

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

AMERICA NEEDS TO DEVELOP ITS OWN NATURAL RESOURCES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. SHIMKUS) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, it's great to be down on the House floor. It has been a limited schedule this week, so we haven't had a chance to really take time to focus on the number one pressing issue in America today, which is the high price of gasoline and energy in this country. We get a chance to do that tonight.

I am going to initially yield to some of my colleagues who have graciously come down to help, and the first one I would like to yield to is Mr. SALI from Idaho.

Mr. SALI. Mr. Speaker, if you're afraid of the future, said Ronald Reagan, then get out of the way, stand aside; the people of this country are ready to move again.

As with so many things, President Reagan was right. We cannot avoid real problems, gloss over pressing needs or, out of fear of something unforeseen, sit immobile until we are overtaken by inevitable results of our previous inaction.

Americans are paying on average \$3.62 a gallon, and by early summer, we're going to be at \$4 a gallon. By the end of this year, it's projected oil will be at \$180 per barrel, an approximate doubling in the space of 1 year. Why are we paying so much? Very fundamentally, it's a supply and demand issue. We need oil, but the supply is limited. This is frustrating in its own right, but it's truly maddening when you consider the supply of crude is not really limited and that we have additional resources available to us, but they have been locked up by Congress.

The current majority claims they have the answers in a new clean energy agenda which purports to offer reduced reliance on foreign oil. But they seek to do it through increased alternative forms of energy, much of which is not even available today, instead of drilling for and pumping American crude.

Before the vote was taken on the majority's latest energy bill on December 18, 2007, Speaker PELOSI said, You are present at a moment of change, of real change. Perhaps she was correct, only the change she envisions is radically different than what most Americans want.

To lower the price at the pump and to break our addiction to foreign energy, we must increase production of American crude, not stifle it. Today, our country currently imports 61 percent of its crude oil and 15 percent of its natural gas. It's not only expensive but foolish for us to depend on such po-

litically unstable regions like the Middle East for our energy.

If this Congress were serious about reducing America's reliance on foreign oil, one would also think it would invest in new energy supplies that it can produce in the U.S., such as coal-to-liquids using clean coal technology; and it would engage in immediate development of domestic oil sources by obtaining oil from ANWR, drawing oil from our Outer Continental Shelf, our oil shale, and even oil sands.

Additionally, we have large supplies of natural gas, and instead of using it for domestic purposes, we're selling about two-thirds of it abroad. Natural gas is a steal when compared to crude oil. According to one recent news story, natural gas prices are currently much lower than crude oil when the two are compared on a BTU equivalency basis. Currently, crude oil is nearly \$120 a barrel compared to natural gas at about \$11 per thousand cubic feet. Since natural gas is used at about one-sixth of the cost of crude oil, that's a bargain.

We need to actively develop American natural gas resources, and we can because the supply is there. We need to lift the moratorium Congress has imposed on drilling our offshore natural gas reserves and tap into this incredible resource.

These are supplies that we have right now on the lands of our own Nation. We don't have to go abroad and be held economic hostage to foreign oil cartels.

Natural gas is one piece of the puzzle. But let's be candid. We still need oil, a lot of it. And as we increase oil supply, we must also increase refining capacity to process it, yet it has been three decades since we built a new oil refinery. Lack of refinery capacity is another reason why gas prices are so high.

And we further tied our hands by shying away from clean, secure, safe nuclear energy. Since the 1970s, nuclear technology has been developed that will enable us to produce nuclear energy without the potential dangers of previous years.

In his news conference yesterday, President Bush said, Many of the same people in Congress who complain about high energy costs support legislation that would make energy even more expensive for our consumers and small businesses. He went on to say, Congress is considering bills to raise taxes on domestic energy production, impose new and costly mandates on producers and demand dramatic emission cuts that would shut down coal plants and increase reliance on expensive natural gas. That would drive up prices even further. The cost of these actions would be passed on to consumers in the form of even higher prices at the pump and even bigger electric bills.

□ 2030

Now, of course the President was referring to our friends on the other side of the aisle. And the fact that he's right does sadden me because this is

not a partisan problem, it's an American problem that demands a true bipartisan solution. Yet, the Speaker's energy bill that came out at the end of last year will invest less than \$300 million over 3 years in such clean energy sources as hydropower, marine and hydrokinetic energy, wind energy, solar, and clean coal technology.

In contrast, consider the cost of what the Speaker chose to invest in through her energy bill. The bill contained \$375 million for a Green Jobs program for 3 years; \$600 million to assist developing countries with their renewable energy development, and additional funding, as needed, to assist India and China with the same. That's right, we are sending American tax dollars overseas to the two very countries we are competing with for energy supplies. Is that the kind of real change that Americans want?

Tragically, with the policy changes wrest by this Congress, Americans across this country have only continued to see higher and higher gas prices as new record-high gas prices are reached almost daily. As President Reagan correctly reminded us, Americans are not afraid of the future, we welcome it. In facing the future, however, America needs sound energy policy that develops domestic energy sources from every source available, including crude oil, natural gas, clean coal, hydropower, and every alternative source of energy. To put it another way, we need all the energy we can get from all the sources we can possibly afford. We need a real energy policy, not a futuristic wish list. Madam Speaker, we're waiting. Please don't make us wait any longer.

With that, I yield back.

Mr. SHIMKUS. I want to thank my colleague, and I appreciate it.

A couple of things I want to highlight. When he talks about supply, we have a 250 years worth supply of coal in this country, 250 years that we can have access to. And according to the Federal Government, there is enough oil in deep waters many miles off our coast and on Federal land to power more than 60 million cars for 60 years. So your point about supply is important and a critical portion of this debate, and really what separates Republicans from the Democrats as we fight about these energy costs.

