

to increase the supply of oil in our country. Passing the Energy bill that has already passed the Senate, that went to conference and was held up by the Democratic side by two votes would give us the supply that we need to lower the cost of fuel in our country. We have at our disposal the capability to lower prices.

Mr. President, I think it is incumbent upon all of us not to just look at the cartel that is OPEC, but to look at our own resources and to control our own resources. We have the capability to do that and we are not because of the obstructionism on the Democratic side.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent for 1 additional minute.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, first, the Energy bill would do absolutely nothing over the next few months to lower these gasoline prices. What will help to lower the prices is passing this resolution and pushing OPEC to increase crude oil production. In fact, Republicans have even asked, with respect to the Energy bill, what it would do to gasoline prices. There is no evidence that it will lower prices.

This resolution does something in conjunction with making sure we stop filling the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, making sure the Federal Trade Commission deals with these anti-competitive practices.

This resolution can make a difference by pushing OPEC to stand up for the consumer. It was good enough in 2000 when a number of our colleagues, led by current Secretary of Energy Abraham, said it made sense. I submit this is something, unlike the Energy bill, which can make a difference for the gasoline consumers getting hosed at the pump right now.

For that reason, I think it is unfortunate my colleagues have objected. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey is recognized for 15 minutes.

ECONOMIC SECURITY

Mr. CORZINE. Mr. President, I rise to speak on America's economic security—rather, I should say America's economic insecurity at the moment.

Before the Senator from Oregon leaves the floor, let me compliment him on bringing up one of those issues that absolutely must be addressed, one of those issues that is squeezing middle-class Americans: their gas prices—natural gas prices and gasoline prices.

The idea that we are unwilling, after we are committing so many resources to the Middle East, to try to bring stability and democracy in the Middle East and not use our diplomatic capital to accomplish what the Senator from

Oregon is speaking about, to bring forth a response from OPEC, is just unfathomable. It is absolutely an abject failure in the context of economic policy management and certainly on diplomatic efforts.

I compliment the Senator for his efforts. I hope he will include me as a co-sponsor of his resolution.

As I said, I wish to speak about America's economic security. We have certainly heard in the last 48 to 72 hours a lot of celebration and victory laps being taken with regard to 1 month's economic report on employment in the United States.

All of us are pleased to see that jobs have been created in the United States. We are glad to see they finally met something that looked like the expectations that have been talked about for the 38 months this administration's stewardship of the economy has been in place. It is positive for those who have found jobs, but it is failing to take into account something that I think is very important in the reality of people's lives and something that is not being celebrated on the ground among working men and women in the United States, and that is an incredible squeeze on moderate and middle-class families in this country across the board.

It is great to celebrate big-picture statistics, but the last time I checked, statistics are not how people live their lives. The reality is we have almost 8.5 million unemployed Americans. That number actually grew last month by about 180,000. For those folks and for many people who feel as if they are at the edge of whether their job will continue, the situation is really quite serious. Those kitchen-table issues actually make a difference in people's lives.

I will be specific. Just last month, we closed the next to the last auto production facility in New Jersey. Mr. President, 1,500 manufacturing jobs were eliminated in New Jersey. By the way, we have one last plant, which is scheduled to close in May of 2005. Then we will have the auto industry completely eliminated from the State of New Jersey. We have already had the textile industry eliminated. We have seen AT&T and Lucent lose literally tens of thousands of jobs over the last 2 to 2½ years in my home State.

When people lose in these contracting industries, we see a decline in the real standard of living when people are reemployed. The statistics show that the average loss, since the last recession, for people who lose jobs at \$44,000 when they were working to their next job at \$35,000 was 21-percent decline in their real earnings. That is what happens when people are part of that growing job set but, unfortunately, they are losing their manufacturing jobs, they are losing their white-collar jobs, and they are moving into service sector jobs that are dramatically less valuable for their families and their own economic well-being. It is a big hurt, and I know it is a big

hurt on those folks I see and talk with in my home State.

