

laws or regulations of the House and of the Committee on House Administration pertaining to such travel, and as promulgated from time to time by the Chairman.

THE OFFICIAL TRUTH SQUAD

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Georgia (Mr. PRICE) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the leadership for allowing me to host this hour this evening, an hour once again of the Official Truth Squad. The Official Truth Squad is a group of individuals who got together almost 2 years ago now, and we are somewhat frustrated and concerned about the level of not just rancor here in Congress, but the level of disinformation and the kind of information that was often being put forward in support of certain legislation that, in fact, well, Mr. Speaker, just wasn't true.

So what we did is to get together, primarily, a group of freshmen from the last Congress and put in place this Official Truth Squad. Our goal, our purpose, is to raise the level of the rhetoric, to be a little more positive than is usually the case here in Washington, and to use facts. To use facts. We have a number of favorite quotes, but one we like to use frequently is one from former United States Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, who kind of crystallized what is a real concern here in Washington, because everybody throws around their own opinions. But his quote was, "Everyone is entitled to their own opinion but not their own facts."

We think that it is extremely helpful when we are talking about issues to talk about facts, because if we are not using facts to base the decisions we make here in Washington, if we are not using facts to reach the conclusions, then it is very likely that we will not reach the right conclusion.

I have said before, Mr. Speaker, that in my former life I was a physician, and I knew if I didn't use facts and I didn't make the right diagnosis, it was virtually impossible to formulate the right treatment plan and then have the patient get well. So we can look at that as an analogy for what we are trying to do for our Nation, which is to make the right diagnosis, to formulate the right proposals and plans and policies and put them in place so that the patient that is our Nation survives and thrives and does well.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be able to have the opportunity once again tonight to host an hour of the Official Truth Squad; and I will be joined by a number of colleagues, and we will address two or three issues this evening. We are going to start by talking about what many people have discussed around the Nation, and it has kind of captured the attention of many in the media, Mr. Speaker, and that is this issue of the 100-hour agenda that the majority party, the Democrats, have.

It is curious to look at that for a variety of reasons, but we will look specifically at the amount of time and kind of what they have been doing with that 100 hours.

Secondly, we will talk about the issue of student loans. It is a bill we had here in Congress today, and we are trying to have facts back up policy as it relates to how best to provide appropriate loans for students who are trying to reach that American dream all across this Nation.

Thirdly, we are going to talk a little about energy policy, something that I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, needs a lot of facts brought to the table.

The common theme that I think people will appreciate if they are truly interested in looking objectively at these three issues, and so many others here in Congress, the common theme about these three issues tonight, I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, is broken promises. Broken promises.

In fact, when you look at these issues independently, I think you will be able to see as we go through them the broken promises that have occurred just in these first 2 weeks in Congress.

And why is it important, Mr. Speaker, for promises to be kept? Well, you know, we hear all the time from the other side that people voted last November for a change. And they did vote for a change; there is no doubt about it. There were a lot of things we in the majority could have done better. But people across this Nation based their votes upon information that they had. They based their votes upon what they were being told and what they were being promised by the other side. So if those promises aren't kept, then that is important.

It is important for a variety of reasons. One is that the policies that were promoted and were espoused as being the be-all and end-all for our Nation aren't being carried out by the majority party. But as important as that is, Mr. Speaker, maybe even more important is the fact that when people go to the polls and they vote, and they rely on what Members of Congress who are ultimately successful have told them they were going to do, and then those things aren't done, all that does, Mr. Speaker, is breed a cynicism and a disgust with our form of government and our Representatives, and makes it so that it is extremely difficult to move forward in a positive direction for our Nation.

I want to talk a little bit about the 100-hour clock, and then we will have some others, I know, who will be interested in speaking about that. There has been a lot of talk about this 100 hours, this wonderful 100 hours in which the Democrat majority was going to get all these grand things done. And it was promised, it was promised, this 100 hours.

Now, what we have seen over this period of time is that that 100 hours has changed. Initially, the first 100 hours was going to be, to quote the Speaker

on October 6, 2006, she said, "In the first 100 hours the House meets after Democrats win control," and then she went on to describe what they were going to do. The first 100 hours the House meets after Democrats take control.

Then it soon morphed into, well, it will be the first 100 legislative hours. On December 1, after the election, when they began looking at what they were going to do and how they were going to make it happen, they said, on December 1, 2006, "In our first 100 legislative hours in office we have a bipartisan and an achievable plan."

Mr. Speaker, as you well know, that kind of went by the wayside as well. And when we called them on it, we said what 100 hours is it, the new majority leader, Mr. HOYER from Maryland, put it best when he kind of talked about, well, we will try to do it in 100 hours. Maybe we will get it done, maybe we won't. But then he said, "It all depends on how you are counting 100 hours."

And he is right. He is right. It all depends on how you are counting the 100 hours. If you have the desire to deceive the American people and turn the clock on and off whenever you want to, then you get to about 33 hours, which is what the Democrat clock tells us they have taken.

This is our third week, Mr. Speaker, our third week here. So what does that mean? It means that we are working about 10 hours a week. About 10 hours a week. I think the American people are working a whole lot more than 10 hours a week. A reasonable amount of time, given that we have been sworn in for about 14 days, 2 full weeks, a reasonable amount of time may be 80. And that is about the sense of how many hours we have in fact been in session.

As of 7 p.m. tonight, Mr. Speaker, we will have been in session 81 hours and 53 minutes. So that is a reasonable estimate. But the total, if you really keep track of 100 hours, the total time as of noon today was 336 hours. As of noon today, 336 hours.