We believe that when you bring more supply to the public that's demanding it, prices will go low. Speaker PELOSI promised, on April 24, 2006, "Democrats have a commonsense plan to help bring down the skyrocketing gas prices." Well, they have a plan, but the plan was just the opposite of what she envisioned. Here's a barrel of crude oil, \$58.31 when she became Speaker of the House; the price today, \$115.92. That, as I stated on this floor numerous times, that is bitter change, that's negative change. Change is not always good. This is bad change. This is change that was promised by the current leadership in the House.

Now, how does that translate into the fuel for the soccer moms in the country? Well, when the Democrat majority came in, the price of gasoline at the pump was \$2.33. Today, it stands at, on average, \$3.65, a huge increase. Again, negative change based upon what was promised by the then Democrats in the minority. What they said, what happened when they got into the majority, they promised change. This isn't the change that we bargained for.

And just because I like to bring in the aspect that energy is the item that affects every aspect of our lives, as I said last week, in the Coast Guard Authorization bill, for every dollar increase in diesel fuel, it costs our Coast Guard \$24 million. For every dollar increase in a barrel of crude oil, it costs our United States Air Force \$60 million. For the sake of the taxpayers we ought to be demanding more supply.

And BILL, you know the coal-to-liquid opportunities that are up in your neck of the woods, and how the Air Force is pleading with us for energy security, for the ability for them to project their cost, and really for national security. Isn't it crazy that our military is dependent upon foreign sources of energy to run our war machines? Not only is it crazy, it's scary. And I would make the argument that it's negligent on our part to keep our military financially reliant on imported energy and really militarily at risk, where we could, in essence, be blackmailed with the threat of controlling those supplies when we need to move our war machines.

Add to this, I always like to add this on this chart, \$3.65 is the price. Guess what happens when we moved to climate change? Chairman DINGELL of the Commerce Committee is the only intellectually honest person who started talking about climate change, and he said, "for us to address climate change, it will require an additional 50 cents per gallon of gas." So now if we've got, on average, \$3.65 and we add 50 cents for climate change, that means right now, before we get to the summer driving season, people will be paying \$4.15 for a gallon of gasoline. That is bitter change. That is change that the public did not agree to when Speaker PELOSI made her promise in 2006.

And this highlights what you were talking about. Here's a comic. And you know when issues start getting into the media and the folks start making fun of public policy in America that you've really got a point that's resonating. "We demand you energy companies do something about these high prices." Isn't that what we're hearing our friends from the other side of the aisle? Okay, energy companies, do something. Can we drill in ANWR? Forget it. How about offshore? Are you crazy? Clean coal? Out of the question. Nuclear power? You're joking, right? Well, don't just sit there, do something.

And what do we hear from the other side of this building? What we hear is,

which is laughable, let's add more taxes to the energy companies. Now, where in the history of this country, when you've added more taxes do you get lower prices? I would challenge anybody on the other side of the aisle to show me any time in history where we added more taxes and we lowered the price of a good. You know what? They can't do it. It's ludicrous.

And then they also say, I know what, we're going to force the people who are selling us the oil, we're going to force them to drill and produce more oil when we won't even do that ourselves. How crazy is that?

So as my colleague, Mr. SALL, pointed out, we have options, we have solutions. We mentioned many of them. One is, take our natural resources in coal, over 250 years of coal resources. Now, I would rather have the good mid-western Illinois coal-basing coal that you have to go underground, not stuff you can get off the surface like in some of the western States, but here is a picture of a western State. Grab that, build a refinery, refine that coal into a fuel, stick it in a pipeline, send it to our Air Force bases, or send it to our airports. How many recent budget airlines have just gone bankrupt? At my count, there's four. Think of all the job losses. Think of all the health care now that's no longer accessible to those families. Why did they go bankrupt? High jet fuel costs.

One solution would be this; and the great thing about this is, American jobs in the coal mines, American jobs to build a refinery, American jobs to operate the refinery. These are good-paying jobs with good benefits. American jobs to build a pipeline. And of course, these are American jobs to fly the airplanes and operate the airfields or protect us.

So with that, I would like to yield to my colleague from Tennessee (Mr. DAVID DAVIS).

Mr. DAVID DAVIS of Tennessee. Thank you, Mr. SHIMKUS, for your leadership tonight, and thank you for your interest in this issue.

It's interesting, looking at your charts tonight, I notice some of your charts actually have numbers that have to change. If you look at those, that's almost like I see when I go back home to east Tennessee every weekend, I see on the pumps at the gas stations, they have to change, also. And it's changing because we see the gas prices continuing day after day—

Mr. SHIMKUS. If my colleague would yield, they're not going down. Ever since I started this, the numbers are always going up.

Mr. DAVID DAVIS of Tennessee. And you're exactly right. I think when Speaker PELOSI took over, oil, I think, was \$58 a barrel according to your chart. Now it's \$115 a barrel. And I can bet by tomorrow if we use that same chart, that \$115 will be gone and you'll have to change that chart again.

I do thank you for your leadership in this issue. You know, we've been busy

in this Congress. So far in the 110th Congress we've named 78 post offices, Federal buildings or roads. We've also passed legislation honoring LSU for their NCAA Football Championship, and the Red Sox for their World Series sweep over Colorado, and even commemorated the Detroit Tigers for winning the American League pennant.

