

I appreciate that he has come to the floor today to talk about it as well. We have had 3 years of meetings, negotiations, and broad stakeholder outreach in an effort to craft the most effective piece of energy legislation, with the greatest possible chance of passing both Chambers of Congress and being signed into law.

Shaheen-Portman is a bipartisan effort that reflects an affordable approach to boost the use of energy efficiency technologies. It will help create private sector jobs, save businesses and consumers money, reduce pollution, and make our country more energy independent. It will have a swift and measurable benefit on our economy and our environment. In the last few weeks we saw a study from experts at the American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy which found that this legislation has the potential to create 136,000 domestic jobs by 2025, all while saving consumers billions of dollars and reducing pollution.

Efficiency is the cheapest and fastest approach to reduce our energy use. Energy savings techniques and technologies lower costs and free up capital that allows businesses to expand and our economy to grow. Perhaps equally important, energy efficiency has emerged as an excellent example of a bipartisan and affordable opportunity to immediately grow our economy and improve energy security. In addition to being affordable, efficiency is widely supported because its benefits are not confined to a certain fuel source or a particular region of the country. It is clearly one of the policy areas where we really can come to a common agreement.

It is no wonder that energy efficiency legislation—Shaheen-Portman—enjoys such large and diverse support. It has received more than 250 endorsements from a wide range of businesses, environmental groups, think tanks, and trade associations, from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the National Association of Manufacturers to the Natural Resources Defense Council.

I am hopeful the Senate will return to Shaheen-Portman when we have finished debating the serious issue of Syria. I appreciate the commitment of our leadership on both sides of the aisle in the Senate to do so. I recognize this will be the first time a major energy bill has reached the Senate floor since 2007; therefore, it only makes sense for us to have a robust energy debate that allows for amendments from both sides of the aisle to be considered. I look forward to working with my colleagues to find an agreement on the way forward.

I thank my good friend Senator PORTMAN for his partnership in bringing this bill to the floor. I also thank the majority and minority leaders as well as Chairman WYDEN and Ranking Member MURKOWSKI for all of their support as we have gone through this process and hopefully will bring this bill to the floor in the next couple of weeks.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

SYRIA

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, we rise at a time of great debate here in this Chamber and in this country about what the appropriate response should be by the United States to the horrific use of chemical weapons by the Government of Syria. That is a debate which will unfold over the next days here. We will see, as the situation continues to develop, what actually comes to the floor.

But the President of the United States has asked for our input here in the Senate. Today we are focused on really the most important question an elected representative is asked to respond to; that is, whether to commit America to military combat. To that end, we have all spent time looking over intelligence reports. We have participated in classified intelligence briefings. I have also had the opportunity to meet with top members of the administration. From the information I have received, I do believe the Government of Syria used chemical weapons against its own people.

I believe an international response is appropriate, but I do not believe the administration's proposal of a U.S. military strike is the right answer. There is no guarantee it will prevent Assad's use of chemical weapons. I do not believe it will end the senseless bloodshed in Syria. I do not believe it will bring stability to the region that is so critical to our national security. I do not believe it will enhance Israel's security. I do not believe, most fundamentally, that it is nested in a broader strategic plan for the region.

The situation we face in Syria today is partly the result of a failed foreign policy. It is time for a change of course. We need a comprehensive long-term strategy first, not a strike and then the promise of a strategy, which is what the administration has proposed. "Strike first, strategy later" is a recipe for disaster. If the current resolution comes to the floor as a result, the current resolution being considered, I would not be able to support it.

ENERGY SAVINGS AND INDUSTRIAL COMPETITIVENESS ACT

Mr. PORTMAN. America must also look to its interests here at home. Senator SHAHEEN just talked about that. Without a doubt, the ongoing chaos in Syria has served to remind us once again of the volatility and the instability that has plagued the Middle East for many years. It should also serve as a wake-up call.

As a country, we have for way too long been dependent on dangerous and volatile parts of the world for our foreign energy needs, particularly foreign oil. We have seen the impact in the price of oil, even in the last couple of

weeks. We certainly have seen it in our economy, the roller coaster we have seen with energy prices up and down. As a result, the need for American energy independence is not just a matter of the economy or economic security or energy security, it is also a matter of national security.

Given these realities, it is incumbent upon us now more than ever to pursue a true "all of the above" domestic energy strategy. We have to find ways to produce more energy here at home. Just as important, we have to figure out how to use less by wasting less. We will save money, we will save energy, we will make our economy more competitive and create more jobs, and, yes, we will reduce our dependence on foreign oil.

The piece of legislation on which I joined with the senior Senator from New Hampshire, which we introduced just before we left for the August recess, takes important steps toward that goal of reducing the amount of energy we waste in this country. Senator SHAHEEN just talked about it. It is called the Energy Savings and Industrial Competitiveness Act. It was meant to be on the floor today. We were supposed to be debating it. It is absolutely critical that we are debating Syria instead, but I do hope we can take up this legislation after the discussions about what we do with regard to the situation in Syria.

This bill, the energy security bill, is bipartisan. It is bicameral in the sense that there is support in the House and the Senate for it. It is, as Senator SHAHEEN said, a bill that reduces our energy waste and moves us toward energy independence. According to the recent study she talked about, it is estimated to aid in the creation of 136,000 new jobs, saving consumers over \$13 billion a year by the year 2030. That is why it is no surprise that it is supported by such a broad group, as Senator SHAHEEN talked about. That support, by the way, is one big reason it passed the Energy Committee with a strong bipartisan vote of 19 to 3.

Simply put, the legislation we proposed makes good environmental sense, it makes good energy sense, and it makes good economic sense too. It is a rare example around here of bipartisan support, which ought to be encouraged in a number of areas, but certainly this is one where we can find common ground.

I want to thank the majority leader this morning, and the minority leader, for working out a unanimous consent agreement that allows us to move forward on this commonsense approach in the coming days. In that debate, we will talk more about the legislation, how it helps manufacturers on the global stage, and how the savings companies will accrue from energy efficiency will lead to better paying jobs. We will talk about how our legislation helps to train the next generation of workers in the skills they need to compete in the growing energy efficiency field. We will talk about how it makes