Now, people may say, well, that doesn't make a whole lot of difference what the time is. But, Mr. Speaker, it does, because the promises were made and the promises have been broken. Again, as Mr. HOYER says, it all depends on how you're counting 100 hours. Kind of reminds me of the quote about the definition of "is," doesn't it, Mr. Speaker?

We are so pleased to have many members of our conference who want to take part in the Official Truth Squad, and tonight we have a new friend to me and to our conference, Congressman DAVID DAVIS, the gentleman from Tennessee, who is a freshman. This is his first term in Congress.

He began a small business, a very successful individual back in Tennessee, and he has great perception on the processes of legislation because he, like I, served 8 years in his State legislature. So I am very, very pleased to welcome Congressman DAVIS to the

floor this evening to share a few words with us about the first 100 hours, the first couple of weeks, and his experiences.

I welcome you and would be glad to yield.

Mr. DAVID DAVIS of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman, and here we are in our third week of 100 hours, and that is not east Tennessee math. I represent the beautiful area of northeast Tennessee and the 1st Congressional District and am very honored to do so.

One thing I recall when we went through the elections last year, being a freshman legislator here in Washington, I remember the talk about we need change, and I think the American people actually voted for change, Mr. Speaker. But I am not so sure the American people are going to be happy with the change that is taking place here on the Hill.

One of the things that has happened as we have moved forward in this first 100 hours, one of the very first things that we did under the new Democrat majority is, we took a vote to not require recorded votes in the Rules Committee. Now, remember, back in the elections during the talk of change, this was going to be the most open Congress that had ever been known on Capitol Hill. Well, when you go into a committee and you take a vote and that vote is not open and recorded for the people back home, you are not opening up sunshine, you are actually pulling the blinds down on government.

I don't think that is exactly what the American people wanted to do. I don't think that is the change the American people wanted.

I was known as a Tennessee legislator that actually worked to open up government in Tennessee. When I went there, I found out in Nashville, Tennessee, that they were doing the very same thing. They were going into committees and subcommittees and people were taking votes, and you could go to the speaker of the house and say, Mr. Speaker, I am with you; don't worry about that. I will vote with you on that issue. And then you could go back home and say, don't worry about me, I am with you on that issue, and you would be telling two completely different stories.

Well, after 8 years of working in Tennessee, we finally changed that. And so I was looking forward to coming to Washington where we were going to have the most open Congress that had ever been known on Capitol Hill. Well, here I come, and the first week of the 100 hours, 3 weeks ago, I find one of the first things the majority party did was to actually stop recording votes. That is not the change the American people wanted, Mr. Speaker.

On another issue, Mr. Speaker, when the Republicans had the majority, if they wanted to raise taxes, if there was a need to balance the budget with taxes, it took a super majority to raise those taxes. It took three-fifths of the

Members of this august body to raise those taxes.

Well, the American people voted for change. Not sure they got the change they wanted, though, because one of the very first things that took place here on Capitol Hill was, they lowered that super majority to raise your taxes down to a simple majority. So now taxes can be raised without one Republican vote.

I don't think they would have done that if that was not something they are looking at as a possibility in the future. I am not sure that is the change the American people voted for. I think they ought to be concerned. I think it can lead to bigger government, and it is going to lead to a bigger bureaucracy. We are seeing that in some of the votes.

Not sure that is the change the American people voted for.

One of the votes we voted for the second week of the 100 hours was to threaten life.

□ 1900

What a tragedy when you don't protect the life of the unborn. We were talking about stem cells. And I am a big supporter of actually using adult stem cells. There is new research that has come out that says you can use amniotic fluid. And if you look at the science, the science tells you that there are about 72 diseases that have been treated with adult stem cells. There is zero diseases that have been treated with the embryonic. And that debate was not really about can you do it or can't you do it. It has already been legal. And I can tell you, being a businessperson, if there had been a lot of scientific possibilities for that there would be some business somewhere that would have invested capital, risked that capital because there is a potential for success in the future.

Well, under the Democrat control, under the majority control, unfortunately, they decided to pass the piece of legislation to allow embryos to be destroyed; in other words, allow life to be destroyed. I am not sure that is the change the American people wanted, Mr. Speaker.

Then, again, in the second week of the first 100 hours, a bill actually passed here on the floor to allow our national security to be controlled by the United Nations.

Now, living in the mountains of East Tennessee, I don't know many east Tennesseans that would want the U.N. to be in charge of our security. We are a sovereign Nation, and I honestly believe Americans across the Nation are just like most east Tennesseans, we don't feel like we have to go ask the U.N. if we can protect ourselves. I can't think of anything that is more important than a government that is willing to protect its citizens. That is our number one responsibility is the security of our citizens. So putting us under the auspices of the U.N. is, I don't think, the change the American people wanted.

Then there is going to be a bill coming up tomorrow on energy taxes, and there is a lot of talk about big oil and what are we going to do with this issue. And we are giving special interest. Well, the reality is the special interest that I want to protect is the person that turns on his light switch back in east Tennessee tonight, or has to turn their heat on because it has gotten colder outside, or the family back in east Tennessee is having to stop and fill up their automobile with gas tonight. That is the special interest that I want to protect. And raising taxes during this 100 hours is not the change that the American people wanted, Mr. Speaker. That is not what I hear from east Tennessee, and that is not what I hear from Americans.