Granted, post offices need names and championship teams need to be honored, but when I go back to the First District of Tennessee, people don't ask if I'm working on these types of things. They ask, DAVID, how am I going to fill up my pick-up truck if the gas prices don't come down?

What we haven't done is pass a sensible energy policy that will break our dependence on foreign oil. And I don't know about you, and I think you will agree with me, it scares me that we're dependent on foreign nations for our energy needs, dependent on people that hate us and hate our freedoms and, quite frankly, hate our religion. It is a dangerous precedent that we set when we become more and more and more dependent every day. It's time to get our priorities straight and help the citizens, families and small businesses in each of our districts across America. There is no excuse for this when families in my district are struggling to fill up their vehicles just to go to work.

I can remember a time 10 or 12 years ago, before I came to Washington, when there was a lot of talk about one party would steal milk from babies, or have senior adults eating dog food. Well, I can tell you, this worries me when I have families in east Tennessee that are to the point that they have to decide, do they buy food that's going up, or do they buy energy to go to work? This worries me.

There is no excuse for small businesses in my district to be forced into bankruptcy because they can't operate under high energy prices that they're facing. There is no excuse when families in my district have to choose between driving to work each day or putting food on their table or sending their kids off to college. There is no excuse.

Energy is the foundation and lifeblood of the American economy, creating the conditions that help us support good-paying jobs in the United States and allowing our industrial base to compete with the rest of the world.

Gasoline prices have increased more than \$1.23 per gallon since the majority party took control of this House last year, increasing from a nationwide average of \$2.33 per gallon on the very first day of the 110th Congress to now \$3.55 per gallon. And again, that will probably change by tomorrow, and it's changing every day.

What we need is no more excuses. We need an energy policy that allows us to use American energy. We need to drill for oil in ANWR and off the Intercontinental Shelf. We need to use our abundant coal supplies through the use of clean coal technology.

One of the first things I did when I was elected to Congress is went to the Pentagon and spoke with the Secretary of the Air Force. And one of their top priorities is to use American coal, American energy, and take that coal and turn it into a fuel that we can actually fly our jets with. That's not too much to ask. And we think, boy that sounds a little out there, a little futuristic. Well, let me tell you how futuristic it is. The Germans ran their war machines in World War II by changing lumps of coal into gas. In World War II. This is not futuristic, some pie-in-the-sky issue, this is something that was done in World War II, it can be done now.

□ 2045

And we need to create safe nuclear power plants and we need to build refineries. And we need to expand our green energy initiatives like switchgrass. The University of Tennessee has a wonderful program looking at that possibility. Wind power, solar power, hydroelectric power. I think we have to look at green energy, but I think we've got our heads in the sand if we feel like we can run the American economy off green energy.

I think we have to have an energy plan. And an energy plan, an energy policy, combines all of these things together. It's a supply-and-demand issue. It's that simple. If you have a lot of something and a few people want it, the price will come down. This is basic economics that you learn in high school. If you have a small amount of a product and a lot of people want it, the price will go up. We have a limited supply. And it's not just Americans now that want the supply. China wants the supply. India wants the supply. We live in a global marketplace.

There are people in this Congress that believe you can tax and regulate yourself into prosperity. It never has happened. It won't happen today, and it will not happen in the future. If there's anybody that serves in this House that believes that you can put a tax on a business and that tax won't be passed on to the consumer, they haven't taken economics. They will pass that cost directly on to the pump.

Now we see that gas prices have gone from \$2.33 a gallon, when the majority party took over, to \$3.65, according to your chart today. Can you imagine if we put more taxes on top of that, what that's going to do? That's going to put a higher burden on the American consumer, on the American family.

There are families back in East Tennessee that sit around their kitchen table trying to decide how they're going to put a budget together, and it's putting a real dampening spirit on them when they have to try to spend \$50 or \$60 to fill up their vehicle.

Mr. Speaker, some people here in Washington believe the best way to reduce our gasoline price is just to tax the oil companies that are providing our energy supply. You can't tax and

regulate yourself out of an energy crisis. You can't tax Joe's or John's or Chris's pickup truck full of gasoline. It just doesn't make any sense.

The American middle class deserves better. They deserve an energy policy that is dependent on American energy, not foreign energy. That's why 2 weeks ago, I signed onto a piece of legislation that's carried from my good friend from Texas, MAC THORNBERRY, called the "No More Excuses Energy Act." "No More Excuses."

We've talked about energy for years, before I ever came here. As I was running for office in the last election, I heard the majority party say if you'll just let us take power, we're going to lower your energy costs. Well, I certainly don't see it in your charts today, Mr. SHIMKUS. I can tell you we need no more excuses. We need to use American energy. It's the only way to lower the cost at the pump and to give some relief to the American taxpaying citizen.

Thank you for your leadership.

Mr. SHIMKUS. Thank you.

And I have a few comments. Immediately after you mentioned Mac Thornberry's bill, I also signed onto the No More Excuses Energy Act.

The school bus folks were in town today, and what I have really gotten an appreciation of over the past year is, as I said earlier, how energy costs affect everything.

Look at the cost to the local school district, who is paying for the school buses to pick up the kids. The prices of diesel fuel are double. It's not planned in the budget. How are they going to meet these costs? Many will have to go back to the voters of the local control school that we have, and they're going to have to raise taxes to pay for it. There's no benefit to that for the kids. I mean they're still driving the same buses. That is a lost opportunity for money to go in a different direction to help educate kids but now has to go to fund the transportation system to get kids to school.

So I appreciate those comments.

Mr. DAVID DAVIS of Tennessee. Just to follow that same logic, think of the local volunteer fire department or the local ambulance service taking money from health care or the local police department taking money from corrections. You can see this through all branches of the economy. It really is affecting people in a very negative way.

