even helicopters on two enormous cargo ships that were in the Port of Beaumont. Those ships deploy cargo to the war in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The community, because of Hurricane Rita, was left without electricity for over 3 weeks; 75,000 homes were destroyed. Several thousand homes to this day have not been repaired, and people are still living under blue roofs.

That part of the gulf coast, Mr. Speaker, is a petrochemical area, refinery area. Eleven percent of the Nation's gasoline is refined out of that small area in southeast Texas. Thirty percent of the Nation's aviation fuel is manufactured there. And the Port of Beaumont, as I mentioned, that deploys one-third of the military cargo going to Iraq and Afghanistan.

But this hurricane was not a water-damage hurricane, although there was a storm surge. It was a wind-damage hurricane, and people lost their homes not to rising water, to losing their roofs and water coming in because of rain.

And that whole issue is being dealt with, or not being dealt with, with the insurance companies because of their refusal in many cases to even pay for the damage because it was not water damage, it was wind damage.

But be that as it may, the devastation affected the rice industry. This part of southeast Texas is a rice-growing area. As with Dr. BOUSTANY and his area, this part of the Nation supplies a lot of rice for not only the United States but other nations.

This year the rice farmers lost their second crop, that is the crop that they make money on. And now, rice season is back upon us. But to show you the devastation from Hurricane Rita, I talked to the owner of two John Deere stores there in southeast Texas that supply the farm machinery for the rice farmers.

He says he has not sold one piece of farm machinery this year because the rice farmers cannot afford to buy them. Those rice farmers now, many of them will go out of business and that land will be turned into something else. But be that as it may, Hurricane Rita was not one of those issues that caught the National attention, because local officials, many of them that were here today, took care of business as soon as Hurricane Rita showed up. There was very little loss of life.

And because apparently for no loss of life, that was not a story that the national media sought to portray. Mr. Speaker, we just hope in the supplemental that two things occur: that the people of Louisiana are treated not unfairly, but the people in Texas are treated equal to the people in Louisiana.

Rita was a hurricane just as powerful as Hurricane Katrina, and that the funding be the same, and that the line between Louisiana and Texas, the Sabine River, not separate fairness; that fairness go across the river and treat all Americans the same.

□ 1645

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 4 of rule I, the Speaker signed the following enrolled bill today:

H.R. 4297, to provide for reconciliation pursuant to section 201(b) of the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2006.

30-SOMETHING WORKING GROUP

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to come before the House once again. I would definitely like to thank the Democratic leadership for allowing me to have this hour, this 30-something hour, Democratic leader NANCY PELOSI and also Mr. STENY HOYER, our whip, and our chairman Mr. JAMES CLYBURN and also Mr. LARSON, JOHN LARSON, our vice chair of our caucus.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, we come to the floor every day that we are in session, almost every day, to share not only with the Members how we should work in a bipartisan way leading on behalf of this country, but also to share with the American people how important that its elected representation here in Washington, DC, need it be Democrats, Republicans, Independents, that we come together under one flag and we salute one flag to make sure that we fight on behalf of what they need, not what the special interests may need here in Washington, DC.

I can't help but segue out of that opening into this historic day in American history. This historic day, and it wouldn't be anything that I would say that we should put forth a House Resolution to designate it as some sort of special holiday, but I think the Members need to be made aware of what happened 5 years ago on this day that might have put into motion, I believe had a lot to put into motion of what the American people are feeling now, not only on the east coast or in the Midwest or on the west coast or north or south, but what they are feeling of the sound of the ring at the gas pump when they are pumping gas into their tank, the feeling that they have when they can no longer carry cash because all of the cash is being spent on fueling their tanks to be able to give their children a ride to school or be able to help a sick loved one to a doctor's appointment, or a small business person trying to figure out how he or she is going to go up on the cost of their service or the product that they provide to a given company because of these gas prices.

Mr. Speaker, I don't want to be a Member of Congress with a conspiracy theory; and so that is the reason why, Mr. Speaker, the 30-something Working Group, we have gone back to looking for the facts of how do we get to where we are now, where did we fall short as a Congress on behalf of the American people. Now, when I say fall short, I want to make sure that the Members don't get confused.

I think here on the Democratic side of the aisle that we have done a very good job, if not an outstanding job, of trying to represent the people that wake up every day and want to provide, want to put forth their best role, their best foot in this great democracy of ours. I think on the majority side that it has been well documented that there has been access into energy policy here in this country in government-funded buildings where special interest was top shelf. That is a heavy charge, but let me just back it up here.