Big government simply isn't the answer all the time. Oftentimes, I find, as I talk to the good commonsense folks back in east Tennessee, is sometimes the government is the problem. And bigger government leads to bigger bureaucracy. I think the way we solve these problems is not look to big government, but look back to our families, back across America. Families can make good decisions for their children and for their grandchildren. Then look to the States. States have a good handle on what is going on back across the United States and look to local governments. Look to businesses. Big government's not always the answer. I don't think that is a change that the American people wanted, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for participating this evening, and I appreciate your perspective. You have come with a wealth of knowledge and information, especially in the health care issues, but also your legislative experience. And I think you are right. I think that the American people did indeed vote for change. And you outlined a number of the issues that I suspect, had the other side run, during the campaign, on those issues, that the vast majority of the American people, Mr. Speaker, would have said well, that is not what I mean.

To not reveal to the American people what kind of votes are occurring in committee? That is not democracy in action. Doing away with the super majority. We know why they did away with the super majority don't we now, because they are about to raise taxes tomorrow, and they couldn't have done it if it required a super majority.

To have the United Nations have some significant control over portions of U.S. foreign policy, that is not the kind of change that the people were interested in.

And you used one of my favorite lines, and that is that the special interests that you have are the constituents that you represent. And it is so true, that when people in this Chamber talk about special interests, the fact of the matter is the only special interests we ought to be concerned about are the constituents that we represent.

And so I can't thank you enough for your participation tonight and the wisdom that you bring and the truth. We don't call it the Official Truth Squad for nothing. And you spoke words of truth and good fact and we appreciate that.

I want to move on, Mr. Speaker, to a couple of other issues. But before I do present a specific issue, I want to highlight some comments and a quote that come from our Speaker, from the new Speaker, that she made during her address to the first session of this Congress. And I think it is important for the American people to be reminded the difference between word and deed. People can say a lot of things. But the actions are what speak louder than words. And these are the words that she used on that first day. "Let us join together in the first 100 hours," there it is again, "to make this Congress the most honest and open in history. This openness requires respect for every voice in Congress. As Thomas Jefferson said, every difference of opinion is not a difference of principle. My colleague elected me to be Speaker of the House, the entire House, respectful of the vision of our founders, the expectations of our people and the great challenges we face. We have an obligation to reach beyond partisanship and to serve all Americans."

Well, Mr. Speaker, those are wonderful words. Would that they were true. Would that they were true.

And so that brings us to the issue of student loans, the issue that was on the agenda for the House to deal with today. And I am sorry to say, Mr. Speaker, that what we have here is just one of a repeated series of broken promises. This is another broken promise by this majority party.

What did they promise? The promise was, this is a quote from their own publication. "Our new direction plan will slash interest rates on college loans in half to 3.4 percent for students and to 4.25 percent for parents."

What is the reality? Well, the reality, Mr. Speaker, is that instead of cutting rates in half across the board, the Democrats, what they did was phase in a decrease in rates over a 5-year period of time, and only for subsidized loans going to undergraduate students, not the statement that was given, not the promise that was given to the American people.

And Mr. Speaker, remember when promises are made and promises are broken, it does a disservice to all of America and it creates a distrust in our institution. But more importantly, this whole issue of decreasing student loan interest rates, once the fixed rate for this one category, just one category, reaches 3.4 percent, which occurs in July of 2011, it doesn't get there until July of 2011, but once it gets there it is only in effect for 6 months. The fixed rate returns to its original rate on January 2, 2012. Mr. Speaker, that is a broken promise. That is a broken promise if I ever saw one. And

what it means is that the American people decrease their trust. They lose their trust in their leadership. And certainly that is what is happening right now across this Nation as this Nation sees the broken promises that are being piled up one after another.

I am pleased to be joined by another good friend and colleague, a member of the Official Truth Squad coming to the floor and assisting in bringing truth and facts and information to the American people, Congresswoman MARSHA BLACKBURN from Tennessee, who has again had a wealth of experience here in Congress, but also wonderful experience back home, and looks out for those special interests that she has, and that is her constituents at home. I welcome you this evening and yield to you and look forward to your comments.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Georgia, and I want to thank the gentleman from Tennessee who previously spoke. He was in the State House when I was in the State Senate there, and he has been such a leader on the issue of government accountability and government reform and openness. And the comments he made are so very, very true. And he truly does have a sense of disappointment with the way the Democrat majority has chosen to circumvent the rules process, circumvent the committee process, not record the vote and go under a shield of darkness rather than having sunlight and exposure in recorded votes. And he represents his constituents so very well, and I am delighted that he has joined us in this body. And I thank the gentleman from Georgia for his diligence in the Truth Squad and in continuing to bring truth to the floor and to talk about the issues that are before us. He is talking about the student loan bill that came before us today, and I tell you what. Listening to some of this today, I think the gentleman would agree with me, you had to wonder every once in a while what you were listening to and where they were getting this information, saying that it was going to save approximately \$4,400 over the life of every loan, talking about how it was going to make college more accessible. And it was such a head scratcher because it doesn't do anything for students who are trying to get into college. It doesn't do something for the here and now. It is for the later on, after people have graduated from college.

And you know, another thing that I found to be so very interesting was the way there was no talk about things that the Republican majority had taken action on, conservative ideas, things that we had heard repeatedly from our constituents that they wanted to see happen. And I would like to highlight just a few of the steps that were taken by the Republican majority. You can go back to 1996.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Will the gentlelady yield for just a moment?

Mrs. BLACKBURN. I will yield.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. I appreciate that because I think it is important to highlight that. But I think that what you said, I don't want folks to miss the fact that, and I was stunned when I learned this with the bill that came to the floor today, and I suspect you were as well, and that is that the bill that was on the floor today by the Democrat majority will not assist a single undergraduate student in this Nation. Not one. Isn't that the truth? And I yield back.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. And the gentleman is correct in that. This is for ones who have graduated and then you are earning an income and then you start to pay a loan back.