Mr. SHIMKUS. And it's silly that we're not going after our own resources and our own supply when Russia is attempting to grab vast chunks of the Arctic to claim its vast potential of oil and gas and mineral wealth to fuel their country's economy. And actually, as we know, and I've got a friend from Michigan who knows this, they use energy to extort and impose their will on the free governments of the former captive nations, and they use it as an extortion tool. And they're going after resources and we don't. It's crazy.

Russia and China have overtaken the United States in dominating the global

energy industry. China's building 40 nuclear plants. China opened a new domestic energy reserve in 2004. China is increasing offshore energy production. In fact, China is in league with Cuba to go after Outer Continental Shelf oil 50 miles off Miami, 50 miles. We can't go there, but we're allowing the Communist Chinese access to the gas and oil reserves on the Outer Continental Shelf. And there's much, much more.

It is ludicrous that we are the only industrialized nation in the world that does not go after and use our own resources. How crazy is that? It's time we stopped. And I hope the public is getting significantly angry enough that they are going to demand that this House does something to open up reserves.

Now I'm joined by my good friend and colleague KEVIN BRADY from Texas.

Welcome.

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Thank you for your leadership on this issue. You come from a State, Illinois, that has a diverse blend of energy sources, and you've got a leadership role on the Energy and Commerce Committee. You know this issue. And you're right, "no" is not an energy policy.

I think this new Democrat Congress is completely disconnected from the real world. I say that because recently I held some roundtables at Mama Jack's Restaurant in Kountze, Texas, which, by the way, has great food and a great small business owner who's living the American Dream. And then I went to a new Chevron station earlier this week in Shenandoah, Texas, across from the Woodlands, where our family lives, and just talked to motorists about this issue.

What I found at Mama Jack's Restaurant were two small business people who basically say they work for free now. One was a florist. Another one, I forget what small business he was in. They basically said the price of fuel has eaten up all their profits for the week.

I talked to the sheriff of Hardin County, who said, basically, they run through their annual budget in law enforcement about halfway through the year. Now their officers aren't able to make some of the discretionary, positive, proactive calls they'd like to make. They don't have the money to do it.

At the gas station, I talked to a painter who lives in Montgomery County, works all throughout the Houston area, who said, basically, that he used to make \$500 a week, what his net was. Now his fuel eats up \$250 of that.

I ran into a teacher, a guitar teacher, a young man who had a very fuel-efficient car. He actually sold his land in Willis and moved closer to where he works just because, as he said, "We just can't take these fuel prices."

Yet look at Congress. Look at this new Democrat Congress. Since they've been in office, not only has the price of energy just skyrocketed, but look at

what it's done. The first thing it did to address energy prices, it passed a bill through the House to allow individuals to sue OPEC. To sue OPEC. What is that going to accomplish?

Then the second thing is this Congress began promoting longer-lasting light bulbs. Those are fine, but I don't think it's going to help lower the price at the pump anywhere.

Then they decided, no, here's the problem: We're apparently producing too much energy here in America. So they went after the U.S. energy companies. And what happened was 3 years ago, a Republican Congress, concerned about the loss of jobs overseas, changed the Tax Code. We basically said, look, if you produce and invest in America, create jobs in America, manufacture in America, you will have a lower tax rate than if you do that overseas. It makes great sense. Well, this new Democrat Congress said, no, there's one industry that we won't stand for. So they singled out the U.S. energy industry and said, no, we're going to tax you like you're producing, investing, and creating jobs in foreign countries; so we're going to treat you and your workers like you're a foreign investor. So at a time when we need more U.S. energy, we basically told our American energy companies, we're going to punish you for exploring here and producing and manufacturing in America, and, by the way, we're going to outsource good American energy jobs to other countries. We'll just make it more attractive for them.

And then this Congress apparently squeezed in between hearings on steroids in baseball and appearances by Julia Roberts, and we managed somehow to pass a measure to insist on more fuel-efficient cars. That's good. That actually is a good thing. But then this Congress went right back to punishing U.S. energy producers. The latest scheme out there is that we won't sell any military planes made in America, by the way, by American workers unless OPEC agrees to sell us more oil. So, in other words, our message to OPEC was: We want to do less, but we insist that you do more. It makes no sense at all.

I agree with you, Mr. SHIMKUS. We need a balanced approach to our energy. We need to take more responsibility as America for our own energy needs. We need to conserve more. Every one of us can do more to stretch our energy. We do need new technology because everything we touch can be made more energy efficient. And, yes, renewables are important. In fact, the Republican Congress is the one who put in place many incentives on wind and solar and biomass and biofuels types of issues.

But what your point is that I agree with, and, I think, the American public agrees with, is we do have to increase supply. We are, I think, a country of Americans that want more American energy. And the way we do that is to unlock our resources.

I'm from Texas. I have watched this Government push our energy companies deeper and deeper into the gulf coast, into riskier and more expensive waters, and then we wonder why the price of oil is higher. We've locked off most of our reserves along the gulf coast. We've locked off our Arctic energy, which is a tremendous, vast resource. We refuse to help work on the U.S. Naval Shale Reserve, which is another resource. Mr. SHIMKUS, for many years I have heard you talk about the need to take coal and turn it into super clean liquid fuels that can help again fuel our country as we go forward.

The good news is America has remarkable resources if we will just take more responsibility for what we need because our economy is like a growing young boy. We continue to grow. But other countries do as well.