2001 on this day, not yesterday, not tomorrow, but on this day, Vice President DICK CHENEY and his energy task force had a secret meeting bringing together big oil companies, energy lobbyists, CEOs, and other special interests to craft the administration's energy agenda, an agenda to deliver Big Oil big dividends. This is well documented within the media, this is well documented as it relates to testimony in some committees before Congress. Big five oil companies, $32.8 billion in the first quarter profits this year, free drilling rights on public lands, $9 billion in subsidies; $20 billion over 5 years, and waived royalty fees, another gift that was given out of this energy policy.

Big Oil comes through for the GOP. Big Oil gave 84 percent of their campaign contributions to Republicans in the last 24 months. Bush-Cheney got more than $2.46 million in 2004 as it relates to campaign contributions. More than $70 million to the Bush and Republican Congress since 2000.

Democrats want to take this country in a new direction, and I think it is important that we point out some of the things that have taken place.

Now, some may say, Well, Congressman, I mean, that is good, you pointed that out. But, Mr. Speaker, I must go down memory lane to remind the Members and also the American people that this meeting was well denied by many: What are you talking about, a secret meeting? What do you mean? We do everything in the sunshine here in Washington, DC. We have transparency. We believe that we are here on behalf of the American people.

Well, let me just say that, and I want to point to an article that I pointed out last week, and I think it is important because we come to Washington every week for the business of the people and I think it is important that we point this out. This is a Washington Post article that is dated November 16, 2005. As a matter of fact, it was on the front page: White House documents show that executives from big oil companies met with Vice President DICK CHENEY's

energy task force in 2001, something long expected by environmentalists but denied as recently as last week by industry officials testifying before Congress.

We should have a problem with that. The document obtained, this week, November of 2005 by the Washington Post, shows that officials from ExxonMobil Corporation, Phillips, Shell Oil Company, and BP of America, Inc., met in the White House complex with CHENEY's aides who were developing a national energy policy, parts of which became law, parts of which are still being debated.

I think it is important, Mr. Speaker, that we bring that to the attention of the Members and remind them as we Members come to the floor, especially on the majority side, and start talking about, well, you know, I don't know how we got here. I don't know why these oil prices are the way they are. And I am going to show that chart there in a minute, but like it is some sort of, like it is someone there like a puppet, like pulling the strings and, I don't know how the puppet is moving.

Well, let me just remind the Members with all due respect, Mr. Speaker, that when we tried to come forth with an energy policy last year that would be meaningful for all Americans, not just some, and definitely not the folks that were invited to the White House. Now, I don't know and I don't know this as a fact, but I would have a pretty strong, I guess you can, like some people say, you could take this to the bank that everyday Americans were not called to the White House and asked how energy policy should be put forth in this country, because all of these subsidies were being placed on the table for these big oil companies.

And when it was reported, I remember very vividly, Mr. Speaker, that some folks said, well, it is in innovation, that is the reason why we are meeting with them. They are the professionals. Well, why while they were giving their advice, they were cutting their deal. And I think it is important for us to again say what this means to the American people.

Gas prices across America doubled. Big Oil profits quadrupled. I have already gone over that, but Big Oil has profited in a way that no other time in the history of this Republic, and I think it is important that people understand that we, those of us that are on this side of the aisle, Democrats, we believe in investing in the Midwest and not the Middle East. It is far too expensive, and I think we have figured that out and I think the Republican majority hopefully will get the message.

The bottom line is, like the commercial, Mr. Speaker, got milk? The bottom line, have you gotten enough? Have you gotten enough of the backroom deals? Have you gotten enough of the secret meetings that are later revealed? Because there are some people of good will that will share this with the American people. I mean, on this side of the aisle we have called for and I am going to talk about an amendment that we put forth that was voted down on party lines that made a lot of sense; but I guess because Democratic Members put forth that amendment on behalf of the American people, I guess it wasn't good enough, because we weren't invited to the meeting.

Once again, Mr. Speaker, I go back to the only way we can have bipartisanship here in Washington, DC, like I have mentioned before in other floor speeches, is that the leadership has to allow bipartisanship. You can't come from a minority position or the minority here in this House, as the Democrats, and say, well, we want to work in a bipartisan way. That is a statement. The action is the leadership, the Republican leadership of this House and this Congress say, well, we want to work in a bipartisan way and we will; we will let the minority Members know, the Democratic Members know when we will come together in a conference committee. We will sit down with Democrats to craft legislation, energy policy, prescription drug policy, health care policy. You name it. Social Security policy. We will come together in a bipartisan way to make sure that we put forth the will of the American people. But that was not allowed.

We are calling for on this side, we ran our amendments in committee and here on this floor, relief for consumers and farmers and small businesses, investigate and punish price gouging by big oil companies. Investigate and punish price gouging by big oil companies. Stop billions in tax breaks and subsidies and handouts that are ongoing to big oil companies. Keeping Americans, Americans home-owned and home-grown out of poverty of paying so much for energy prices. Increase production and use of American biofuels. Increase cars and trucks that run on ethanol. Make ethanol and biodiesel more available at the pump. Increase energy independence and create good-paying jobs in rural America, research and development to create cutting-edge technologies and biofuels.

