

I also congratulate and thank the thousands of activists who worked tirelessly for nearly a decade to bring our troops home.

I thank the Illinois State senator, who, on October 2, 2002, stood before a crowd in Chicago and said, "I don't oppose all wars . . . I oppose a rash war," a war, he said, which "distracts us from a rise in the uninsured, a rise in the poverty rate, a drop in the median income." That State senator was Barack Obama 9 years ago. Later, as a candidate for President, he promised to end the war in Iraq—a promise fulfilled today.

Welcome home, troops. And thank you, Mr. President.

NORTH CAROLINA MEDICAID BOONDOGGLE SHOWS NEED FOR MORE ACCOUNTABILITY

(Ms. FOXX asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, this week I learned of a recent audit of North Carolina's Medicaid billing system. Normally, I don't bring up State issues like this before the House, but it turns out that this isn't just a State issue.

North Carolina is currently upgrading its Medicaid billing system and agreed to pay a contractor \$265 million to make the upgrades. But surprise, surprise, the upgrade will end up costing \$495 million—nearly twice as much.

Who cares? That's a problem for North Carolina taxpayers; right? Not so fast.

It turns out that the Federal Government is expected to pick up 90 percent of the tab for this new system. That means all taxpayers, including North Carolina taxpayers, will be shelling out an extra \$200 million to cover for the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services' incompetence and inability to keep a lid on costs. Making matters worse, this department went so far as to give itself an "A" grade for managing the upgrade program.

Mr. Speaker, I doubt taxpayers will give the folks at the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services an "A" for flushing \$200 million of their money down the toilet.

This is a classic example of how government bureaucracies view Federal taxpayer dollars—as manna from heaven. This money is not manna from heaven. It is taken directly out of the pockets of hardworking taxpayers from across the Nation. When taxpayers hear stories like this, they wonder why they even pay taxes in the first place. It's no wonder they give Big Government a failing grade.

IN CELEBRATION OF BILL OF RIGHTS DAY

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. I rise today to recognize and celebrate

Bill of Rights Day, which is today, December 15, 2011.

The Bill of Rights was created to ensure a level of limited government. A "parchment barrier" was the way many of our Founding Fathers described documents such as the Constitution and its first 10 amendments—the Bill of Rights.

Our Founders viewed them as an essential guarantee on our freedoms. These documents would serve as a barrier to an oppressive government, preventing such forces from overpowering its citizenry. Our Founders also knew that such documents weren't worth the parchment they were written on unless a diligent citizenry knew of their distinct worth. For the protections offered under the Bill of Rights to endure, they knew that all citizens must understand their content and importance.

That's why today we celebrate Bill of Rights Day—for each of us to better understand our Bill of Rights and to know that, without them, liberty cannot prosper.

ENERGY SECURITY, AMERICAN JOBS, AND THE KEYSTONE XL PIPELINE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DUFFY). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. TERRY) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. TERRY. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Today, we are going to discuss energy security, American jobs, and the Keystone XL pipeline.

At this time I yield such time as he may consume to the chairman emeritus of the Energy and Commerce Committee, Mr. JOE BARTON of Texas.

(Mr. BARTON of Texas asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BARTON of Texas. I thank the distinguished gentleman from Nebraska.

Mr. Speaker, we are here today to discuss a project that is of utmost importance to the American people. As the gentleman from Nebraska just mentioned, it's called the Keystone XL pipeline. It is a proposal to extend an existing pipeline that starts in Canada, comes down through the Midwestern parts of the United States, into Oklahoma. The proposal is to extend that pipeline to the gulf coast of Texas and Louisiana.

Why is this important to every American?

Quite simply because we use lots of energy in America and because we do not produce as much as we use, so we have to import some of the energy. A lot of the energy we use comes from oil; and the Keystone XL pipeline, if built, would bring crude oil that starts up in Canada, down through the Midwest, to the gulf coast where we have about 50 percent of the United States' refining capacity.

This is a good deal because, number one, Canada is an ally. We are importing quite a bit of oil right now from Venezuela, which has a government dictator, Mr. Chavez, who is somewhat hostile to the United States. We are importing oil from the Middle East. While we have allies in the Middle East, that is an unstable region in terms of its political stability. So, if we could get more energy from North America, from Canada, that would be a good thing for us.

In the construction phase, this pipeline will create—the gentleman from Nebraska would know the exact number—somewhere between 20,000 and 30,000 jobs, I believe. Once in production, with all of the spinoffs, we think up to 100,000 jobs would be created here in the United States. It would make us more secure.

When you just look at the facts of it, you have to ponder why anybody would be opposed to it.

I am puzzled as to why some of my friends on the Democratic side of the aisle are opposed to it. The State Department, under the leadership of Hillary Clinton, endorsed the pipeline. They did an impact statement that said it was positive. At one point in time, it looked like it was going to get approval and move through. The environmental groups came to Washington last fall. They surrounded the White House, and protested against President Obama. Unfortunately, in my opinion, the President decided to delay a decision until after the election, which is why we're here today.