I will finish with this: I've watched Congress blame everyone in the world for high oil prices except themselves. I think Congress ought to look in the mirror when it comes to high energy prices at the pump, and here is why: The high world oil prices reflect the new reality of this Democrat Congress. And what we have said is stable governments like America are no longer going to take responsibility for energy; so we are actually pushing more of the world's reserves into unstable countries, just as you said: Russia, Venezuela, Iran, Nigeria, and others. As a result, we pay a premium price because the rest of the world now knows that America, a stable government, has said no, we are not going to be part of the solution, we want other countries to. And, unfortunately, our motorists, our small businesses, our law enforcement are paying the price. America needs to take more responsibility for our energy.

Mr. SHIMKUS. I thank my colleague.

There is something about the American character. We believe that America is strong because we have this value of rugged individualism, that we believe in self-reliance. And what galls Americans in this debate is that the Democrats are demanding increased oil production everywhere but in America. I mean the Democrats demand increased oil production everywhere around the world but America. And when they do that, they are creating jobs everywhere in the world except in America.

Here's the result of their "no" policy: When they came in, \$2.33 per gallon of gas. On average today, \$3.65. You add to that a 50 cent global warming tax, and we would be paying at the pump today \$4.15. The barrel of crude oil, the feedstock, when this Democrat majority came in, \$58.31. What is it today? It's \$115.92.

There's a 250-year supply. And by far the least expensive fuel we have in coal reserves across this country, the largest coal reserves of any country in the world, is right here in the United States. And according to the Federal Government, there's enough oil in deep

waters many miles off our coast, and on Federal land—that's not on the coast, that's just on Federal land—to power more than 60 million cars for 60 years.

□ 2100

Mr. SHIMKUS. Again, the Democrats have decided to demand other countries explore, develop, create jobs in energy, and continue to keep our reserves locked up, never to be used.

I am happy to welcome my colleague and friend from Michigan, Congressman MCCOTTER.

Mr. MCCOTTER. I thank the gentleman for his leadership on this issue and for yielding me some time.

We have heard a lot throughout the past years about making America more energy independent. Myself, being a natural contrarian, have heard recently members of my own party saying that the Speaker has yet to unveil her plan to lower gas prices. I think this is an error. I think the more disturbing news is we have seen the Democratic party's plan to lower gas prices, and it has failed miserably.

If we remember last year, we were told we were taking the steps toward American energy independence. We passed a "Lethargy Bill," as I referred to it, that was going to solve all our problems. We were going to innovate our way out of this, we were going to conserve our way out of this. We were going to throw American taxpayers' money to India and Communist China and around the world to make the red bureaucrats green.

When the Speaker was recently on Larry King's show last week, apparently she was under the impression that their plan had worked. When asked what the price of gas was, she replied, \$2.56. She was off by \$1. Evidently the pattern of wishful thinking had already set in; that their wonderfully detailed plan that they had waited to unveil had already been hoisted upon an unsuspecting American electorate. And these are the results.

Now we hear the "blame game" beginning. Because having had their energy plan fail, they are now looking for scapegoats. When politicians come looking for scapegoats to explain their failure, I assure you of one thing, it's going to cost taxpayers money. It may cost you directly, it may cost you indirectly, but this will cost you money.

I will say why. First, their policy having failed for a fundamental reason, they can come up with no better thing to do than to try to affix blame. Their policy has failed because it's built on a 21st century energy fallacy. The fallacy is that environmental conservation and energy production are irreconcilable. The Republican party takes the opposite view. We believe that a plan of conservation and innovation and responsible production through the use of green technologies and others is entirely possible for our free people, and it can help increase the supply of domestic energy and help to alleviate the

cost of gas at the pump and the cost of energy throughout our economy, which is eating into family budgets even as we speak and do nothing in this 110th Congress.

Now what are they going to do instead? They are going to put taxes on energy companies. Windfall profits tax. I remember something Ronald Reagan said a long time ago. Corporations are not taxpayers, corporations are tax collectors.

So here's how this works. This is the new energy plan. The new energy plan is to divert attention from the fact this Congress has done nothing to increase the supply of oil or domestic energy to help Americans. They will then try to tax the energy companies. The energy companies will turn right around and put that cost into your pump. It will be passed right on. This is not my speculation, this is what economists tell you almost universally.

Then the politician comes to you, after Government has more of your money, and says, Thank me. I punished those bad people. And you say to them, Well, that is great, but what about me? Is there any more energy being produced? You have taxed it, there is less of it, the price continues to go up. You walk out of here with more of my money. I don't think the American people are going to be grateful for that.

Another short term gimmick that we are hearing is we must demand that OPEC produce more oil. This is sheer genius. Sheer genius. We are now hearing calls from the Democratic party to make America more energy dependent on foreign sources. They pump more, we buy more, they keep the money. There is no energy independence in this shortsighted call, there is just another attempt to deflect blame and responsibility away from this Chamber, where it belongs, the Chamber across the hall, where it belongs, and from a total failure of a 21st century fallacy to fix energy needs in America and make us more energy independent.

Now, as we know, these costs go throughout the economy. They are inflating the cost of living for all Americans. And yet there's talk, talk, talk, talk. But there are people who are not talking about energy. We are engaged in a fight for the global access to oil with the Communist Chinese as we speak. They are in every continent of our world and they are trying as hard as they can to gain direct access to these foreign sources.

At the very time the United States of America, as the distinguished gentleman from Texas points out, is trying to deter American companies from finding new sources of oil, at the very time we are told by some voices that we demand energy production everywhere but America, it is easy in our day and age to say to ourselves that there is no real direct cost to Government. We live in a credit card age. We don't live in the age my parents grew up in, my grandparents, and I was raised to respect you save your money,

you plan your budget, you work responsibly, and hopefully the good Lord takes care of you. No.