Now, I am going to say, Mr. Speaker, because some folks may say, well, you know, Congressman, that is great, that is some great points there, but it is here on the innovation agenda. This is like the quick read on our promise to the American people on innovation. And we have a number of folks that have endorsed this innovation agenda and that are Democrat and Republicans, not only in the area of education and broad-band technology but also as it relates to energy independence in 10 years.

Mr. Speaker, that is not an if we do get in the majority, when I say the Democrats get in the majority, that is when we get in the majority what will happen. That is a promise. That is not something like a campaign slogan and saying that, well, you know, we filled our, you know, we will represent you well. No, that is the plan. And the Members can go on housedemocrats.gov if they want to get information on the innovation agenda. It is just that simple. Just like that. It is just that simple.

The energy plan is right here. Ready, set, go, Mr. Speaker. Ready for bipartisanship or a Democratic majority. I think it is going to take a Democratic majority to get us to where we need to be to be able to put forth the kind of leadership that is needed in energy level.

Again, Mr. Speaker, not talking fiction but fact. I hold in my hand here a report that was done by the minority staff and the Government Reform Committee talking about the Bush administration energy policy and the 5-year review of what it is going to cost Americans in the long run. We know this, Mr. Speaker, because we have tried to offer and head off what is happening right now. And I think it is important that the Members understand. That report is out there in case Members want to take a leadership role on the Republican side and say maybe we need to start working with the Democratic side on some of these issues.

□ 1700

I think it is also important, Mr. Speaker, to point out that as we look at these record-breaking prices at the gas pump, that we look at the subsidies and cut out the talk about is there price gouging or not. I think the American people are going through a major head-scratching session throughout this country of saying I am paying through the nose; they are saying there is a gas shortage; but meanwhile, these big oil companies, even though they show up on the Today show trying to explain to Americans why the prices are what they are, they are getting another membership at the golf club. Forget, let alone buying golf clubs, they can buy these country clubs now because it is record-breaking profits, and it is very, very unfortunate that that is the case.

I want to say that last fall, Mr. Speaker, we had an appropriations amendment on the floor that we put forth that would have increased the opportunities for another look at the innovation, make sure that it falls on the side of the American people, that we do not use environmentally sensitive land to be able to carry out the will of big oil companies who just want to continue to do what they have been doing over the years but, hopefully, ahead in the area of biofuels, more emission vehicles and also innovation. We have talked about the innovation, and I think it is important we brought that to the attention of the American people.

I also have to, Mr. Speaker, share with you today, I have given the Web site out. I just want to make sure because I want to make sure the Members are able to follow me. Let us talk a little bit about border security, and I think I am now going to talk a little

about it because a lot has been said, very little has been done. I think it is important to look at the facts of what is actually taking place here, and I do have some facts here, and I also have a solution, something that folks like to talk about but they do not like to enact.

We talk about immigration and border security, the President gave a speech last night and said that we need to protect the southwest border, we need to protect America. My goodness, if we do not do it, we do not know what is going to happen. We have got to keep the terrorists out.

Well, last I checked, Mr. Speaker, there are a number of terrorists and well-known terrorists, even a recent documented case in Washington State of a terrorist coming through the Washington-Canada border and all along the northern border and some other places here in the United States. So to say that it is all in the southwest United States, that that is the issue and we need to deal with it, I think that there are some other underlying issues that are there. And I just want to share with you that when you look at a leadership that has been in place, Mr. Speaker, for oh, well, I know 6 years with a Republican President in the White House, Republican-controlled House, the double-digit years, and now look up and say we have a problem where we have to send the National Guard—the National Guard to the border?

Well, I guess it would be easy if Democrats were in control anytime during that time, because you can point at the Democrats and say that is the reason why we have to send the National Guard, because it has been mismanagement of the government and we have not adhered to the number of recommendations and reports that have been coming out over the years saying that we have to increase the number of border patrol agents and because of the lack of oversight and the lack of follow-through and executing any of that; we have found wasteful spending from the Department of Homeland Security, need it be secure borders or whatever the initiatives were dealing with cameras and sensors and all. We were so busy giving out these contracts to the special interests that no one bothered to hold the light of accountability over these contracts, and so we find ourselves in these quick fix, make money for folks, that can influence this process over what should happen in a functional government.

Let me get that Gingrich poster if I can. I want to bring Mr. Gingrich, not Mr. Gingrich, Speaker Gingrich, Mr. Speaker, who delivered the Republican majority to the Republicans, and this is what he is saying. He is saying, ''They are seen by the country as being in charge of a government that cannot function.'' They, Mr. Speaker. When you have a former Speaker of the House that said ''they'' that means he is separating himself. ''They'' means that they are no longer the people I knew when I was there. ''They,'' they is like a group of people that the relationship may not be what it was, but I do not know what they are doing. They are over there. They are not on our side.

