years. Because right now you are seeing with the rubber-stamp Congress and President Bush that the Lyndon Johnson administration and the Congress at that time has been dethroned as it relates to spending.

□ 1900

So I think it is very important that we look at that. I think it is also important to look at our plan, America going in a new direction, going into a new direction, making sure that they have representation here in this House. And this is for every American, not just Democrats, not just Republicans, not just Independent, not just individuals that have decided to participate in the political process, making sure that we help working families every day and the individuals that are retired and our veterans and all of the folks that we should be fighting for in a very fierce way.

I think it is important that if you folks really want to look at making sure these oil companies no longer price gouge Americans, making sure that we have affordable health care and prescription drug care, making sure that working families are able to make a livable wage, that is something that we are working very hard on.

We are going to start with the minimum wage, moving that to $7.25 from $5.15, making sure that the Congress doesn't give themselves another raise. And the Democratic leader and the Democratic whip and myself and a number of members of our caucus have said, no increase for Members of Congress until the American people get an increase.

And also, what Mr. RYAN talked about a little earlier, Mr. Speaker, cutting the student loan interest rate in half so that it can be affordable for folks to go to college to be able to make a stronger workforce for us. Also, as it relates to tax breaks for those that are paying for college.

I already hit the issue on preventing the administration and those here in Congress from privatizing Social Security. And I think it is also important for us to note that all of this is on our Web site with our energy plan, our real security plan as it relates to protecting America, and our plan on investing in the Midwest versus in the Middle East, of E85 and other alternative fuels.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I will give the Web site. In closing, I would just like to say that when you look at the history of the country, being an American really is an adventure. We have seen, from the inception of this country, that there have been tremendous challenges. But tremendous leaders and heroes abound in the country, all over, in the public sector, in the private sector, in education, in science, in medicine. We have seen and produced some of the greatest individuals in the history of the world, and being an American is an adventure.

The most frustrating part, I believe, in the last several years, and we have said this before on this floor, is that after 9/11, with all of the political capital that the President had, with the whole country watching him, the best, greatest most demanding challenge he could come up with was for the American people to go out and go shopping. You know, that, I think, illustrates the kind of leadership we do not need in all of these changing times.

And so our leadership that we provide from Article I, section 1 of the United States Constitution, which creates this House of Representatives, I am excited about the possibilities, come January, that we will have, when we are running this government, at least from the House side and hopefully from the Senate side too.

But like you said, we want to use all of the talents, all the creativity, all of the ability and intellect that this country can muster to make sure we are pushing it forward. As you said, with alternative energies and investments in education and getting creative with how we are going to create wealth in the 21st century, through business incubators and some of these small business programs that we have that can go and help and retool small businesses that don't have the wherewithal to pay $1 million for consultants to come in.

We have a public program that allows businesses to retool themselves for 80 or $90,000. And I have had people in my office who have experienced this program. It led to tremendous job growth here in the United States.

So there are things that we can do. And I think it is an exciting time for all of us. And I very much look forward to us doing this in January. www.housedemocrats.gov/30something.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. RYAN, it was a pleasure being on the floor with you this evening. As you know, we want to thank the Democratic leader for allowing us to have this time.

We also would say that it was a pleasure addressing the House

PERMISSION FOR COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY TO HAVE UNTIL MIDNIGHT, JULY 21, 2006, TO FILE REPORT ON H.R. 2965, FEDERAL PRISON INDUSTRIES COMPETITION IN CONTRACTING ACT OF 2005

Mr. KING of Iowa (during Special Order of Mr. MEEK of Florida). Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Judiciary Committee be permitted to file a committee report to accompany the bill, H.R. 2965, no later than midnight on July 21, 2006.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Iowa?

There was no objection.

FURTHER MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A further message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed with an amendment in which the concurrence of the House is requested, a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 2864. An act to provide for the conservation and development of water and related resources, to authorize the Secretary of the Army to construct various projects for improvements to rivers and harbors of the United States, and for other purposes.

VACATING 5-MINUTE SPECIAL ORDER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the 5-minute Special Order for the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. GUTKNECHT) is vacated.

There was no objection.

HONORING OUR TROOPS IN IRAQ

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MCHENRY). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. GUTKNECHT) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to be here on the House floor tonight to report to my colleagues and those who may be watching what I learned over the last long weekend. I was privileged to go with Chairman PETE HOEKSTRA of the House Intelligence Committee to Iraq. It was my first trip to Iraq. It was a very eye-opening experience, Mr. Speaker and Members, one that I won't soon forget.

Before I get started talking about that trip and some of the lessons that I learned while we were there, I would like to start with a quote. And I will come back to this later. The quote is: ''Do not try to do too much with your own hands. It is their war, and you are here to help them win it, not win it for them.'' I am going to come back to that quote later, Mr. Speaker, because I think it says so much about some of the things that we learned while we were in Iraq. Most importantly, I will come back and tell you who it was that originally said that.

The first thing I want to say tonight, though, is an enormous thank you and congratulations to the brave Americans who serve the United States in uniform.

When you get off the plane in Baghdad, you realize what they have to put up with, particularly during the summer. When the door opens on that plane, it is like opening the door of an oven. And there to greet you are bright young Americans, and they are in full uniform, helmets, heavy flak jackets. And I don't know what the temperature was, but it was the hottest I have ever experienced in my life. And those are the conditions under which our brave Americans do their business every day. And it is not just that they do it for 8 hours a day with long lunches and coffee breaks. The folks over there are working 12 hours a day and, in many cases, 7 days a week. And I don't think there is anything that we could say here in this Congress which would ever adequately express the