Now, the Republican philosophy, the conservative philosophy on this is, let's get more people into the classroom. Let's help people afford that. Let's allow deductions for families so that they have the opportunity to work hand in glove with their children to make a better education possible. You can go back to 1996 when the section 529 plans came in. Save for college. You, the wage earner, the taxpayer, the mom, the dad, take the responsibility for this and tackle it as a family. That is part of the American dream, working together to realize that dream.

And Mr. Speaker, I tell you what. That is something that is proactive. That is something that gives the power to the individual, not taking it away and saying hey, we are going to cloister it away in Washington, D.C. and you want to go to college, come talk to us. We don't believe in that.

Then you can look at the Taxpayer Relief Act of 1997, two tax credits in that. HOPE Scholarship, Lifetime Learning, reinstatement of the above-the-line deduction for interest on student loans, an exclusion for earnings accruing to education IRAs. They were later changed to be the Coverdell Education Savings Accounts. There again, not giving power to the government and control to the education process over the government, but giving it to moms and dads and families and students so that they can make those.

Well, we can look at the Deficit Reduction Act in 2005. The Smart Grants of up to \$4,000 annually for students majoring in math, science, engineering or a foreign language critical to this great Nation's security. Smart Grants. It effectively doubled the Pell Grant for many students. It increased subsidized student loan borrowing caps for freshmen and sophomores, there again, steps that give you, the individual, the power and the control.

We can look at current student aid. We have seen such an increase in student aid over the past decade. To see the amounts that those have increased is just amazing. Our higher ed funding in total has increased.

□ 1915

To the gentleman from Georgia, you know, as we have stood here today and

listened to all the myths, and listened to the information that is erroneous, it has been very disappointing. I would just like to commend to our constituents who are watching tonight that they may want to go to the Education and Labor site, our ranking member, BUCK MCKEON's site, and look at some of the information there that the republicans.edlabor.house.gov have on there, what is the truth with the legislation that we have passed today, so that they can have a better understanding of it.

I had talked with a constituent who had thought that they were going to see enormous savings from this. They had misunderstood the rhetoric that they were hearing on the floor today and thought that they were going to be saving about \$4,400 a year, not \$4,400 over the life of a loan, which is incorrect, but that it would be even less than that, and for the average student it is more like \$400.

So the gentleman is correct in the assessment that he is making. I appreciate that he is breaking down the interest rate chart so that our constituents do have clarity on the situation that is before us.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. I thank the gentlelady for participating tonight and for bringing wisdom and truth to us in this Chamber.

I think the part of the challenge that we have is, this really is a difference in philosophy. It is about who ought to be in control. You highlighted that extremely well, talking about the importance of what we on the Republican side believe, and that is that students and parents ought to have the resources in order to make decisions, not government making decisions.

What we have seen in this very short 100 hours, depending on how you run the clock in these first couple of weeks, what we have seen is a clear example of the government controlling all aspects of our life from student loans to prescription medication to all sorts of things, wage and price controls.

This chart here is the exact chart that determines the definitions that were provided in the legislation that was on the floor tonight or today for student interest rates.

Right now, as you know, Mr. Speaker, they are at 6.8 percent, and that was fixed appropriately, our side did that last time, in order to make certain that we had more students eligible for student loans.

What happens over the ensuing 5 years with the bill that was passed today by the Democrats? You can see that next year the rate goes down to 6.12 percent, then down to 5.44 percent and on down until you get to 3.40 percent. But again that is only for 6 months. What happens after that 6 months? What happens on January 1, 2012? Goes right back up to 6.80.

So the frustration and the disconnect that people hear at home when they think that they have been told something that would occur, but in fact,

that is not what is going to occur at all, in fact, they have been sold a bill of goods. It is another broken promise.

I think it is very destructive to all of us, all of us on both sides of the aisle, when people aren't able to trust what the Members are telling them in terms of what they would do would they be given the opportunity to lead.

We are joined again this evening by another dear friend, Congresswoman VIRGINIA FOXX from North Carolina, who is a stalwart on the Official Truth Squad, and she brings such wonderful wisdom. In this instance, she probably has more knowledge about this than virtually anybody else, that is because she was a college president back in North Carolina.

I welcome you and thank you for your participation tonight. I look forward to your comments.

Ms. FOXX. Thank you, Congressman PRICE, and thanks for always being so prepared with the Official Truth Squad and having the charts out there that show people the facts. Before I got here, I hope you said your famous line, people are entitled to their opinion, but the facts are the facts and we cannot change those. That is important.

Again, I think what we have here is a sham, and perpetuation of untruths by the Democrats to the American people; and frankly, having served 10 years in the State legislature, in the State senate, we were not allowed to say things that were untrue. We got called down by the presiding officer. So when I first came here and heard Democrats doing that, I was stunned, and as you know, pushed to get the Truth Squad going so that we could get the facts out there.

But I appreciate your comments about my experience. Let me say that I do know a lot about this subject, both from my own personal experience as a student and my experience as a university administrator and college president.

I grew up about as poor as anybody you will ever meet. So did my husband. It took me 7 years to get my undergraduate degree, but I graduated from college without a single penny of debt. We have heard all these sad stories about all these people graduating from college with debt. But, you know, it doesn't have to be that way. People choose to borrow money to go to college. They can work, and they can apply for scholarships. They can do the kinds of things I did. I got absolutely no help from home. I financed my entire education and graduated after 7 years without a penny of debt, so it can be done.

Students have lots of choices where to go to school. We have community colleges that are very inexpensive that do wonderful jobs, all the way up to very expensive schools in this country. People have that opportunity.

After I graduated, after I earned my doctorate, I was a university administrator, and I knew a lot about financial aid because that was part of my job. Then I became a community college

president. So I do know this subject very well.