But when you think that votes on an energy bill or votes on a regulation that is imposed or votes on litigation that is imposed or votes on taxation that seem indirectly removed from you, there's a cost to all this. When we talk about the cost of taxation, litigation, regulation and an aversion to production of American energy, you need not go to the CBO to have this scored.

Look at the gentleman from Illinois's chart. That is the cost of a government that is unaware of what is happening in America, what our future energy needs are, and who do not understand that the American people, when challenged, will meet that challenge, we will provide for environmental conservation, free market innovation, and the domestic production of energy to take America where it needs to be, which is energy independent. But then, again, we have always viewed America as the solution, and we always will.

I thank the gentleman for all the work that he has done on this, and I look forward to continuing this discussion with him in similar forums, for it is important that the American people understand something. According to the chart in front of us today, it is clear that in the 110th Congress Democrats don't care what they cost you.

I yield back.

Mr. SHIMKUS. I thank my colleague.

There's a great op ed today in the Washington Post by Robert Samuelson. I want to read the first paragraph: "What to do about oil? First it went from \$60 to \$80 a barrel, then from \$80 to \$100 and now to \$120. Perhaps we can persuade OPEC to raise production, as some Senators suggest; but this seems unlikely. The truth is that we are almost powerless to influence today's prices. We are because we didn't take sensible actions 10 or 20 years ago. If we persist, we will be even worse off in a decade or two. The first thing to do is start drilling."

Now I am joined by my colleague from Georgia, Mr. WESTMORELAND. Welcome.

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Thank you, Mr. SHIMKUS, and thank you for doing this. I am glad to hear all of the discussion today. As Mr. MCCOTTER was just talking about, the Democratic plan, I guess, or their policy, was H.R. 6, which was part of their monument pieces of legislation this was going to change the direction of this country. As we see by your chart, they definitely have changed the direction of gas prices in that they are skyrocketing up. We heard so much before they got in charge about the commonsense plan that they had. So H.R. 6 was their energy bill.

If you look at H.R. 6, and, Mr. SHIMKUS, I did a little word search and found that crude oil was mentioned five times in that bill, which was well over 300 pages. Gasoline was mentioned about 12 times. Domestic drilling was

not mentioned. Drilling on the Outer Continental Shelf was not mentioned. But what was curious was that swimming pool was mentioned 47 times because there was a piece of swimming pool legislation that was added to the bill. So swimming pool was mentioned about seven times more or eight times more than gasoline. Then the other interesting thing is 350 times in that bill was lamp or light bulbs.

So I have a hard time explaining. I just spoke to a group of farmers Saturday morning at a breakfast and they were asking me about fuel prices. As you know, the price of diesel is up well over \$4 a gallon. When I tried to explain to them the Democratic solution to our energy problems and our dependency on foreign oil, I don't think that they believed me. I read them the bill, I read them the things that were in the bill, and I am having a hard time convincing them that I am telling the truth.

So I am proud that you're here and that these other members are here so I can have somebody to go back and say, Look, I told you I am telling you the truth. This is their policy. It is a non-policy. Their commonsense plan that they had to reduce our dependency on foreign oil and to bring down the rising gas prices has done nothing but cause them to go up almost 50 percent.

So I thank you for doing this, and I hope that by me sitting here listening to some of my other colleagues, I can get some ideas about what to go home and tell the people of the Third Congressional District of Georgia.

What really is their plan? Did they really have one? As it turns, it seems if they had one, it has certainly backfired on them and, shamefully, the American people.

Thank you.

Mr. SHIMKUS. I thank my colleague for coming. In reality, and I taught high school for a couple of years, and when you don't make a decision, you have made a decision. Even though you don't have a policy, you in fact have a policy.

Our debate is that when the Democrats promised us, when Speaker PELOSI promised us, and I quote, "Democrats have a commonsense plan to help bring down skyrocketing gas prices"; and when Majority Leader STENY HOYER promised, "Democrats believe that we can do more for the American people who are struggling to deal with his gas prices," well, they sure did more. They just burdened struggling citizens with higher gas prices. Democrat Whip JIM CLYBURN said, "House Democrats will have a plan to help curb rising gas prices."

When you don't have a plan, the plan that you have is a plan for failure. This is a planned failure, \$8 to \$115. Facts are hard things to dispute. Gasoline prices, \$2.33, \$3.65. That is Speaker PELOSI's plan to bring down skyrocketing gas prices. They are skyrocketing gas prices but they are not being brought down. They are continuing to go up.

So Monday we had truckers driving around Washington, D.C. protesting the high cost of diesel fuel. I have got independent truckers going bankrupt. In fact, I brought to the floor in the last couple of weeks a picture of a local strike of independent strikers protesting the high cost of diesel.

My friend, Congressman BRADY, highlights the fact that many small town, independent, self-employed people are not making any profit this year because the profit they had planned, it's all going into pay the high cost of gasoline. This is failure.

We would hope our colleagues on the other side would recognize this failure and come to the floor and help us fix this. But their solution is demanding on other countries more drilling when they won't demand drilling in our own country. And then they have this convoluted idea that if you tax people, that is going to lower prices. I challenge them anywhere historically to show me a time when you have raised taxes and prices have come down.

In fact, I have got the perfect colleague to come up here and talk, a CPA and accountant. He has probably seen a lot of small businesses, probably seen a lot of tax burden come onto businesses. I am not sure those tax burdens have ever lowered the cost of that company doing business. But I would like to welcome Congressman CONAWAY from Texas.