I guess that is what the Speaker is saying, and so I think it is important for us to look at the reason why this Republican Congress, Mr. Speaker, is being seen as they, even by individuals that were in the leadership of bringing about and delivering the majority.

Border. There are 1,000 fewer border patrol agents than were promised in the 9/11 Act. There was a lot of discussion around the 9/11 Act that passed off this floor, but there are 1,000 fewer than what was promised to the American people. The Republican-controlled Congress has broken the promise it made in funding additional border patrol agents, immigration enforcement officers and detention beds, especially in the 2004 Congress when it enacted the Intelligence Reform Act, or better known as the 9/11 Act, which mandated an additional 2,000 border patrol agents being hired over each of the 5 years.

But the President's subsequent budgets have failed to include adequate resources to implement the act. Indeed, the President's fiscal year 2006 budget called for only 210 additional border agents.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I had to read that part, and I am going to stop right there for a moment, because sometimes when they have the newscast on these cable stations, they run the breaking news at the bottom. I wish I had one of those ticker tape little areas under the President last night to read out in the fiscal year 2006 budget; that is, 2006 budget only called for 210 additional border patrol agents. That is the facts. That is not something from the Democratic Caucus. That is not something that I was walking down the street and just said, hey, I am going to say to the President. No, you can look in his budget, you can look it up on line, you can look in the White House Web sites archives, if they have not taken it off just based on I said something about it.

Now the President is ringing the bell saying, let us send 11,000 National Guard troops down to the southwest border even if there are documented cases of what is going on on the northern border.

The Republican Congress has not done much better. In the fiscal year 2006, they only funded an additional 1,000 agents, only 1,000, even though the 9/11 Act called for 2,000 agents per year. I am going to read off, Mr. Speaker, a little later on the amendment that we put forth here on this floor that was voted down by Republicans and voted for by Democrats.

The act also mandated an additional 8,000 detention beds, but only in the fiscal year 2006 the Congress funded only 1,800 additional detention beds. Again, I must add, one may go on prime-time television, say another thing, but the facts state different. We call it the Potomac Two-Step.

The President and the Republicans continue to underfund the border patrol. The President's fiscal year 2007 budget does not fully fund the authorized level of border patrol, while the Democratic budget substitute does.

The fiscal year 2007 House homeland security appropriation bill that was marked up in subcommittee last Thursday falls 800 border patrol agents short and 3,130 detention beds and 500 immigration enforcement agents short of the authorized levels that was passed off of this floor just a few years ago.

Again, I mean, I am so glad that God has given me breath to come to this floor to share this with the Members and the American people, because if we look at the prime-time address or some sort of press conference, we will never get down to what is actually happening here in Washington, DC. I can tell you, on this side of the aisle, we have had enough of this kind of talk and lack of action.

Now, let me just pull out here that this border security, Mr. Speaker, is a nonpartisan issue and should not be a Democrat-Republican issue. It should not be, well, that Independent in the House has a proposal, that Independent. It should not be former Members of the House, Speaker of the House, calling Republican majority ''they,'' as though they are not working in a way that they should work on behalf of the American people. Not my words, but Speaker Gingrich's words.

I can tell you that it is important that we move in the direction of making sure that we do not cater to certain major conservative voices, telling the President let us send 11,000 National Guard troops. Let me break that down for the Members in case some of the Members probably do not understand what that means.

I am a member of the Armed Services Committee. Last I checked, we had an issue as relates to end strength. We do not have the necessary personnel to even take on the obligations that we have now. We have men and women in harm's way in Iraq and Afghanistan and other very dangerous places, in the Horn of Africa, at this time. And when we talk about the National Guard, that means someone in your neighborhood will be called up for, what, for 2 weeks to go to the southwest border. For 2 weeks, they are going to be trained, mobilized, fed and dropped on the southwest border, for 2 weeks at a time.

I am going to tell you what that means for Members like me, Mr. Speaker, and there are 20-some odd Members from Florida, 25, 26, 27, and counting the two Senators. But this means for Florida that our Florida National Guard, hurricane season is starting in 3 weeks, have to have in their mind that they are going to the southwest border to protect only the southwest border and not really carry out a

mission of homeland security against terrorism. That means that those individuals that have been deployed and pulled away from their families from some area of 12 months to 14 months at a time, in Iraq now, has to come back home, kiss the kids, hug the wife, and then head off for 2 weeks over to the southwest border.

Now, this is something that has been going on for some time now and something that we have been calling for to be changed.

