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In February, the Senate Democratic Conference approved a far-reaching program dealing with Economic Recovery and Energy Efficiency. I refer to the report offered by an Ad Hoc Committee chaired by Senator Pastore. It was a unique achievement. It was a program that dealt not in platitudes but in concrete recommendations for legislative action with major impact on the life of the nation. It was a blueprint for action by the Congress.

The recommendations which were made on dealing with the energy crisis were in sharp contrast to those of the President. The latter showed clearly that the Administration had chosen the path of ever higher prices as the way to meet the nation's energy shortage. Its preferred method was quick and simple. It was also a flim-flam. The less an American's ability to pay higher and higher prices, the less his share of gasoline and all products derived from petroleum.

By contrast, the program which this Conference endorsed last February sought to treat energy as an essential component of American life--essential to all Americans. It reflected agreement with the Administration only to the extent that we recognized that this nation could no longer assume unlimited supplies of petroleum products at low prices. Starting from the same point, this Conference, however, elected to deal with the problem not by forcing price rises but by restricting wasteful consumption wherever it was to be found--in transportation, in residential heating and cooling, in appliances and products and in industry. At the same time we proposed to stimulate production of greater energy supplies through government policies which would encourage research and mandate the use of sources of energy other than petroleum.
That program endorsed last February by the Senate Democrats has been
given the highest priority by the Senate Committees under Democratic Chairmen.
The essential legislative measures to interpret that program are now for the
most part out of Committee and ready for action on the Senate floor. There is
not just one bill. The program consists of many legislative measures which,
taken together, represent in the judgment of the leadership sound public policy
for the years and decades ahead.

After six months of intensive and careful work in the Committees—not
inordinate, by any means—it is now time for the Senate to come to grips with
this legislation. The Administration's spokesmen have asked glibly, derisively,
where is the Congress' answer to the energy problem? These legislative measures
are the answer from the Senate Majority.

I regret to say that during the past few weeks, we could have made
considerable headway in dealing with this legislation had it not been for
the dead-locked New Hampshire question. All of us have felt the frustrations
of that question. We have gone on week after week, hour after hour—in the
Senate on that road to nowhere. The Leadership has tried every way to bring
this issue to a head, to a decision so that the Senate might dispose of it and
get on to other matters. We have not been able to do so.

If we have been frustrated what of the people of the nation? They
look to this body—their Congress—for action on other pressing matters. They
look to their government—President and Congress—for relief, redress, and
remedy for grave economic difficulties. Instead, they see discord and disunity
over an obscure procedural question in which few outside this Chamber have any
great interest and even fewer any understanding.

That situation is intolerable. While the quest for its resolution
must continue, the Senate cannot go on going nowhere on the New Hampshire
question. The emphasis of our efforts must be shifted, however, to other
matters and notably to the question of energy and the economy. Unless we do
so the Administration's program such as it is will preempt this field. That
can only mean that every American will lose and lose drastically in terms of
the price paid to operate an automobile, to heat a home, to clothe and feed
a family; in terms of ever-increasing unemployment and rising economic anxieties.

The legislative pieces are beginning to come together into the in-
tegrated whole for the energy program which was endorsed last February by this
Conference. The Leadership is now ready to ask the Senate to act on measures
aimed broadly at cutting consumption of petroleum—as in the Mandatory Auto Fuel
Economy bill. We are ready to act on measures aimed at increasing domestic
supply—as in the Outer Continental Shelf and petroleum reserve development
programs. We are ready to act on measures aimed at requiring a massive shift
in use from oil and gas to coal and other abundant sources of fuel. Seven or
eight relevant bills in this connection are either on the calendar or are about
to go on the calendar. Indeed, on Tuesday last the Senate passed almost in a
matter of minutes and by an overwhelming vote the Strategic Reserves legislation/
It is something for the future, but a critical element, nevertheless, in facing up
to cartel manipulation abroad and any other abrupt and contrived interference with
the supply of petroleum.