Mr. CONAWAY. I thank my colleague for hosting the hour tonight and for his work on the issue of trying to educate the American people as to what we are doing here.

□ 2115

I would say as kind of a spin-off of your comment earlier, I think our colleagues on the other side do have a plan, but they are not explaining the plan fully to the American public. Their plan is to promote anything but oil and gas and fossil fuels. And that is fine. We can have a legitimate philosophical debate and argument and disagreement as to whether or not we should continue to explore for and exploit fossil fuels. But in that conversation ought to be the cost of changing to a non-fossil fuel environment.

So I would argue that the policies that have been put in place over the last 15 months have been specifically garnered to reduce America's production of fossil fuels. They have been specifically put in place to raise those costs and make other alternatives more competitive in the market. But what they have not done a particularly good job of is explaining to the American public that these alternative sources have a cost.

If it were already cheaper to produce electricity any other way than the way we are currently doing it, we would be doing it that way. That is the American model. If it were already cheaper to power our automobiles and trucks and planes any other way, we would be doing that.

So as we look at these policies that are being put in place by our colleagues on the other side, they are specifically intended to raise costs on our businesses, raise costs on American businesses, raise costs to consumers. When you raise costs to businesses, those businesses compete in a global environment. They compete with companies around the world who may have a different cost structure than they do. And to the extent that our costs here are higher than other places in the world, particularly as it relates to energy, then our companies would be less competitive, and the less competitive our companies become, the fewer jobs available for Americans to take. So you can kind of get a sense of this death spiral that we put ourselves in by making ourselves less competitive.

The cold, hard facts are that energy costs over my lifetime and your lifetime will continue to increase. There is just no other way to get around it. That is going to happen. But those increases should not be as dramatic as the increases that my colleague has shown on the floor. We can manage and work towards slowing those increases down, making those increases much more manageable and easier to deal with if we had a rational, pro-production, pro-supply policy that we put in place.

If we make a decision that we want to go totally green, we want to go to a zero carbon footprint, that has immense costs that we have to agree on. If we collectively agree those are costs we want to bear, then let's go do that. But at this point, at this juncture in time, no one is talking about the costs of moving to the style of energy production that my colleagues on the other side want to do.

As an example, section 526 of the energy bill that was passed in December prevents any Federal agency from contracting for sources of energy if they can't prove that the lifecycle greenhouse gases are less than they otherwise would have been. Well, that has a cost to it, because that means our Federal agencies, including the Department of Defense, can't buy energy from Canada.

Now do you want to buy energy from Canada? We share a long border with those guys, it is a democracy and we go to war together. We don't go to war with each other. Or do you want to buy crude oil from countries who hate our guts, from regimes that would just as soon America would go away as look at us?

What section 526 does, well-intentioned but misguided in its impact, is it says you can't buy things, you can't buy unconventional sources of energy like gas-to-liquids, like oil shale, like tar sands, unless you can prove, quote-unquote, that the greenhouse gas cycle is less.

These are policies that our colleagues on the other side are putting on. They are policies intended to increase costs to the American consumer. They sim-

ply won't say that. But if you look at the impact those policies have, they are specifically set to reduce America's supply of energy. If you reduce our supply of energy in a growing demand circumstance, straight economics tells you that your costs are going to be higher.

So as we move toward what we would all agree is a laudable goal, and that is making America dependent on energy sources that are within American control, that are environmentally responsible, let's look at the cost of how we make those moves. If we want to make them dramatically and unprepared, then, fine, those are dramatically higher costs than would otherwise have needed to be the deal.

So the basic points are costs will go up over the rest of our lifetime. We ought to do to what we can to manage those costs, prevent the spikes we see and the dramatic impact there, because businesses and consumers have a difficult time dealing with spikes. They can deal with a gradual increase over time, because that is just the way normal things work, but spikes hurt us in trying to plan for and be competitive in the world markets.

Let's come clean as to what all of these costs are for carbon tax or global warming or climate change, whatever it is. Our colleague from Michigan has said it ought to be 50 cents a gallon for gasoline. I don't know if that is the right number, but at least he put a dollar value on the ideas of how we move toward less dependence on sources of oil, in this instance fossil fuels.

But the phrase "energy independence" is a misnomer. We will never have a world where we aren't dependent on energy. We have to have energy to turn the lights on in this building. What the phrase should be is that we are not dependent on energy from sources that we don't control, from sources in countries who hate our guts, from sources that when we give them money, they turn around and take that money and do bad things to American citizens. So we can have an energy policy that makes sense, is responsible to the environment, but doesn't raise costs dramatically and arbitrarily on the American consumer.

I appreciate my colleague giving me a chance to rant a bit tonight and participate in our conversation.

Mr. SHIMKUS. I thank my colleague. Pro-production, pro-supply, and conservation I think are key items.

Mr. CONAWAY. Let me add one other thing that I left out. I had a conversation today with some folks from an energy electric company. We talk about energy, we ought to bifurcate the discussion. One is the electricity production, which is the bulk of the energy we use in this country, versus fuels that power cars and airplanes and trucks. They are looking at the impact that some of the proposals out there are with respect to increased costs in order to lower their CO₂ emissions.

They currently produce energy at almost 4 cents a kilowatt hour. Under

the proposals that they are examining, which are led by the Democrats, they believe their costs will go to 11.8 cents a kilowatt hour. That doesn't mean just in the vacuum. But take your electric bill that you pay this month, or the one you pay in July when it is really high because of air conditioning, and multiply it by 2½. That will be kind of a rule of thumb as to what some of the proposals out there are doing for energy costs.