In addition, I hold in my hand here, Mr. Speaker, the 9/11 Commission report, at least the cover of it, a report card, the final report of the 9/11 Commission, dated December 5 of 2006. And this report card basically, and I will come down before the week is out to bring my copy of the 9/11 report to the floor, and I can read into the record verbally several pages of that report of things that should be taking place now or should have been taking place, and it has not.

The 9/11 report basically called for exactly what we passed here on this floor: 2,000 additional border patrol agents annually, okay; almost coming to the tune of 12,000 additional border patrol agents; of making sure that we are able to deal with attrition, we are able to make sure that we have professionals that are on the border. Being a border patrol agent is not just something you can hop up and just try to do tomorrow. Making sure that we move from a G–11 status to a G–13, which means that there is higher pay, paying these men and women for being the professionals that they are and making sure they have the kind of force that they should have.

Border patrol is not something that should be enforced or carried out when the poll says that we are not doing anything. It is something that is to protect the United States of America and it should not be a knee jerk.

□ 1715

Everything cannot be: Well, what if this? Well, we will send the military. What if we? We will send the military. We have a volunteer force. They signed up to stand up and do what they have to do on behalf of this country. My hat is off to them. They allow the veterans who, Mr. Speaker, serve in this Chamber, and also we represent throughout this great country of ours, they fought to allow us to salute one flag. And that is something I don't take lightly.

But when you have a Republican-controlled Congress that doesn't believe in bipartisanship, in working together, I think it is important to be able to point out some of these issues that are of great importance.

When you start looking at guidelines for government sharing of personal information, that is a ''D.'' Wow. That is in the news today. That is their report from 2005. When you start looking at checking bags and cargo screening, that is also a ''D.'' I wonder how they came up with that? That has been in the news recently. When we start looking at the issue of critical infrastructure assessment, that is also a ''D.'' When you start looking at the issues of how do we deal with FBI security workforce, that is a ''C.'' When you start looking at the guidelines for intelligence oversight reform, that is a ''D.'' When you start looking at unclassified top-line intelligence budgets, that is an ''F.'' When you start looking at the issues of moving in the direction of securing our borders, also very low marks.

I think it is important that we point this out, and this will be on our Web site for your perusal, the Members, if they want to take a look at it. I think it is important to talk about the issue at hand, of what the President has shared with us last night, and to talk about it being willing to endorse something. And we will put a copy of that amendment that we put forth on the homeland security piece and what it called for on the Web site as well.

Well, in December of 2005, Democrats had a motion to recommit on H.R. 4437. In that amendment we called for an increase of border patrol numbers, border patrol officers by 3,000 additional agents, totaling 12,000 in total, and to expand the new training facility to be able to handle the capacity of training those officers.

We called for increased border patrol agents and inspectors, pay agents, from G–11 to G–13 that I mentioned earlier, Mr. Speaker, that would put these agents on par with other law enforcement agencies so that we don't end up being the training ground for other law enforcement agencies that then take the dollars we have put into training, recruiting, and all of those things that goes into bringing those individuals on; that they are not taken away by other law enforcement agencies.

Immigration and customs enforcement, which are ICE officers, 2,000 additional agents and 250 additional detention officers.

This is a plan, Mr. Speaker. This is not something where you just jump up on television and say we are going to send 11,000 National Guard troops. That is not a plan. That is a Band-Aid. And I want those comments of what Republicans are saying about that plan.

We have here where we also call for 100 additional U.S. attorneys. U.S. attorneys. One hundred additional U.S. attorneys to be able to handle the cases. We don't want them sitting in detention centers taking up all that bedspace. That is 400 in total to be able to deal with the prosecution of individuals that come into the country illegally, and also those smugglers.

We are also calling for immigration judges, 75 additional immigration judges. We called for Coast Guard, 2,500 additional enforcement personnel, or 10,000 in total.

It is also important to be able to deal with the investigations of fraudulent schemes and documents, so we called for 1,000 investigators that would be able to investigate those fraudulent documents so that we can have, guess what, competence.

We are finding in the Department of Homeland Security, Mr. Speaker, the reason why these procurement officers are going through so much trouble and not being able to have oversight over these contracts is that we haven't put the individuals there to oversee the contracts. So the contractors, those that come in, government contractors know they can come in and take advantage of the government and there are several months before we figure out what is going on, or before the Department figures out what is going on.

The amendment also calls for a thousand entry inspectors and K–9 enforcement teams, 375, that would take the place of many personnel individuals. These K–9s have been an effective tool in the effort against terrorism in U.S. enforcement throughout this country and along the borders.

