The President's private accounts pose a serious threat to the future economic security of all Americans. Private accounts would cut Social Security's funding, weaken the program, and make its financial problems worse, not better. Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan told Congress that private accounts would do absolutely nothing to improve Social Security's solvency. The government would have to borrow nearly $5 trillion over 20 years to fund private accounts. That would increase interest rates, harm our economy, and lead to large tax increases.

Democrats want to work with President Bush to strengthen Social Security for the long term, but we need to get it right. Clearly, women are disadvantaged when facing retirement. They are paid less and work fewer years than men, on average. Any reform that is enacted must keep the safety net intact. Our mothers, our daughters, and our granddaughters are counting on us.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2360, DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2006

Mr. SESSIONS, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 109–83) on the resolution (H. Res. 278) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2360) making appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2006, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

A SCIENTIFIC PERSPECTIVE ON ENERGY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KUHL of New York). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. EHLERS) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. EHLERS. Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise again to address a topic of immediate and great importance to our Nation. I will be joined this evening in this discussion by my fellow scientist, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. BARTLETT). He is in the life sciences primarily, although he has done work in the physical sciences. I am a physicist by training, a nuclear physicist to be more precise, and we hope to give a scientific perspective on the issue of energy.

There are a number of topics I wish to discuss relating to this, but let me first say that as scientists we have a unique perspective on energy, because we have had to deal with it in both a theoretical and a pragmatic way. As a result of this, and our scientific training and analysis, and graphing, we developed a perspective which I believe is accurate, but which is not widely held, except by a few far-seeing energy companies and energy analysts.

And I would also like to mention, if I may, that we covered much of this material last week, and I apologize to my colleagues for repeating it, but I have received a lot of questions and comments regarding the comments we made, and I felt in order to review it appropriately we would have to cover all of the material, but in a somewhat more cursory fashion. In addition, this evening we are going to add another dimension to the topic, and that is to discuss its relevance for national and economic security. So I hope that those who have listened to and seen the presentation last week will enjoy this one, again, because it will be somewhat modified.

The first point I would like to make about energy is that it is unique. Energy is unique, and unique means there is nothing else like it. That is very true about energy. Let me describe two, just two factors about energy that demonstrate this.

First of all, energy is our most basic natural resource. Why? Because without it, we cannot use our other natural resources. Just think about any natural resource you might wish to use, whether it is copper or iron or some other natural resource. Suppose you want to use some copper, you want to do some plumbing in your house or you want to run some copper wires through your house. Where do you get the copper? You have to dig copper ore out of the ground. It takes energy to do that. Once you get the copper out of the ground, you have to process it. You have to smelt it or use some similar process for that to purify the copper. That takes energy. Then you have to transport it to the fabrication plant. If you are going to use copper for plumbing, then you have to transport it to a plant that can convert it to tubing. It takes energy to transport it to the plant, and then it takes energy to manufacture the tubing from the copper. And when you finally finish, it takes energy to transport the copper to the store near your home, and it takes energy for you and your car to drive down and buy it and drive it back home, and finally, you install the copper. Every single step of the way of using that natural resource, that copper, involved the use of energy, and that is why I say energy is our most basic natural resource, because without it we cannot access and use our other natural resources.

The second unique aspect to energy as a resource is that it is a nonrecyclable resource. Once you use it, it is gone. Now, that is not true of copper. You use copper tubing, and eventually the house may be demolished, you can save the copper and recycle it and use it over and over. The same with iron. The same with many other natural resources. But with energy, it is different. The laws of thermodynamics are very explicit and the laws of thermodynamics are laws of physics that have been known for over a century, well over a century, and there have been no violations observed to those laws. These are laws of nature governing our creation.

One aspect of that energy is it is a nonrecyclable resource. Once you use it, it is gone. You put a tank full of gasoline into your car, you drive your car around, and a week later it is all gone. There is nothing left to recycle. It is energy that has been converted into kinetic energy of motion into friction, and eventually all of it gets converted into heat and radiates out into space.

Now, an important side effect of this, of our dependence on energy as being the most basic natural resource and something we cannot recycle, is that the price of energy affects our economy more than the price of almost any other resource. So when the price of gasoline goes up, it has a dramatic affect on us, but even more than that, and an even more dramatic affect, is the price of energy affects the cost of manufacturing something, the cost of digging it out of the ground. So when the price of energy goes up, the cost of living goes up because the price of almost everything goes up.

Let us take a look at something else about energy, another aspect. Energy appears to be intangible. You cannot really detect energy very well with your senses, and energy has many, many different forms. But you cannot touch it, see it, feel it, smell it, or taste it, except for light and heat; those are pretty obvious to our senses of seeing and the sense of feeling something hot. But energy is largely intangible. And, for most people, the only tangible aspect of energy is the price at the gas pump and the utility bill at the end of the month, and that is how you tell when you have used energy and how much you have used.

Now, it is different for scientists. The gentleman from Maryland (Mr. BARTLETT) and I recognize the nature of energy because we have worked with it so much. To us energy is very tangible and we can develop a sense of feeling for energy and when it is being used, but for most people it is not. That leads me to a comment that I made a number of times: I wish energy were purple. I really wish energy were purple, because if energy were purple we could see it, we could all see it. We could see when it is being used, when it is being wasted. And if in the middle of winter you drive up to your house and you look at your house and see purple oozing through the walls, you say, I better get better insulation in this house. Or you see rivulets of purple running from your windows and doors, you say, I have to tighten up those windows and doors. I cannot have all that money being wasted in energy. But we cannot see it, so we do not know it. If energy were purple, we would see how cars use it when they go by us on the freeway, we would see it around us in many different ways, and we would certainly treat it more carefully and certainly try to save more money by saving more energy.

Something else about energy I have pointed out before is how important it