank you, Mr. President.

(The remarks of Mrs. CARNAHAN pertaining to the introduction of S. 342 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mrs. CARNAHAN. I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, is there an existing order with respect to morning business?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senator from North Dakota, Mr. DORGAN, has 15 minutes under his control.

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#### CONGRATULATING SENATOR CARNAHAN

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, Senator CARNAHAN just gave her first speech in the Senate. I listened to her speech. Our country has been blessed with men and women who have stepped forward to serve over many years. Some have stepped forward during times of great difficulty, none in more difficult circumstances than Senator CARNAHAN. Her husband, a candidate for the Senate, was tragically killed in an airplane crash, and she subsequently was appointed to the Senate.

I listened to her speech this morning. She will make a significant contribution to this country and to the debate on important issues such as education in the Senate. I know her late husband would be so proud today of the legacy for which she continues fighting—progress in our country's education system. I thank her for what she is doing and for her service to our country and congratulate her this morning on her statement to the Senate.

#### ENERGY PRICES

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I rise to comment about the situation in this country with respect to energy.

Last evening I was signing letters, as is so often the case for those of us who serve in public life. We receive a great deal of mail, many phone calls, hundreds of e-mails every day, and then, of course, the old-fashioned way—we get letters actually written and stuck in an envelope and mailed to us. It is among the most important things we do, to try to respond to constituents.

Last evening, as is the case with most of my colleagues, I was spending time late in the evening reading mail and signing mail that has come from North Dakota. I came across a couple of letters I want to read to my colleagues and then describe what it is we need to be doing to respond to some of these issues.

I received a letter from a man named John. I have not contacted him, so I will not use his last name. John, from Fargo, ND, wrote the following:

Dear Senator DORGAN,

I am in complete shock after receiving my natural gas bill yesterday. I live in a modern house that is well insulated, I am careful about closing doors and ensuring that all the windows are sealed, I set my thermostat at 68 degrees (now even lower), and yet I receive a bill for natural gas alone, for over \$726 for a one month period. How is that possible?

Please tell me, Senator, how it is that we can live in the most technologically advanced country in the world, yet we can't maintain adequate stocks of natural gas to get us through the winter. Are we being gouged by producers?

He then asks a series of additional questions. I will not read the entire letter. I will only say that he asks a question he could ask on behalf of millions and millions of Americans who are opening their bills now to heat their homes and discovering, after 2 of the coldest first 2 months of the winter in a century in this country, it is costing a fortune to pay for natural gas bills, propane bills, home heating fuel bills. John writes a letter saying: I am doing all the right things. I have a home that is well insulated. I seal it. I keep the thermostat at 68, and my heating bill for natural gas last month is \$726, and I can't afford it.

I have a second letter from another fellow also named John from North Dakota. He described what happened to him. He and his wife had purchased an older building that had been subdivided into several apartments. They took an apartment in their retirement years and were renting the others. He said he had been paying \$300 a month for heat. When his February bill arrived, it was \$1,091. He went to the office of the gas provider to talk to them. He said:

I left the office wondering what to do. I didn't want to tell my wife the truth about this. She doesn't know about it yet. Today is her birthday, and tomorrow is our 53rd wedding anniversary. We have been making it

okay in our retirement years, nothing to spare with the \$1600 monthly income from our five apartments. This is our retirement home. We have no choice now but to sell it. Our \$1,000 monthly bill would be impossible and yet they say it is going to go up even more. We don't want to move, but there is not much else we can do.

I am sure all of us are getting identical letters from around the country. What is happening? What on Earth has happened that has caused fuel bills to double, triple, and, in some cases, even quadruple? When people get fuel bills for \$600, \$700, \$800 a month—and in North Dakota we have had a bitterly cold winter, the first 2 months especially, and especially the last few weeks again—it is sticker shock to get bills like that.

Now I want to mention a couple of additional points. I will be very brief. First of all, we need to take some emergency action. We need more money in LIHEAP. We are out of money. We have to do a supplemental at some point, and there has to be money for the low-income energy assistance program.

No. 2, I have suggested, in legislation I have joined others in introducing, a tax credit, an income tax credit to offset about 50 percent of the increase in home heating fuel bills of this year versus last year.

That is a way, it seems to me, to use a tax credit to put some money into people's pockets to offset about 50 percent of these increased bills. That would also be helpful.

Legislation will be introduced today that would deal with weatherization, LIHEAP, conservation grants to States, and increased energy efficiency in the Federal Government. Senator BINGAMAN has been working on that along with others, and I have been working with him, as well. We have a lot of things to do, both in the short term on an emergency basis, and in the long term. We also are investigating potential causes for the natural gas price increases.

But we also need, at the same time, to understand that we have the requirement to not only find more natural gas and oil—we stopped looking when it went to \$10 a barrel—and now it is at \$30 a barrel and there is a great deal of exploration again. I think all the evidence indicates that there is a record amount of drilling, and we will have more natural gas and oil coming on line within 6 months, 12 months, 24 months; but that is not going to solve the problem for the next 3 months, or even 6 months, or a year. So we are doing all of that.

At the same time, we need to be more concerned about the development of both renewable energy and also about conservation. Renewable energy, such as wind and biomass, can contribute a significant amount to this country's energy future. Any energy program that makes sense also must include an

element of conservation. That is why I talk about weatherization and other issues.