Mr. SHIMKUS. I appreciate that. And I have tried to segue a little bit of the climate change debate. We mentioned it here with Chairman DINGELL. To be intellectually honest, a carbon tax would be a way to go. He says 50 cents a gallon. So if the average price today is \$3.65, you add 50 cents a gallon, Americans will be paying \$4.15 a gallon. Now, even in the cap and trade program, really cap and trade equates to 50 cents a gallon. And we just want folks to be intellectually honest and be clear, so the public has to understand.

An issue out today, politicians beware, the issue tied for last, climate change tied for last on a list of domestic priorities for President Bush and Congress in a 2008 survey from the Pew Research Center for the people in the press, lagging behind influence of lobbyists, moral breakdown, et cetera. Last. But California just passed a 20 to 30 percent increase on the electricity bills to deal with climate change. So if we want lower energy prices, we need more supply.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

EFFECTS OF TROOP DEPLOYMENTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, before I begin, I would like to ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, we appreciate the opportunity tonight in the 30-Something Working Group to talk about an item that is extremely important to America and particularly important to America's military families, and that is the effects of troop deployment on the children, families and communities of military personnel.

Speaker PELOSI has been so supportive of the notion that we need to make sure that we shape our policy, particularly around our Nation's veterans, in support of our military families. The extended troop deployments,

the tour after tour of duty, I know that so many of us as Members have met with soldiers' families and met with individual troops who have said they are on their third and fourth tour of duty, that they are having extended deployments, that they are having a much shorter than they are supposed to time between deployments. Normally they are supposed to go through about 365 days between deployments. Those times have not been respected and they have been sent back much sooner.

Since October 2001, approximately 1.6 million U.S. troops have been deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan. Deployed family members are leaving behind parents, children and spouses to provide a selfless patriotic service to our country. However, families are also asked to make great sacrifices when dealing with the stress and anxiety of multiple deployments, limited and infrequent communications, and the separation of a family member.

In this Month of the Military Child, we thought it was only appropriate that we show our support for those that themselves provide so much support to our soldiers and discuss the consequences of these prolonged separations.

I would like to begin, Mr. Speaker, with a story of the Lopez family. The Lopez family is right here. They were profiled in the Sesame Workshop Talk, Listen, Connect Series. Ten-year-old Ernesto, who is the little boy right here, and 6-year-old Jennifer, live with their mother and baby brother on Fort Bragg in North Carolina, which is home of the Airborne and Special Operations Forces and one of the largest military bases in the world. Their dad, Staff Sergeant Ernesto Lopez, is in Iraq on his third tour of duty.

Look how little these children are. The daughter is 6 years old. If he is on his third tour of duty, and most of these tours of duty, Mr. Speaker, are, as you know, about a year each, that means that he has missed half of Jennifer's life already. Half. It is just unbelievable.

Jennifer keeps a special calendar in her room to mark the days until her dad comes home. Ernesto sleeps with a duplicate of the small ball that his father carries, a soft army ball with a molded helmet and a soldier's face, onto which Ernesto drew a heart that means "we love each other," in his words. Even baby Elan, who was born 2 days before his father was deployed, has a soft-sided photo album filled with pictures of his dad that his mother hopes will ease his recognition when he returns.

Imagine. It is going to be incredibly difficult for this family to go through the restoration of bonding that military families inevitably go through. I can't imagine having just given birth and having to leave to go across the world and not know whether or if I would see my family again. That is what our men and women that are fighting for us in Iraq are going

through every single day. And as Ernesto, Jennifer, Elan and Mrs. Lopez know so well, when a parent is deployed, the entire family is deployed.

The Lopez children are an example of the 1.2 million children under the age of 10 who have a parent or parents on active military duty or in the Reserves, which is more than at any other time since World War II.

Tonight, Mr. Speaker, we are going to be discussing the burdens of deployment on the children, families and communities of the brave men and women that serve us in uniform. Families and communities of military personnel are making huge sacrifices every day for the protection of this country, and we must be prepared as a Nation to ensure the well-being of military families, welcome home our brave soldiers at the end of their tours, and provide for their safe reintegration into their communities.

At this time, I would like to recognize the gentleman who suggested that the 30-Something Working Group take up this subject during our weekly hour. He is a tremendous leader when it comes to the issues important to veterans and military families, Chairman BOB FILNER, the gentleman from California.

Mr. FILNER. I thank the gentlewoman for her leadership on many issues, especially in these special orders, and tonight a very important one, the effect of deployment on our families, our military families.

You know, this is a war that has gone on the second longest in our history. There are over 4,000 young men and women who have been killed. There have been at least 30,000 casualties that we account for of Americans, hundreds of thousands of Iraqis. That 30,000 official figure, by the way, compare that with the following statistic: Over 800,000 veterans have already returned from this war in Iraq.

□ 2130

Over 300,000 of them have filed claims for injuries, whether physical or psychological, while in battle, 300,000. Compare that with the official figure of 30,000. It is a factor of ten. Something is not being told to the American people here.

But then, think of all the families involved of those who have been killed, the best and brightest of our young men and women, the casualties that we admit, the hundreds of thousands of casualties when they come home. Not only do they have to deal with fatality or grave injury, they have to deal with income problems. A spouse may have to take care of her husband and lose two incomes.

What about the children? Over 1 million children of those deployed or were deployed or will be deployed, how do they take daddy coming home, or not coming home, dealing with violence that is a symptom of PTSD, posttraumatic stress disorder, dealing with an amputated father or mother, dealing with brain injuries?