I think it is important to look at a plan, not a Band-Aid. Now, speaking of a plan and a Band-Aid, let's talk for a minute about these 11,000 troops. An L.A. Times article today. In California, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger said he agreed with the President on the need for a border overhaul and immigration policies, but he criticized the plan of the National Guard on the border. Border State Governors were not consulted about the proposal in advance, and there are many outstanding questions about the impact of the President's proposal on Californians, he said in a statement. It remains unclear what impact only 6,000 National Guard troops will have on securing the border, says Schwarzenegger. I am concerned that asking the National Guard troops to guard our Nation's borders is a Band-Aid solution and not the permanent solution we need.

I just wanted to say that Governor Schwarzenegger, being a Governor in a State, a large State, where usually the National Guard reports to the Governor of that State, until they are federalized I mean, I would be concerned if no one at least had a conference call and said, hey, we are thinking about doing this; Governors, what do you feel about that? Okay, let's just take that out. Let us just talk about the way they do things here in Washington, DC. Let us just talk about Republican Governors, and say, what do you think about this; and how do you feel about how your National Guard can play a role in this? Well, that is from Governor Schwarzenegger.

Here is a Member of Congress, Congressman JONES of North Carolina. This is his quote. ''If Bush had done this 2 years ago, we could have seen a real solution that might have improved the environment for the debate about what we should do now.''

That is from that same article, and we will have this on our Web site a little later on today for the Members that would like to have that information.

We put forth that amendment, Mr. Speaker, going back to the amendment

which was voted down on partisan lines, I guess because Democrats had an idea and a solution, not just a Band-Aid.

I think it is also important, Mr. Speaker, for us to take a step back and to make sure that the American people know that we should all be on their side. And I do believe my colleagues in some areas are on their side, but there are too many people listening to the special interests here in Washington, DC.

We have a plan. We put our energy plan on the table. It is on Housedemocrats.gov. It is there. It wouldn't just be on the Web site, it would be implemented if the Republican majority would work in a bipartisan way with Democrats in putting forth these plans. Maybe we wouldn't be paying more at the pumps if the Democrat proposals and amendments that were on this floor at the time we were dealing with energy policy on price gouging, there wouldn't be a question whether there was price gouging or not because there would be enough U.S. attorneys to be able to deal with it. The oil companies would know there would be a $3 million fine, plus prison time, jail time.

It is criminal to spend $56 to fill up the tank of an F10 Ford truck. It is criminal to have folks running around here putting $10 at a time in their tank and only getting three gallons, if that, in some cases to make it back and forth from work. And I think it is important that people understand what is happening.

I think it is important to note, Mr. Speaker, to the American people and the Members, and I just want to mainly talk to the Members, that we have time. We have time for a revelation, a paradigm shift for the majority to say we are willing to work with Democrats in a real way. But guess what? History doesn't speak to that. Recent history and the history of 5 or 6 years doesn't speak to that.

I am very concerned that people are paying for a one-sided policy, a Republican majority policy, a White House policy, a rubber-stamp policy, Mr. Speaker, of saying, Mr. President, whatever you want, we are willing to fund it. We are willing to give tax breaks to billionaires that we cannot afford; we are willing to give tax-free giveaways to the oil companies, which has never happened in the history of the country; we are willing to turn our heads and ignore real price-gouging policy and laws because somebody from the oil companies may end up going to jail.

Well, let me tell you what is happening. Gas prices are so high now that I know, I mean, I know for a fact that crime will go up because of gas prices. People are going to do what they have to do to fill their tanks or to put some gas in it. And I am not encouraging that. I used to be a State trooper. I want those individuals to be dealt with. But I wonder why we would put the country in the posture it is in now to benefit the few oil companies that are out there?

We can talk about the rubber stamp a little further, Mr. Speaker, because I think it is important that not only when we talk about oil, we talk about immigration. As I said, when I talked about the incompetence of one-sided policymaking without working in a bipartisan way, I just want to say that it seems like the Republican majority here in the House are afraid of foreign people but not afraid of foreign money.

When I talk about foreign money, Mr. Speaker, I have to get this chart here. I bring this chart out again. I have talked about this chart so much until I see it sometimes when I close my eyes, because I cannot help but point out again to the Members on the Republican side, the majority that is setting forth the policy and that has put this in motion and has been a part of history-making in the wrong way.

There are 42 presidents, Mr. Speaker. This is a fact. This is the U.S. Department of Treasury. This is not a 30-something report or the Kendrick Meek report. In 224 years, $1.01 trillion has been borrowed from foreign nations. These are the Presidents and these are their pictures. Four years, 2001 to 2005, the President, along with the Republican Congress, pictured down here, have borrowed $1.05 trillion from foreign nations.

Well, who are these nations? Well, we have put together, the 30-something Working Group, we wanted to break this down so that the Members will know what they have done. Republican Members would know what they have done, because we have called for pay as you go, and we will talk about that, not just borrowing as we go from foreign nations, putting this country in an economic posture it has never been in in the history of the Republic. I am not talking about in the last 2 years or 20 years or last 100 years, but in the history of the Republic.