Again, I am appalled at this. I said on the debate about stem cell research that we are so misleading the public, thinking that if we do embryonic stem cell research, we are suddenly going to cure all the diseases in this country.

I think the Democrats are being very cynical again in trying to perpetuate to the American people that if this bill, this bill did pass the House today, by passing this bill in the Congress, what we would do would be to make college education affordable and accessible. It will do not one thing to increase access for any single person going to college. It will not make a college education more affordable.

I heard you and my colleague from Tennessee talking about how it is not going to help a single college student. It only cuts down the cost of interest that people have to pay back after they get out of school, and, as you pointed out, it exists for a mere 6 months. What an absolute travesty to try to perpetuate on the American people.

We need to get the truth about this bill out. I know that there is an 80 percent approval rate for this topic. Certainly the American people want colleges and a university education to be more affordable. However, what we are doing in the Federal Government is, we are actually driving up the cost of going to college. We are driving it up by putting all of this Federal money out there.

You know when the Federal dollars are out there, people will go after it, and the colleges and universities raise their tuition rates every time we increase the amount of money that is available to go to college. Then they scream and yell that they don't have enough money.

That is what we are doing. By doing this kind of a thing, we are doing the opposite of what the Democrats say they want to do.

If they were honest about what they wanted to do, if they wanted to help truly needy students, which I worked with my entire career in higher education, low-income students, first-generation college students, then they would put the money into the Pell Grants or into work-study. Studies show that people who work 15 hours a week while they are in college do much better than students who don't. So that is the kind of thing that we should be doing.

This is another broken promise. The Democrats want to say it is a fulfilled promise. But even this only produces one-tenth of what they promised to do in the campaign, 10 percent return on their promises. We need to figure out a nice ditty to go with that, 10 percent return, 10 percent of the 100 percent promise is what the Democrats are producing here, and it is bad.

What I think the Democrats really want to do is turn us into a socialistic country where the government controls everything. They want to put the

government in control. What I think they want to do is drive the private sector out of this area. We do have a direct government loan, but most of the loans are being done through the private sector.

You know, I don't know a single thing in this country that the government does better than the private sector. There is nothing more efficient. But what would happen is, by tinkering with these rates, even making things very insecure, you are going to drive the private sector out. Because they do business plans; they don't have a well to go to, like the American people, to draw up that money just by adding taxes that the American people cannot resist. What they want to do, I think, is really put the government in control of financial aid and of loans. That would be a terrible, terrible mistake. We don't need to be doing that.

So I think it is important that we come here every week, every night, every day, and tell the American people what the truth is about these programs that the Democrats are pushing.

I want to point out one other thing that I am not sure has been pointed out today. I am quoting from a fact sheet that was given to us by staff of the Education Committee. In a shocking display of hypocrisy, Democrat leaders are paying for their \$6 billion-plus plan with some of the same lender subsidy cuts crafted by congressional Republicans in the 109th Congress. Ironically, House Democrats voted against many of these cuts the last time they were proposed, calling it part of the now discredited rate on student aid.

Now, what they do, they brought in, in almost every case the bills they brought in had been bills that we had last time. They voted against them, they now bring them in. This is not something that we did last time; we didn't say this. We did do a lot to decrease the rate of spending for loans, but we added money for the loans, but decreased what students would have to pay for the loans. We did do that.

Furthermore, in 2002, Representative GEORGE MILLER, who is now chairman of the committee, praised what the Republicans had done by fixing the 6.8 percent rate that began last year. He says, in addition to extending lender subsidies, it cuts interest rates to students fixing the rate at 6.8 percent beginning in 2006 and will save the average student about \$400. Too often in Congress the needs of the average people come last in line.

My colleagues, meaning Republicans, should be commended for assuring that this legislation meets the needs of students and their families. My goodness, he has got amnesia about what he said just a short time ago about what the Republicans were doing. But this suits their needs. They can get out and make campaign promises and then come in here, fulfill 10 percent of what they promised to do, and then try to fool the American people.

Republicans have done a great deal to help students who are struggling to

get an education, and we will continue to do that. But we are not going to be duplicitous about it. We have been very straightforward about it.

I want to thank you again for leading the Official Truth Squad tonight and helping us get the word out to the American people.

We are not going to let them get by with telling their open truths. We are going to bring the facts here every time and make sure that the American people hear, as Paul Harvey says, "the rest of the story."

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. I thank you so much for your wonderful words of wisdom and sharing your personal story. It really is extremely helpful and pertinent and apt.

You call this a travesty. It really is a travesty, because what has happened is that the hopes and dreams of so many Americans have been raised by the rhetoric that we have heard from the other side. In fact, if you look at this again, and you see over a 5-year period of time, the rate decreases for a mere 6 months to 3.4 percent and then shoots right back up to 6.8 percent.

It really isn't fulfilling a promise; as my good friend from North Carolina said, it is breaking a promise. I think that the American people are paying attention, and over a period of time, this will just add up to their frustration about this kind of hypocrisy and this kind of leadership.

My good friends on the other side of the aisle, for the past 2 years or so, have been talking about what they call "third-party validators" to make it so that they can cite individuals that are saying that what they are contending is the case.

We have got some third-party validators on this. I have before me a couple of quotes from some articles written in some very prominent newspapers yesterday and today. The first is from today's Wall Street Journal. This is about these student loans. It says, quote, "The ostensible goal is to make college more affordable, but such a move could well wind up having the opposite effect." This bill, that is, could wind up having the opposite effect.

Further, in the absence of all of this subsidization, colleges would have to be more cautious about raising tuition because their customers would be affected more directly.