Think about it: We have gone from 6.5 million unemployed to 8.4 million unemployed under this administration's stewardship of the economy. When people get jobs—it is good we see job growth—they come back at a lower earning capacity than before.

That is not the only place we are getting hurt. For most middle- and moderate-income families, they have to deal with trying to make ends meet with regard to health care costs and tuition that goes on in their State and, as we just heard very eloquently expressed by Senator WYDEN, increasing gas prices. These are items for which real dough is coming out of people's pockets. We have gone from earning \$44,000 a year on jobs lost to \$35,000 in jobs found, and we have income not keeping up with the cost of medical care.

We have seen an almost 15-percent increase in medical costs for individuals since 2001, while we are seeing less than 5 percent in real income growth. That is a huge gap. By the way, at the same time, there were 3.5 million, almost 4 million Americans who lost their insurance during that period of time, so these costs are actually real. They are coming right out of their pocketbooks. Those 3.5 million to 4 million people are having to pay those costs, and that is why I talk about economic insecurity. This is a reality in people's lives: lower income, higher costs, and they are having to deal with that around the kitchen tables across America.

We might have one great number out of 38 months of economic stewardship as far as job creation, but I do not think it is translating into reality in people's lives.

Let me use another example: increasing tuition costs. There has been a 14-percent increase in tuition costs last year alone. These numbers are up about 25 percent since the Bush administration came into office. We have seen Pell grants go from about 42 percent to about 35 percent. Income, relative to tuition costs for kids accessing the American promise through higher education, has just been a tragedy. We are seeing people not able to afford the kind of education that will allow them to grow their income.

The difference between having a college education and a high school education or high school dropout is a dramatic improvement in their real earnings. We are seeing incredible pressure being put on middle-class Americans in tuition, just as we are seeing in health care costs.

I could go through a whole laundry list of other expenses most Americans have to meet and discuss around the kitchen table. Property taxes in New Jersey have gone up 7 percent in the last 3 years. One of the reasons is we in Washington keep putting mandates on them, and all those mandates trickle down to the local level, the local

school board. They have to meet No Child Left Behind standards and IDEA, special education mandates, and the only way to meet those mandates is to raise property taxes. It is wonderful that we are cutting taxes in Washington, but they are going up dramatically in the State and local governments. It is a very substantial hit, particularly for middle-class and moderate-income Americans.

Again, it is great that we saw 1 month of job growth, but what about these trendlines with regard to college tuition?

What about the trendlines with regard to medical expenses? What about the trendlines with regard to property taxes? Now we are seeing an explosion in gasoline prices. I think that is why there is a sense of economic insecurity among Americans.

It is great to take these victory laps and put all the spin that one wants to put on what is going on with regard to job growth, but it is not matching reality in people's lives. It is not matching with those 1,500 families who are losing their major wage earner at the Edison Ford plant in New Jersey. That is happening across the country, and I think it is a shame.

We will talk a little bit about the job deficit in a macro term. We like to talk about 300,000 jobs grown in a month, but the fact is this is the only administration since Herbert Hoover that is actually going to be overseeing 4 years in office without having any job growth, unless there is a miracle that we have a job growth of 300,000 a month between now and next January.

There has been roughly 2.6 million jobs lost in the private sector, 1.8 in the overall sector because somehow or another we seem to be growing Government for an administration that thinks Government is not a good thing. Anyway, we are seeing job losses where we have not seen it before, all the way back to the Depression. No other President is going to have overseen an actual shrinkage of jobs. By the way, just for comparison purposes, there were about 22 million jobs created in the previous administration. So when the Democrat presumed Presidential candidate talks about 10 million jobs, at least there is a record to run on.

History will show that if we want to see job creation in this country, and we want to have balanced policies with regard to taxes and budget deficits, then we have to make sure we are investing back in the American people in a way that makes a difference.

We have seen these manufacturing jobs leave America, which has shown a reduction in the quality of the jobs that are replacing them. We have seen a reduction in the number of jobs overall.