So what the majority Republican Congress has done has enabled America from being how it was prior to the arrival of the Bush administration and the rubber-stamp Republican Congress.

Japan owns $682.8 billion of the American apple pie, where they have bought our debt, Mr. Speaker. These are not my numbers, these are the U.S. Department of Treasury numbers. China, $249.8 billion of U.S. debt.

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China didn't make us do it. It is the policies coming out of the White House rubber-stamped by the Republican majority. If we worked in a bipartisan way, Mr. Speaker, the Republican majority can be able to say, well, you know, both parties made this mistake. Oh, no. History reflects and the present reflects the reality of that statement, or the lack of reality of it. The U.K., $223.2 billion of U.S. debt that they bought. The Caribbean nations, $115.3 billion of U.S. debt that they have bought, not because American people said, hey, let's just go out on a credit card and spend money. It is because the Republican majority said, let's go out on a foreign credit card and spend the money and do things that we can't afford to do like $11 million in National Guard troops that will be activated that we will pick up the bill for because of a lack of policies in taking on the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission. I can't say that enough.

Taiwan, $71.3 billion Taiwan owns of our debt. OPEC nations. OPEC nations covering Florida and Georgia, $67.8 billion. OPEC nations have a lot to do with the oil situation right now that are providing most of our crude.

Germany, $65.7 billion they have bought of the U.S. debt. Korea, $66.5 billion; Canada, $53.8 billion of U.S. debt.

Now, I can talk and speak boldly on this issue, Mr. Speaker, and I will tell you why. There is only one party here in this House that has balanced the U.S. budget, period. Not one, not one with an echo in this Chamber, Mr. Speaker, Republican that is presently serving or served when the budget was balanced can say that they took their voting card out and they voted to balance the budget where the surplus is as far as the eye can see, until the President was elected and the Republican Congress was emboldened with a rubber stamp. Now, deficits as far as the eye can see. Record-breaking borrowing.

How do you borrow in 4 years $1.05 trillion? How does that happen? Mismanagement and tax giveaways and special deals to special interests, that is how that happens. Somebody said, okay, well, Congressman, if this was a two-way conversation, well what about that thing we call the war? What about the thing we call 9/11? Well, what was World War II? What was World War I? What was the Great Depression? There were many other challenges that the United States of America has had over the history of 224 years prior to the Bush administration coming into power and the Republican Congress being handed a rubber stamp. So I don't think the Members would be able to explain this chart or explain the facts of incompetence or explain the fact that they have had a rubber stamp in their hand ever since President Bush has taken to the White House and the Republican majority has had their way of saying, Mr. President, whatever you want, we will do it. And that is how we got to $1.05 trillion in 4 years. That is how that has happened.

I think it is important that, again, when we talk about issues and we point out the problem, guess what, Mr. Speaker? The solution will follow, or the attempt for a solution.

We talked about pay as we go. Some policymakers call it PAYGO, but I just want to make sure everyone understands what we are talking about in Washington because a lot of times we use acronyms and we lose people. We lose people that elected us to come up

here and represent them. So we use these acronyms sometimes not only to cut down a speech or what have you, but to also carry out that dance that happens up here that is called the Potomac 2-Step. If we use enough acronyms, it will lose the people and they won't know exactly what is going on up here. But we on the Democratic side believe in spelling this thing out for everyone.

Congressman JOHN SPRATT from South Carolina, one of the most honorable Members of this House and ranking member on the Budget Committee, put forth a substitute amendment on House Concurrent Resolution 95 in the 2006 budget resolution that instituted pay as you go.

Now, what does that mean? Now let's just make sure that we break this down just in case a Member of the House or Senate or a staff member or just, you know, everyday-Joe or -Sue doesn't understand when we say pay as you go. That means what many of us do every day. If we are going to buy something, we have got to know how we are going to pay for it. If we are going out and we want to buy, I don't know, a radio, and you go out and you buy that radio and the radio costs $100, well then you step back. You can be at one of our favorite American department stores and you say, well, if I am going to buy that radio, where am I going to get the money? Do I have $100 in my pocket? That is the first question that you ask yourself. Then you say, well, maybe I can't afford it. Or do I want to put it on this credit card?

Well, what the Republican Congress has done is that they have been taking out the credit card and they have just been charging everything, not only charging everything, charging it to foreign nations, the power of people that have, not people, but countries that have bought our debt not based on what everyday Americans have done as it relates to irresponsible spending and a lack of planning; it is because what the Republican Congress has done. These are our leaders that have been elected to lead.