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The biggest winners from this latest subsidy will be the relatively well off professors and administrators who run higher education. "Ultimately increasing the government's role is a recipe for making college less affordable."

Then from the Christian Science Monitor yesterday, from a gentleman who is quoted here, Mark Kantrowitz, the publisher of financialaid.org for students. He says, "It's a great sound bite, cutting rates in half, but it is an incredibly expensive proposal with very little student aid benefit." "Very

little student aid benefit." "Congress would be better off spending the money on something else, like increasing the Pell Grant," which isn't increased with this bill, offered to the neediest students as aid that graduates don't need to pay back," Kantrowitz said.

Mr. Speaker, really it is just another broken promise, and it is truly, truly a shame to have this be one of the hallmarks of these first "six for six," these proposals that come forward. And virtually every one of them doesn't live up to the promise that was made.

Would the promises that were made be the proposals that I would bring to the floor? Well, not likely, Mr. Speaker. But I do believe that it is important that promises that are made for our constituents be promises that are kept when you are in control, in power, in Congress. Otherwise, we do a discredit and disservice to our entire electoral system.

How are the American people supposed to be able to decide for whom they should vote, if regardless of what an individual says it is not what they do? I believe in an individual's word, and I believe it is important that individuals make honest comments when they are running for office. In fact, that is not what we have seen to date, Mr. Speaker, and that is very, very troubling, to me and to many of my constituents and many folks around the Nation.

I want to switch gears a little bit now, Mr. Speaker, to the issue that will be on the floor tomorrow in the United States House of Representatives. It will be H.R. 6, a bill that has to do with energy policy, national energy policy.

The upshot of the bill is this: Mr. Speaker, as we talked about before, it will be the first time that the Democrats have very directly raised taxes on the American people. It took them 14 days to decide that they were going to do it, not a long time. But who are they going to raise taxes on?

Well, the Democrat energy plan that will be introduced tomorrow, and I will have some information on it, will be a tax increase on American oil companies. Yup, they are going to tax American oil companies because there is a lot of sentiment and anger out there about energy prices. But what happens to foreign oil companies? Not a thing. Not a thing, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, you talk about a travesty. That is a travesty. This bill tomorrow will drive up our dependence on foreign oil.

Again, I want to go to some third-party validators. An article in the Wall Street Journal yesterday talked about this bill and said if you increase the cost of domestic oil production by \$10 billion, you are ensuring that U.S. imports of OPEC oil will rise and domestic production will fall.

Mr. Speaker, I think it ought to be a goal and my constituents back in the Sixth District in Georgia believe that

we ought to be utilizing American resources for Americans, having American energy for Americans. There is a three-pronged way to do that: Conversation, utilizing resources and alternative fuel. What we are doing is increasing the amount of foreign oil being used. It doesn't make any sense at all. It doesn't make any sense at all.

The Wall Street Journal article goes on to say the House energy bill is nearly a carbon copy of California's Proposition 87. That 2006 ballot initiative would have taxed California's home-produced oil in order to subsidize green technology alternatives.

California is a fairly liberal State, the home State of our Speaker. Maybe that is where they got this idea. California is a fairly liberal State, but even those voters understood that Proposition 87 would have damaged the State's home oil and gas industry, increased foreign oil consumption and raised the energy bills for State residents, and it was clobbered at the polls.

This is a quote from the Wall Street Journal. "The House will plow ahead anyway, but let's hope the Senate has more wisdom."

I include a copy of that article for the RECORD, Mr. Speaker.

[From the Wall Street Journal, Jan. 16, 2007]

THE OPEC ENERGY SECURITY ACT

House Democrats have finally released the details of their "Energy Security Bill," which will be voted on this week, and they must be cursing their rotten luck. Just when they want to stick it to Big Oil for alleged price gouging, oil and home heating costs are plunging. Never mind; this was a campaign theme amid \$3 gasoline, and a detail like \$2 gas isn't about to stop Democrats now.

This bill is said to promote America's energy independence, but the biggest winner may be OPEC. This is a lengthy, complicated bill, but the central idea is simple: Raise taxes on domestic oil producers and then spend the money to subsidize ethanol, solar energy, windmills (so long as they're not on Cape Cod), and so on. But if you increase the cost of domestic oil production by \$10 billion, you are ensuring that U.S. imports of OPEC oil will rise and domestic production will fall.

The bill also includes a "Strategic Energy Efficiency and Renewables Reserve" fund for alternative fuels. That sounds a lot like the Carter-era Synthetic Fuels Corporation—one of the more notorious Washington boondoggles of all time, having spent \$2.1 billion of tax dollars on alternative fuels before declaring bankruptcy. Today there is no underinvestment by the private sector in alternative energy. The research firm New Energy Finance has found that between 2004 and 2006 investment in alternative energy doubled to \$63 billion. Venture capital funding of green-energy technologies has quadrupled since 1998.

The Democrats also insist that the big five oil companies have received sweetheart deals from the government that have ripped off taxpayers. So let's take a closer look. The most controversial issue involves \$6 billion in royalty payments that oil companies are said to owe the government for oil pumped from federal waters. The facts suggest otherwise.

These were leases for drilling rights in the Gulf of Mexico signed between oil companies and the Clinton Administration's Interior Department in 1998-99. At that time the

world oil price had fallen to as low as \$10 a barrel and the contracts were signed without a requirement of royalty payments if the price of oil rose above \$35 a barrel.

Interior's Inspector General investigated and found that this standard royalty clause was omitted not because of any conspiracy by big oil, but rather because of bureaucratic bungling in the Clinton Administration. The same report found that a year after these contracts were signed Chevron and other oil companies alerted Interior to the absence of royalty fees, and that Interior replied that the contracts should go forward nonetheless.