Most important, I think, this ought to lead us to the question of the deregulation in areas of essential service. We need to be sure we have an adequate supply and demand relationship in areas of essential services for the American people. I don't suggest we regulate natural gas supplies, but we ought to have a safe harbor somewhere with respect to production and consumption, so we don't get into a situation where people's natural gas bills spring up two, three, four, five times over what they were previously, for causes to which they didn't contribute. So I wanted to bring attention to these two letters from two fellows named John who wrote me lengthy letters about their respective experiences.

It is painful and difficult and, in some cases perhaps impossible, for some people to pay these kinds of home heating bills. They don't have the money. We need to do something on an emergency basis to try to be helpful to them. More importantly, this country needs a long-term energy strategy that works. Under both Republicans and Democrats, we have not had an energy strategy. We are far too dependent on the Middle East and on foreign sources of oil. If, God forbid, something should happen to interrupt the pipeline of foreign oil coming into this country, and all industrial countries, we would have an emergency on our hands.

We must do something to try to escape the excessive dependence that now exists on foreign energy, notwithstanding all of the current problems we have with respect to the dislocation between supply and demand. Energy issues are critical, and we must do something about them. It is time to have a national energy policy that works, No. 1, and, No. 2, it is time this Congress understands there is an emergency in parts of this country this winter, with respect to the need for some help to pay home heating fuel bills that are exceeding the ability of some people to pay them. That emergency includes the need to provide more money for low-income energy assistance, weatherization, and other related issues.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Missouri is recognized.

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#### SENATOR CARNAHAN'S MAIDEN SPEECH

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I rise briefly to welcome and congratulate my colleague, Senator CARNAHAN, the newly elected Senator from Missouri, on her first remarks on the floor. I apologize for not being able to be here when she made the comments. I was in a Health Committee meeting asking

questions about Missouri education programs of the Secretary of Education.

I understand Senator CARNAHAN was talking about education on the floor, and I know education and children's issues are going to be areas where we will work together. Yesterday, Senator CARNAHAN joined as a cosponsor on a couple measures that are very important, ensuring 100-percent deductibility on health insurance for the self-employed, which is very important to farmers and small business people in my State, and also providing relief from the draconian cuts enforced by HCFA on home health care agencies, which cost us half the home health care agencies in Missouri.

We have many areas in which we are looking forward to working together. I tell my colleagues that Senator CARNAHAN has been a long-time friend. She and her family were close associates in Jefferson City. Senator CARNAHAN was best known in Missouri as a very strong helpmate of our late Governor, treasurer, and servant, Mel Carnahan. I got to know her very well when they shared the same public housing in which we had lived, the Governor's mansion in Missouri. She was a very strong champion of the preservation of that mansion and a most gracious hostess for all the people of Missouri who came there.

After the terrible tragedy which befell her family in our State last year, she was strong and gracious and was widely respected and admired by all Missourians. I know colleagues on this side of the aisle who have not had an opportunity to get to know her and work with her will look forward to doing so. I congratulate her and wish her well after making her first speech on the Senate floor. I know there will be many other issues which affect our mutual constituents on which we will be working together.

I thank the Chair and my colleagues for indulging me as I extend a very warm welcome to Senator CARNAHAN.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from South Carolina is recognized.

(The remarks of Mr. HOLLINGS pertaining to the introduction of S. 341 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. AL-LARD). Under the previous order, the time until 11:30 a.m. shall be under the control of the Senator from Arizona, Mr. KYL, or his designee.

The Senator from Arizona.

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#### ESTATE TAX

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, I was surprised to read the headlines in the paper this morning—and I actually saw a little bit of this on the news last night—that billionaires in the United

States actually support the estate tax and oppose President Bush's plan to repeal the estate tax.

One would think for a moment that is a man-bites-dog story; that is counterintuitive. Upon reflection, it actually makes a lot of sense and makes no sense. I will discuss that today. I will get back to the billionaires in just a moment.

First, to set the stage, we all know President Bush has proposed an important and innovative set of tax relief proposals that will help working American families, will help the economy at this time when it is beginning to falter, and will provide more fairness in our Tax Code. It has three essential features. There may be some other pieces added to this by the Congress.

Primarily, it calls for reduction in marginal income tax rates. That way, everybody who pays taxes receives a tax benefit, tax rate relief.

Second, it repeals the estate tax, one of the most unfair taxes we have ever produced in this country.

Third, it largely does away with what we call the marriage penalty, which actually provides a higher rate of taxes for two people who are married and working than if they were living together without having been married.

Both the repeal of the estate tax and the elimination of the marriage penalty were passed by the Senate and the House last year. We sent those bills to President Clinton and he vetoed them. In the campaign, Governor Bush said: If you send those bill to me, I will sign them. So they represent an important part of his tax relief proposal. Mr. President, I aim to say we will send them to President Bush so he can sign them.

Because there is such momentum behind the repeal of the estate tax, people who fear now that its repeal will actually become a reality have begun to take to the air waves and get their petitions out and to get on television proclaiming that naturally this is a very important and needed tax. The ones who would get the most publicity, of course, are the billionaires who say: Look, we will be paying a lot of this tax. If we can be for it, surely, everybody else can be for it; why would you want its repeal?

It turns out there are two primary reasons. I will summarize first and then go into a little more detail.

The first is that these are the very people who can well afford, A, to pay the taxes; but, B, to pay for the multimillions of dollars to find the loopholes to avoid paying most of the tax, to do the estate planning. That is the euphemism for the term which means hire accountants and lawyers to try to figure out a way to avoid paying most of the tax—and there are ways you can do this if you are willing to pay enough money to these lawyers. And there are ways, also, if you pay enough money to insurance companies.