I think that to get so focused on 1 month's number in celebration is a little bit like some of the other things we have seen that I think undermine the credibility of those who claim everything is so wonderful. There are credi-

bility gaps on all kinds of issues, not only with regard to jobs where there is a 7 million job deficit from the economic report of the President of 2002, post-9/11, projecting there were going to be 5.6 million jobs and there are actually 1.8 million less. That is a 7 million deficit relative to what was projected at that point in time.

We have promised we would cut taxes without using Social Security trust funds. Well, we used every penny of the Social Security trust fund to pay for both the tax cuts and the expenditures that we made in the country.

The claim that any deficits would be small and short term, well, we all know they have not been small. There are record deficits right now, \$500 billion-plus this year. People are talking about as much as \$5.6 trillion worth of deficits in the next 10 years. We are seeing a \$10 trillion swing in cashflow of the Federal Government in the 10 years that encompass the President's timeframe and analysis. It is hard to believe \$10 trillion. I have a hard time even figuring out what trillion means, but it is a lot of money.

I know each American had \$18,000 worth of Federal debt assigned to them when this President came into office. It is \$24,000 now and it will be \$35,000 at the end of the term. We are creating an enormous amount of debt burden on every American as we go forward, and there is a credibility problem. One cannot say they are a fiscal conservative, that they are fiscally responsible, and have this kind of debtload laid on the American people.

There are also other small issues such as the \$140 billion miss with regard to the Medicare prescription drug plan. That is why people are frustrated when they hear about the great news that we had great growth in jobs, which everybody is glad to see, but we do not see it tracking with the reality of the other activities that are going on.

I wanted to make the point that while we are hearing all of this celebration, all of this spinning about how good this is—and again it is good—there were 2.6 million private sector jobs lost, the worst record in history. The quality of the jobs that are replacing the ones that are lost is substantially less in actual real earnings. Real median income earnings last year for the Nation were actually negative for the first time in decades. Massive deficits are occurring at the very same time. We are seeing all of these rising costs on health care, tuition, property taxes, and gas prices in this country.

I think there is a serious credibility problem. We need a new President who will put America first, rebuild our economy, and address the real needs of the middle class and moderate-income elements of our Nation.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. REID. I ask if the Senator would yield for a unanimous consent request.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Yes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that during the debate time, with respect to the cloture motions today, that Senator BYRD be allowed up to 40 minutes of the Democratic time for the purpose of speaking as in morning business and that Senator DAYTON be allowed 10 minutes. Each side has an hour so this is our time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Texas.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the 30 minutes of the majority time be equally divided, 10 minutes each, between myself, Senator COLEMAN, and Senator CHAMBLISS.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I ask that we be notified when our 10 minutes is up.

SUPPORTING OUR TROOPS IN IRAQ

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, this Friday, April 9, will mark the 1-year anniversary of the liberation of Iraq from the dictator Saddam Hussein and his corrupt regime. It was April 9, 2003, that Iraqis cheered when Saddam Hussein's statue fell in Baghdad.

When we began Operation Iraqi Freedom and as our troops were marching on Baghdad, we started the Senate every single day for at least 30 minutes talking about our troops, what they were doing, the successes they had, and the heartrending problems they faced. We let them know that not 1 day, not 1 hour, not 1 minute passed that we were not thinking of what they were doing for our country.

It is still the case today. Although Saddam Hussein's regime fell 1 year ago today, we are still fighting with the spirit and the heart that is personified by our troops on the ground in Iraq today.

At that time, we all talked about—and it was written in the newspapers and talked about on television—that it did not seem like that infamous Republican Guard had been there. We did not meet them on the way to Baghdad. We did not meet them in Baghdad, at least it did not seem like it. It seemed almost too easy.

This is one person's opinion, but this person believes that when history is written about this war, it will say that we are meeting the Republican Guard right now, that they faded into the woodwork and they strengthened their numbers and they are coming back. They have decided to make their last stand because we have a deadline of