what the Economist wrote on May 6 describing the background of France's immigration policy and the reason for their legislation:

Until the mid-seventies, immigrants to France came to work. Since the law was tightened in 1974, the inflows have changed. Today, only 7,000 permanent workers arrive each year, down from over 107,000 in the late sixties. Three-quarters of legal immigrants to France are family related. Not skill related, family related.

France has a low proportion of skilled immigrants. France's Interior Minister, Nicolas Sarkozy, argues ''that under the pretext of protecting jobs at home, France has created a system that let's in only those who have neither a job nor any useful skills.''

How about that?

The Economist article goes on to describe an immigration bill that Mr. Sarkozy has put before the French Parliament this week, which addresses that very problem.

Mr. Sarkozy's proposal, in many ways, simply follows the practice of other countries, notably Australia, Canada, Switzerland, as well as Britain and the Netherlands. In each case, the policy is based on a recognition that there is no such thing as zero immigration, and that a managed, skill-based immigration policy will not only control inflows, but will also bring benefits to those countries.

Madam President, we have focused on a lot of hot button issues, some of which are very important, but we have not given serious thought to the fundamentals of what we are doing here, and what impact it will have on our country. We are not giving any thought to what the Netherlands, what France, what Britain, what Canada, and what Australia are doing. We are not in any way following their model. In fact, we are ignoring the testimony of some of our Nation's most prestigious economists on those issues.

As a result, we have a fundamentally flawed piece of legislation on the floor of the Senate. It should never ever become law, and it is a sad day when those who are supporting this legislation are reduced to quietly going around and suggesting: Don't worry about it being so bad, we just have to do something and maybe the House of Representatives will save us.

I thank the Chair. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. FRIST. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that there now be a period for the transaction of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

RHODE ISLAND ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

Mr. REED. Madam President, I rise today to recognize the Army Aviation Association's top National Guard aviation unit for 2005. Since 1969, the Army Aviation Association has presented this award to the best Army National Guard aviation unit. Indeed, it is a great honor to represent the State of this year's winner, the 1st Battalion, 126th Aviation Regiment of the Rhode Island Army National Guard.

The 1st of the 126th has a long and distinguished history. Tracing its roots back to 1930 and the 68th Field Artillery Brigade, the 1st of the 126th was founded as a field artillery unit and later transitioned to medical care specialists. But in the 1960s, the unit was reorganized into an aviation unit. Since that time, it has performed with extraordinary professionalism and skill in its role as an aviation unit.

Deployed to Iraq from January to December of 2005, the 1st of the 126th served as the core of Task Force Dragonwing during Operation Iraqi Freedom. Task Force Dragonwing, based out of Balad Airbase north of Baghdad, was the lead force responsible for conducting combat support aviation operations through the entire Iraqi theater. They accumulated over 16,000 hours of combat mission flight hours during nearly 2,000 missions while transporting 66,000 passengers and 5,000 tons of cargo. During their tour, they flew 46 missions in direct action against known or suspected anti-Iraqi forces, and 22 missions were subjected to known surface-to-air fire, with 7 aircraft receiving battle damage. Throughout the professional performance of their duties, no members of the unit were killed or seriously injured.

The 1st of the 126th is comprised of 457 soldiers who man and maintain 24 UH–60 Black Hawk helicopters and 12 CH–47 Chinook helicopters. Their mission is to perform air assault and movement operations and to provide command, control, supervision, staff planning, and logistical support to all units affiliated with the battalion.

During one of my visits to Iraq, I had the great honor and opportunity to fly with them, to observe their unit firsthand. In fact, I was honored to be accompanied by GEN John Abizaid, whose comments about their skill and professionalism brought great pride to me and all Rhode Islanders. This unit was ably commanded by COL Chris Callahan and was led by soldiers, pilots, and crew members with great skill and courage and professionalism.

I was, indeed, honored and thrilled to be with them in Iraq, to see their operation, to see the contribution they made to our effort in Iraq. The 1st of the 126th has proven itself an exceptional unit and deserves to be selected by the Army Aviation Association as the top aviation unit for 2005. They have served their country with honor. We are all proud of their service, in the State of Rhode Island and throughout the Nation. Indeed, it is heartwarming to see them being recognized nationally for their great success, their great service to the Nation, and their great professionalism. I commend Colonel Callahan and all the officers and personnel of that unit for their service, for their sacrifice, for their dedication to our country.

NEEDLESS SUBSIDIES TO OIL COMPANIES

Mr. WYDEN. Madam President, a couple of weeks ago, I stood in this spot for almost 5 hours because I wanted to prosecute an important cause, the cause of cutting needless subsidies to oil companies when the price of oil is over $70 a barrel. Today the price of oil is still about $70 a barrel, but there is a prospect of some good news. Late last night, the House of Representatives did something that seemed unimaginable in the Senate a couple of weeks ago. They actually had a vote on whether profitable oil companies should get taxpayer-funded royalty giveaways at a time when our citizens are paying record prices at the gas pump.

When I spoke on the floor several weeks ago, all I was trying to do was get an up-or-down vote on exactly what the House of Representatives voted for last night. In fact, I spoke in this spot for more than 4 hours before any Senator of either political party raised any concern about the proposal I was advancing. But despite that extended effort, I was unable to get an up-or-down vote on my proposal to stop ladling out tens of billions of dollars of unnecessary subsidies to the oil industry.

Last night, the House of Representatives not only voted, but they voted overwhelmingly, on a bipartisan basis, to put a stop to this extraordinary waste of taxpayer money.

I remind the Senate and those who may be following this debate that the Government Accountability Office has said that a minimum of $20 billion will be spent on this program. There is litigation involving this program underway. If the litigation is successful, and we are not able to roll back this subsidy, this program could cost taxpayers $80 billion.

Fortunately, the House voted last night to prohibit funding for new offshore oil and natural gas production leases if companies do not pay royalties based on fair market prices. The House vote aims to get oil and gas companies to renegotiate Federal contracts signed in 1998 and 1999 that included royalty relief for companies at a time when crude oil prices were considerably lower than they are now. If the companies wish to continue to get new leases in the future, they would have to renegotiate the old leases and pay royalties based on current market conditions. This is very much along the lines of what I sought, after an extended discussion, to have the Senate vote on just a few weeks ago.

Some have argued that this approach would be essentially like blackmailing the companies by denying new leases