Confronting us at once is the question of further and drastic price
increases in gasoline and other petroleum products. That is the grim reality
of the Administration's so-called program which consists of adding tariffs on
oil imports, increasing taxes, and decontrolling prices. It is a program which
gives a free hand to those who turn the valves on the flow of this vital commodity.

It is the Leadership's intention, therefore, to give priority to the
mandatory allocation extension with a view at least to keeping a lid on the
price of oil presently under control. A measure to that effect is on the
Senate calendar. It will be taken up Monday or Tuesday. It will provide an appropriate vehicle by which to inform the people of this land of the economic devastation they face in the form of more inflation, more unemployment and a higher cost of living unless the Administration is restrained in its present intention of allowing massive price increases on petroleum. There is a deadline on this measure. We must face this issue this month and the Leadership will try to bring the Senate to that point without delay.

The entire oil and gas pricing question is another aspect of the program adopted last February. That question will also be addressed later with specific legislative proposals. In addition, I would note that the mandatory auto fuel economy bill is ready; the Outer Continental Shelf and Elk Hills measures are ready; ERDA is ready; coal leasing and coal conversion will be ready shortly; the gas pricing proposal is ready; the measure to create an energy production board will be ready, along with any and all energy taxing proposals which will complement the comprehensive program.

The Senate schedule on energy is heavy but it provides alternatives to rationing by massive price increases and ability to pay, as has been proposed by the Administration. It is a schedule which brings into sharp focus the responsibilities of the Senate with regard to the nation's energy problems and the nation's economic problems. Each of us will have to answer individually to our own constituencies for the manner in which these responsibilities are discharged. Together, however, we answer for our party and, with our Republican colleagues, for the Senate. The fact is that the Majority legislative proposals are there for consideration. They are there for consideration by the Senate, the Congress, and the President, as an alternative to the Administration's current proposals.
As heavy as is this agenda, it is not the whole story. Before us lie other measures which must be completed before the legally-required August adjournment. We face a schedule of early mornings, late evenings, and Saturdays. I hope we are prepared for great strain in the days ahead and that, notwithstanding, cooperation will be obtained from all within this room and from the Republicans and the Administration to the end that alternatives may at least be considered. We owe that to the people of the nation and to our constituencies.

I do not think the nation wishes the Senate to spend much more time on the charade which has been going on on the floor for 70 hours. I regret deeply the injustice which is being done by the present procedural shennigans to the two possible Senators-elect from the State of New Hampshire. I regret, too, the deprivation of a seat in the Senate which that state is suffering. Notwithstanding, the Senate has a constitutional responsibility in the New Hampshire matter which cannot be overlooked. It has a constitutional duty from which it must not be swayed by impatience or by glib trials of the issue in the press. The integrity of the electoral process and the seating procedures in the Senate of the United States are involved in this issue. Those are constitutional matters which must not be lightly dismissed. The Senate Majority must not yield to those who would manipulate and exploit the Senate’s generous rules in order to frustrate the discharge of that responsibility.

The New Hampshire matter may have to be laid aside for more urgent national matters involving the energy crisis and the state of the nation’s economy. But the Leadership is not prepared to accept the premise that the Senate must have 60 votes in order to proceed to resolve a question which the Constitution admonishes us to dispose of by a majority vote. So if the two possible Senators-elect and the State of New Hampshire and editorial writers
are unhappy with the situation, I hope that it is at least clear at this point, after half a dozen cloture votes and at least a dozen attempts to obtain a unanimous consent agreement which would bring the debate to a close, who is responsible for the delay in disposing of this matter.

To return to the question of energy, I would note that in response to Senator Eagleton's expressed concern, the Majority Policy Committee has met twice in the last two days in an effort to develop a common approach from the party to the tasks which lie immediately ahead. The results of the Committee's deliberations are embodied in a resolution which sets forth such an approach. I urge the Caucus to consider this resolution in its entirety and to accept or reject it in the same fashion.