

by this administration. This year alone, our economy has lost more than 300,000 jobs. It's important to remember that in order to just keep up with the population growth, our economy must create at least 150,000 jobs per month.

These statistics are devastating to millions of unemployed Americans who are increasingly competing against each other for the very few jobs that have become available. Yet President Bush continues to sit on the sidelines hoping that the economic situation will correct itself without additional governmental intervention.

The Democratic House believes the government must act, and it must act now. That's why we passed legislation last month that would extend unemployment insurance to workers who have exhausted their benefits. We also plan to move a second economic stimulus package that should help create jobs. I hope both President Bush and congressional Republicans would finally realize that this is the right thing to do.

#### DEMOCRATS HELP REBUILD THE ECONOMY

(Mr. PAYNE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PAYNE. Madam Speaker, with so many Americans fearing the loss of their jobs and their homes and worrying about the rising cost of basic needs like food and gas, it is clear that Washington must act.

The House had led the way in working to jump-start the economic recovery by putting hundreds of dollars in the hands of more than 130 million American families with the economic stimulus package. That is only the first step. It is going to take time to reverse the 7 years of the Bush failed economic policies that have favored the wealthiest few to the detriment of the middle class.

Congressional Democrats are working to address the record high cost of gasoline with the passage of a renewable energy tax incentive that will lower prices at the pump and create thousands of green jobs. With 325,000 jobs lost over the last 5 months, this Congress extended unemployment benefits last month, so that those having a hard time finding a new job have access to 13 additional weeks.

The Bush economy is hurting middle-class families in my home State of New Jersey, across the Nation, and we must give them relief.

#### DELIVER FUEL SOURCES TO THE PEOPLE

(Mr. BISHOP of Utah asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Madam Speaker, gas prices have finally hit \$4 a gallon. That's \$1.71 higher than when we

first met as a Congress, and the Speaker said she had a secret plan to lower those costs.

Yet rather than talking about energy issues, we are talking, spending time to find scapegoats to blame for those costs, not realizing that for every dollar that goes up in energy costs, jobs are lost, income is reduced, our social programs are harmed and people simply suffer. We should be fighting for these issues, for the 1,100 people that worked for American Airlines but were fired because they couldn't afford the gas for 100 planes; for the Washington, D.C., cabbie who, for the first time in his life, cannot greet his kids at home when they come home from school because he has to work 2 hours a day longer for the same amount of money; for the Virginia father who can no longer attend his father-and-son outing because he can't afford the gas to go there.

People are suffering, and, instead, we are here on the floor dealing with congressional minutia. We must be dealing with legislation to improve conservation, improve production and improve innovations of how we deliver those fuel sources to the people. Otherwise we will become, as John Adams said, one useless man is disgraced, two are a law firm, and three or more become a Congress.

The people have had this Congress.

#### DEMOCRATS TAKE ACTION ON RECORD HIGH GAS PRICES AT THE PUMP

(Mr. WU asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WU. Madam Speaker, I, for one, welcome this opportunity to engage in a debate with my friends across the aisle about who truly stands with the American consumer versus standing with Big Oil.

Over the weekend, the average price for a gallon of gas hit \$4 per gallon. It's \$4.50 per gallon at the pump closest to this debate. These outrageous prices are taking their toll on all of us, and the average American driver now pays more than \$2,200 per year for gasoline, up from about \$1,400 a year in 2001 at the beginning of the Bush administration.

Since January 2007, when this Democratic Congress came into the majority, we have been committed to changing the Nation's energy policy so we can lower prices at the pump. Last year, this Democratic Congress passed the landmark law that will make cars and trucks more efficient, which will eventually save American families somewhere between \$700 to \$1,000 each year. We have followed this up this year by passing bills cracking down on price gouging by Big Oil.

#### NATURAL GAS IS THE CLEAN, GREEN FUEL

(Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, today natural gas opened at \$12.65 per 1,000 Btus. That is an almost 100 percent increase from this time a year ago.

Natural gas is the clean, green fuel that powers our manufacturing economy, accounts for 23 percent of the energy consumed in America and heats 52 million of our homes. Yet as prices continue to skyrocket and companies move offshore because America has the highest natural gas prices in the world, this Congress has done absolutely nothing to increase production.

Tomorrow, I will offer an amendment to the Interior appropriations bill that will lift the congressional moratorium on offshore production from 50 to 200 miles, which happens to be the safest and most environmentally friendly place to produce energy. There is no need to beg the Saudis for more oil and Canada for more natural gas.

We have vast reserves here in America. We need to produce American energy with an American labor force and give Americans energy they can afford.

#### COLLUSION AND PRICE GOUGING

(Mr. DEFAZIO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. DEFAZIO. Madam Speaker, you have got to admit it's a great system. The oil companies fill the Republican coffers with campaign contributions, and the Republicans pretend that they care about consumers while the Republicans stonewall steps to rein in price-gouging market speculation.

Remember the Enron loophole? That's 50 cents a gallon at the pump today. Ken Lay is dead, but it lives on.

They are protecting OPEC against World Trade Organization complaints that the President refuses to sign. He goes over and holds hands with the Saudi princes, but he won't file a complaint against market collusion.

Refineries, you are right. We have got a shortage. ExxonMobil says they are doing just fine. They have no plans to build a refinery. They are making obscene profits, 6,492 leases, no development. Eighty percent of the Outer Continental Shelf reserves are available, no plans to drill. Naval Petroleum Reserve, it is 8 years since Clinton leased it, zero percent production. There is a sea of oil under it.

Market forces, 11 bucks in 1 day for a barrel of oil, while consumption is way down in the U.S. It's not market forces, it's collusion and price gouging. The Bush-Cheney Republican caucus and the OPEC cartel are doing just fine the way things are. They pretend they want change, but they don't.