The companies have since invested billions of dollars in the Gulf on the basis of those lease agreements, and only when the price of oil surged to \$70 a barrel did anyone start expressing outrage that Big Oil was "cheating" taxpayers out of royalties. Some oil companies have voluntarily offered to renegotiate these contracts. The Democrats are now demanding that all these firms do so—even though the government signed binding contracts.

The Democratic bill strong-arms oil companies into renegotiating the contracts or pay a \$9 per barrel royalty fee from these leases. If the companies refuse, they lose their rights to bid for any future leases on federal property. So at the same time that the U.S. is trying to persuade Venezuela and other nations to honor property rights, Congress does its own Hugo Chavez imitation.

Are American taxpayers worse off because of these leasing agreements? Hardly. It's fortunate these contracts were issued when oil prices were so low, because the oil discovered from those leases will do precisely what the Democratic energy bill will not: reduce U.S. dependence on foreign oil. One of the largest oil deposits in the Gulf was recently discovered as a result of these leases.

Democrats also want to raise about \$5 to \$6 billion by snatching away alleged tax breaks for Big Oil in the Republicans' 2005 energy bill. Sorry, that isn't true either. The Congressional Research Service reports that the net impact of the 2005 energy bill was to raise taxes on the oil and gas industry by \$300 million. Nor does it make sense to repeal a domestic oil company's eligibility for a 2004 tax cut that reduced the effective corporate income tax rate to 32% from 35% on U.S. manufacturers. This tax cut increases the competitiveness of U.S. manufacturers that are now penalized by a U.S. corporate tax rate that is among the highest in the industrialized world. Our objection is that every U.S. company should pay the same, lower rate.

The House energy bill is nearly a carbon copy (if we can still use the word "carbon" in polite company) of California's Proposition 87. That 2006 ballot initiative would have taxed California's home-produced oil in order to subsidize "green technology" alternatives. California is a fairly liberal state, but even those voters understood that Prop 87 would have damaged the state's home oil and gas industry, increased foreign oil consumption, and raised the energy bills of state residents. It was clobbered at the polls. The House will plow ahead anyway, but let's hope the Senate has more wisdom.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I want to also refer to some good work done by the Heritage Foundation. The Heritage Foundation is a group of individuals who talks about responsibility, talks about making certain that individuals have opportunities to succeed in our Nation, and they came out with a memo to Speaker PELOSI citing this bill that is coming on the floor tomorrow, H.R. 6, saying that it risks making energy more expensive.

There are a number of quotes I would like to refer to, Mr. Speaker. First, it says, "The public has responded with anger to recent high energy prices," and that certainly is true as I go home and hear what folks are concerned about, especially when gas was up around \$3 a gallon people were very concerned, and understandably so, and home heating oil and all the like increasing, and that puts many individuals in significant trouble.

It goes on to say, "Doing something about energy prices is understandably high on the agenda." No doubt about it. "Unfortunately, the wrong approach to meeting Americans' energy needs is H.R. 6. H.R. 6 will at best do nothing to reduce gasoline prices, and could actually increase them over the long term."

They go on to describe very clearly the consequences of what this will do, increasing taxes on the American oil companies, which will drive America to be more dependent on foreign oil.

Mr. Speaker, that doesn't make any sense. When I go home and explain things like that to my constituents back in Georgia, they say, well, why in Earth would you do something foolish like that? And all I can tell them is, well, it appears to be that the other side thinks that hollow rhetoric is what the American people want, that they aren't interested in real substance.

This Heritage Foundation memo goes on to say, "The underlying assumptions that the domestic oil and gas sector is currently undertaxed may have been popular campaign rhetoric, but it is not supported by the evidence. Total income taxes paid by this sector reached a record \$71 billion in 2005, the last year for which there is data available. This is up from \$48 billion in 2004 and \$32 billion in 2003."

So, Mr. Speaker, what we see is that as revenues increase to oil companies, taxes increase, the amount that they pay in taxes increases as well.

What happens with H.R. 6? "Most importantly, H.R. 6 will cause harm in the long run by discouraging investment in new domestic drilling for oil and gas."

If you tax something, you get less of it. That is an economic principle that my friends on the other side of the aisle seem not to appreciate. If you tax something, you get less of it.

"America's demand for energy is growing, along with its economy."

Again, that is the three-prong approach needed for energy: Conservation, utilizing responsibly American resources, and then alternative fuel.

But I think it is important, as this memo goes on to state, that we learn from history. The bottom line is that H.R. 6 will raise taxes and will reduce domestic supplies of oil and gas, it will increase imports to fill that void, and it will ultimately increase prices for consumers at the pump and for energy supplies.

How do we know that? Well, this is the lesson of the infamous windfall

profit tax on oil firms that was imposed under the Carter administration in 1980. It was repealed ultimately under the Reagan administration in 1988. But, Mr. Speaker, people around the Nation who knew what was happening at that time will recognize, and this will kind of ring a bell, it will remind them of what happened in 1980.

This goes on to say, "In 1980, anger at Big Oil," and a lot of people were mad at Big Oil over high prices, "led to this punitive tax, the windfall profit tax. But America learned the hard way that this approach does not benefit the American people. According to the Congressional Research Service, the windfall profits tax reduced domestic oil production between 3 and 6 percent."

Mr. Speaker, let me say that again. This tax, similar to the one that the House is about to vote on tomorrow, reduced domestic oil production between 3 and 6 percent. It increased oil imports between 8 and 16 percent. This made the U.S. more dependent upon imported oil. We ought to take pains to avoid repeating that energy policy blunder.