Now, maybe I know this country will be better off financially if there was a bipartisan approach towards fiscal responsibility, but it has not been. And the Republican Congress has put forth, has endorsed and rubber-stamped everything the administration handed down.

So Congressman SPRATT, along with the Democrats, said, let's institute pay as you go. If you put it in the budget and it is going to be something that you want to spend money on, you better say how you are going to pay for it in real money, not funny money, not borrowing from foreign nations and weakening the economic opportunities on behalf of this country. That is what that amendment did. And guess what? Here's the vote right here. It failed. Not one Republican, 228 Republicans vote against it. It is roll call vote 87, March 17 of 2005.

Well, if that one vote, I mean, you look at these two opportunities here, Mr. Speaker. They are the only opportunities that the Republican majority allowed us to even bring something to the floor. We had to work hard to get that to the floor.

If the Democrats were in control of this House, which I hope the American people will allow Democrats to be in control of this House, A, we will work in a bipartisan way; B, we will institute pay-as-you-go policies, and we will cut out countries buying our debt and owning a part of the American apple pie.

Mr. SPRATT, again substitute amendment to House Concurrent Resolution 393 of the 2005 budget resolution. Again, 224 Republicans voted, zero voted for pay-as-you-go policies. Roll call vote 91. March 25 of 2004.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to point those two things out because I want to make sure that people know that we are taking every opportunity on this side of the aisle to put this country back on track of fiscal responsibility. I can't tell you how many times that I have shared that with the Members, and I can't tell you how many times the Members have come to this floor with the rubber stamp in their hand. And I am going to tell you, I am going to show you what that rubber stamp looks like in reality, because I want to make sure that the Members that are checking this debate out see exactly what we are talking about.

This rubber stamp comes in the form of a voting card. This is my not only ID but voting card. And the President wants to give tax breaks that we can't afford to billionaires. Done. Let me vote for it. The President said that we should give unprecedented tax breaks to big oil companies in the time they are making record profits. Done. Let me vote for it. That is fine. Whatever the President wants, so shall he spell it out, we will rubber-stamp it and endorse it. Should we deal with issues as it relates to no plan for a war in Iraq? President said we should. Done. That is what the Republican Congress is saying.

And so here on the Democratic side, we are saying, hey, you know something, and this thing that we call a democracy, Mr. Speaker, we talk about a three-tier government. We talk about a legislative branch. We don't have to talk about it. It is in the U.S. Constitution. We have an executive branch, and we have a judiciary. If the American people want to do away with the Republican rubber-stamp Congress, you know what to do. You want to see this rubber stamp thrown out the back door, then you know what to do. If you want Members to come with their voting card to vote on behalf of the American people and not the special interests and what the White House has said that should be done, you know what to do.

Because the thing about it, Mr. Speaker, and the only thing that I feel good about these days is that November is coming soon and that the American people are so fed up that maybe, just maybe, and I think we are beyond maybe right now with the scare tactics that will be coming from special interests because they know their day is coming. Their day is coming with the American people, and we will have tax breaks, real tax breaks for the middle class; we will have an energy policy that we will say will be energy independent in 10 years. They know that will happen. They will also know that we will have a true prescription drug and a true health care policy that small businesses and large businesses will be able to provide health care for their employees, and that will be done. They know that we will also move with a pay-as-you-go policy and not a borrow-and-spend policy from foreign nations that will also happen. And so I think that it is important that everyone understand that we are here on their behalf.

As I say, as I get ready to close, Mr. Speaker, I think that it is imperative that the Members understand that this is fact and not fiction. If it was fiction, I could not walk around this Chamber and this House of Representatives and this Capitol and speak to Members on a day-in-and-day-out basis. It is not personal. It is just business. And it is the business of the American people.

Let me get the chart here so that I can make sure that Members can get more information.

Housedemocrats.gov/30-something. You can get all the charts that we have shared with you here today and the reports. That is housedemocrats.gov/30-something. We encourage e-mails and anything that Members want to share with us.

Mr. Speaker, what is very unfortunate is the fact that on the eve, or last night, at 12 midnight the clock ran out on seniors here in the United States of America as it relates to the prescription drug plan. On that night, when there should have been great celebration by the Republican majority, what was going on? Going back to the movie ''Wag the Dog.'' No, let's talk about immigration on the deadline of the sign-up time for prescription drugs.

So that goes to show you, Mr. Speaker, that it is something their trying to change the debate of the deadline and seniors being confused and now seniors being penalized the next day after. And so I just want to make sure that the Members know that there are some people that are paying attention to what is going on, and they are called the American people. And you do have time to change, and you do have time to bring about this paradigm shift, but history doesn't speak to it.

And so, Mr. Speaker, with that I would like to thank the Democratic leadership for allowing me to come to the floor with another 30-something hour. We look forward to being back on the floor tomorrow if we have the opportunity.