The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. HOLT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. HOLT addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. KANJORSKI) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. KANJORSKI addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. SHERMAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. SHERMAN addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

ANXIETIES OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) is recognized for 36 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, there's great concern all over the Nation for those who follow what is going on in our financial institutions. That concern is entirely appropriate.

There's great anxiety all over the Nation by hardworking men and women who do not know how they're going to be able to continue to pay the soaring energy costs for both their vehicles and their homes.

Yet, still, the Congressional leadership continues to refuse to put a piece of legislation on the floor for a vote that could immediately send us well on our way to energy independence by allowing us to produce that with which this Nation has been so blessed.

There's much anger over the disgusting immorality of corporate executives who padded their own pockets with millions of dollars by creative bookkeeping and representations that mortgage securities had value that they did not actually have.

There's incredulity in America over Members of Congress who have spent years decrying the culture of corruption, only to have information come out raising questions about failures to pay proper taxes under the income tax laws that may have been written by such person.

There's incredulity that the FBI might find cold hard cash secreted in a freezer 3 years ago, causing people to wonder why nothing has happened.

There's amazement from those who have bothered to notice that last year a vote could be lost by the Democratic majority, fair and square, then the rules be changed to allow a different outcome.

There's astonishment among those who have bothered to notice that the majority leadership could continue to advertise on-line that this would be the most open Congress in history, with complete use of the committee process, and each bill being subjected to full amendment opportunities and across-the-board input, yet, we continue to have the most closed and dictatorial Congress in memory.

While people in America were being overwhelmed by killer gasoline prices and home energy costs, the United States Congress took 5 weeks off. When over 100 Members of Congress played by the rules and signed up in a timely manner to speak for 5 minutes on the last day of our session in July, before the 5-week recess, the majority party used that majority, yet again, to cram down an abrupt adjournment on us to prevent our speaking with the microphones on. Yet, we spoke with the microphones off anyway.

When points of order have been raised regarding rules violations or alleged ethical malfeasance, the majority has used their power to table legitimate objections to prevent the violations from being corrected and from even being called violations. They've even gone so far as to have the transcript of the proceedings in this Chamber changed to cover up the inappropriate behavior and rulings from the day before, but the video certainly revealed the truth.

I simply could not and still struggle to understand how this body could go so far off course. When we find that our Nation has been brought to the brink of financial failure, there was fear with wailing and gnashing of teeth.

But we find that in 2002 and 2003, when the Bush administration was pushing for and demanding reforms of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac just to try to avoid this type financial disaster that they foresaw, the efforts at reform were blocked by people against whom allegations have now arisen in the Senate who were reported to have gotten sweetheart deals from the financial industry. The foresight of such potential problem is to the Bush Administration's credit. But the failure to continue to beat the drum, warning that something was amiss does fall at the feet of the administration and Members on both sides of Congress.

There's one word that can prevent the destruction of our little experiment in democracy, as some of our forefathers referred to it, that could also prevent the destruction of a family, of a company, of a society or of a government or a Nation, and that word is accountability.

When Adam and Eve were convinced there was no accountability, they fell from grace.

When the only man mentioned in the Bible who was said to have a heart after God's own actually had no earthly accountability, King David himself committed atrocious wrongs.

When people are convinced that there is no accountability for sexual relations outside marriage, and there turns out to be consequences of a pregnancy, some think it would be punishment to allow a child to be born alive.

When the highest officers in a company think they can raid the retirement funds of their longstanding employees and be mega-wealthy, with no one to whom to account, they raid whatever is in the company as if it were their own.

Some corporate leaders allow workers to come into this country illegally, just so the owners can pocket a little more profit, despite the fact that it diminishes the society and Nation from following the rule of law and for being a Nation of laws.

And though these same people can't see it coming, history makes very clear that such violations of the rules of law will destroy a Nation and society. It makes this Nation appear, at times, to be a corrupt Third World Nation where the law just does not mean much.

When a society believes that if it feels good, do it, and there is no accountability, society ceases and an animal kingdom full of the basest instincts of animals takes over.

When Members of Congress think that they're too big and important to ever be accountable, they display hubris or arrogance and engage in tawdry financial dealing with the taxpayers' money. When people in government begin to feel that there is no accountability for them, they will allow massive overspending that the country cannot afford. They will create monuments to themselves with other people's money. They will allow the vast national wealth to be sent to other countries that do not like us very much, just so the energy does not have to be produced in the backyard of the selfish.

In 1995, the House and Senate both passed a bill that would bring about drilling in what Jimmy Carter, as President, designated for drilling, because there is no wildlife there. It's a perfect place for drilling. And that is in the coastal area where there are billions of barrels of oil. But President Clinton vetoed the bill.

In the last Congress, we passed a bill to provide for drilling in the Outer Continental Shelf, but the Democrats blocked it from getting the required 60 votes to allow cloture in the Senate, so there was no vote up or down on the bill itself in the Senate, and it died there; while our country was dying.

Here our country is in a terribly difficult time with these extremely high energy rates, and our Democratic leadership still supports sending $700 billion a year to nations, many of whom do not like us. If that $700 billion sends familiar, it's because it's also the amount that Secretary Paulson says that we need at this time to save the mortgage and financial system.

Congressman JOE BARTON proposed that, in this time of financial crisis, why not open up ANWR out of necessity? Why not open up the Outer Continental Shelf and use the billions of dollars that will come from that to help