This goes on to say, "The best thing that can be said for the proposed tax changes and royalty relief provisions in H.R. 6 is that they might not be large enough to seriously reduce domestic energy production, in which case they would not cause much harm. But even so, they set a bad precedent, and if repeated in subsequent bills, could do as much damage as the infamous windfall profits tax."

So if the past is any guide to the future, most of the money in H.R. 6 will be wasted. On the other hand, these tax revenues, if left in the hands of the energy companies themselves, will be re-invested. And how do we know that? Well, in 2005, the energy industry reinvested \$131 billion, \$131 billion, an amount that at that time actually exceeded and was higher than their net income of \$119 billion for the year.

So what is the better way? Well, as this memo goes on to describe, Mr. Speaker, "The better way, the real answer to high energy prices, is not to tinker with tax and royalty rates on existing domestic energy supplies, but it is to expand those supplies so that more oil and gas become available. Recent Department of Interior studies conducted pursuant to the 2005 energy bill confirm that the United States has substantial oil and natural gas deposits." Without a doubt. "These studies also show that much of these offshore and onshore resources are off limits due to legal and regulatory constraints."

This next sentence, Mr. Speaker, kind of caught my eye. "In fact, America remains the only nation on Earth," the only nation on Earth, "that has restricted access to a substantial portion of its domestic energy potential."

We are the only nation on Earth that does this. And why we think that there is no connection between that and us

being more reliant on foreign oil today than we ever have been is beyond me. It doesn't make any sense. Again, Mr. Speaker, my constituents back home don't think it makes any sense either.

In the early seventies, when we all waited in those gas lines and pounded our fist on the dashboard and said never again, we will never be this reliant on foreign oil again, and all of us who can remember that vividly know that sense of emotion and know that sense of frustration as the gas shortages in the early seventies occurred.

But the dirty little secret, Mr. Speaker, is at that time we were about 25 percent reliant on foreign oil. Now we are about 60 percent reliant on foreign oil. And if the Democrat majority has its way, we will be even more reliant on foreign oil, because what we are doing is punishing American companies who assist us in trying to have a greater production of American resources.

This article goes on to say, "Reducing the restrictions on domestic exploration and drilling, not rewriting the Tax Code or revising royalty agreements," as in the bill to be dealt with tomorrow, "will allow for greater supplies and lower prices in the years ahead, and by expanding the resource base it would lead to far greater increases in tax and royalty revenues than H.R. 6 ever could."

So if my good friends on the other side of the aisle are truly interested in having more money, more taxes to spend as they see fit, to increase the power of government, they would be well advised to allow for increasing production, which would increase the ability for them to receive greater tax revenue. This should be the main focus of any genuinely pro-consumer energy policy; that is to not tinker with the tax policy and the royalty policy.

Again, a good energy policy, a quality energy policy, is one that we dealt with last year in Congress, Mr. Speaker. It was primarily three-pronged. One, it dealt with conservation. This bill tomorrow doesn't do significantly anything with conservation. And it encourages Americans to do all they can to conserve, because certainly all of us can do more to make certain we are not utilizing resources that are so, so precious.

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Second is to make certain that we utilize American resources responsibly. Again, Mr. Speaker, as I said before, America remains the only nation on Earth that has restricted access to a substantial portion of its domestic energy potential.

Finally, the solution in the long run and the long term is, indeed, alternative fuel, and we worked diligently to try to make certain that we had resources that would be put forward for hydrogen fuel cells and encouraging inventiveness on the part of the American entrepreneur, because I know, as I suspect you do, Mr. Speaker, that when the American entrepreneur puts his or

her mind to it, there is nothing that they are not able to do.

So tonight, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have had this opportunity to come before the House and to share with this House and with you, Mr. Speaker, and with the American people three issues: the issue of process here in the United States House of Representatives, the 100-hour clock; the issue of student loans, the interest on student loans; and the issue of energy policy.

I mentioned at the beginning, Mr. Speaker, that the common thread between those three issues tonight, that the majority party has brought to us, are really broken promises. It made multiple promises on the campaign trail, and it truly is a shame that promises kept on the campaign trail do not appear to be promises that will be kept in their majority in Congress.

I would suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that the American people are understanding this. When I go home, I hear people's frustration about a lack of leadership, the broken promises that have occurred even in this short 2 weeks in Congress.

Mr. Speaker, we are a wonderful and great Nation, and it is an incredible privilege to represent my constituents in this House, this House of Representatives. I know that the challenges that we face as a Nation are not Democrat challenges and they are not Republican challenges. They are American challenges, and when we work together, we come up with the best solutions.

So I would encourage the Speaker to reread her words of the comments she made to this Chamber, to this United States House of Representatives on that very first day. I look forward to the day when we do, in fact, have the most open and honest Congress. Sadly, Mr. Speaker, we have not reached that day yet.

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO PERMANENT SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HALL of New York). Pursuant to clause 11 of rule X, clause 11 of rule I, and the order of the House of January 4, 2007, the Chair announces the Speaker's appointment of the following Members of the House to the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence:

Mr. HASTINGS, Florida
 Mr. BOSWELL, Iowa
 Mr. CRAMER, Alabama
 Ms. ESHOO, California
 Mr. HOLT, New Jersey
 Mr. RUPPERSBERGER, Maryland
 Mr. TIERNEY, Massachusetts
 Mr. THOMPSON, California
 Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Illinois
 Mr. LANGEVIN, Rhode Island
 Mr. PATRICK MURPHY, Pennsylvania
 Mr. EVERETT, Alabama
 Mrs. WILSON, New Mexico
 Mr. THORBERRY, Texas
 Mr. MCHUGH, New York
 Mr. TIAHRT, Kansas