In what we call the "jobs bill" that passed the House 2 days ago, there is a provision in it that requires a decision to be made on Keystone within 60 days, I believe, of the enactment of the bill if the President signs it. The President has said he would veto that bill, which shows that, while he said back in the fall that he wanted to delay a decision, apparently he opposes it. So he opposes jobs. He also opposes energy security for the United States, which is an odd platform, in my opinion, to run on in a Presidential election campaign—but it's a free country, and if the President wants to go down that trail, he has the right to do that.

So I believe that Keystone is a good idea. In my congressional district down in Texas, there are numerous pipelines. There are oil pipelines, natural gas pipelines, gasoline refined product pipelines, water pipelines. We have never had any major problems with any of those pipelines from an environmental standpoint. The Keystone pipeline would be built using the absolute latest in technology and with the latest in safety, in inspections, in maintenance. I just cannot imagine why we would oppose it.

So I am in strong support of it, and I want to thank Mr. TERRY for his leadership on this issue. He has introduced bills. He has worked tirelessly in committee. He has worked tirelessly on the floor here. As I said, I hope that we get

this done, but I am in very strong support. I want to thank him for his leadership, and I also want to thank Congressman CARTER for his leadership. He's here today, and he has worked very diligently on the Keystone pipeline, too.

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Mr. TERRY. Thank you, Mr. BARTON. At this time I would like to yield such time as he may consume to the other gentleman from Texas, Judge CARTER.

Mr. CARTER. I thank the gentleman from Nebraska for yielding and for all of your hard work on this issue.

This is an issue that is important to the United States of America. It's just that simple—that you don't have this kind of an opportunity in the economic environment that we have in this country very often. We have a country that has seen the worst unemployment, rampant unemployment and has had the most number of quarters with bad unemployment figures since the Great Depression. And here we have our Canadian neighbors to the north with this Keystone XL pipeline that is proposed to stretch 1,700 miles, cost \$7 billion to construct over a 2-year period, and create 100,000 or more jobs for America. And this is paid for. This is other people's money. We're not asking the Federal Government to spend more stimulus money on this energy project, as it did on the famous Solyndra project in California. We're asking it just to approve this pipeline.

Now the reason I'm here to talk is because starting at age 16 until I graduated from law school, every summer of my life, I worked on pipelines. I was not the engineer. I was the guy with the shovel. I dug the ditches, and I cut the grass and operated the survey crew, and I gauged the gauges. And I did all of the various things that need to get done. I have done them in the State of Texas, in the State of Louisiana, and I was actually on a pipeline that stretched from northern Holland to Belgium in Europe. I worked there one summer. So I personally know the pipeline business from the bottom end. These are great jobs. Even the guy that wields the shovel has a great job, a great-paying job. That's why I did these jobs, to help pay my way through school. I found them to be very professional organizations, and I worked for five different companies. So I am known as, as they say, an old pipeliner.

This project is a no-brainer. We created an Energy Department in this country during the Carter administration, I believe—and I could be corrected on that. Its purpose was to wean us off of Middle Eastern oil. Now our neighbors, our first cousins up in Canada, have found oil up there. They want to have us do the refining process for them. They have laid their part of the pipeline and the infrastructure in the north. And they're major participants in this pipeline coming south, to bring this crude down to the southern

major refinery area in this country so that it can be refined into products that we use every day, products that we depend on every day.

An estimated 100,000 jobs will be created by this pipeline. And you know, I'm not even sure they know how to estimate pipeline jobs because there is so much more that the American public wouldn't understand about the construction of a pipeline. There are going to be roads built. There are going to be fences built. Things that you never would even relate to the pipeline business are required to get the labor and the materials to the various locations on the construction of this pipeline. So every State this passes through in this country is going to be a State where they are going to benefit from good-paying jobs.

These people that argue these are temporary jobs—this is a 2-year project, and these are the kinds of jobs that American folks, they pray for. These are the ones that the unemployed people of this country are on their knees every night asking to come to their town so they can have a good-paying job, a job that will support their family. And out of these construction projects can come other things that are related to the maintenance of the pipeline.

This is a plus-plus-plus opportunity for American workers. Here we are at a time when the number one issue in the United States is putting Americans back to work. We have all this peripheral stuff. But it all comes back to that we don't get our country back on track until we put Americans back to work. And quite honestly, the attempts we've made in the past have not been very successful. This is a guaranteed successful job-creating project. We have track records to prove it. You can look back on the history of pipelines, and these construction programs have always been part of prosperity wherever they go.

Now this is not a labor versus management issue. Five major labor unions have endorsed this project and have signed project labor agreements with the TransCanada Corporation. Over 20,000 construction jobs will directly be created to install the line. On top of that labor required to put this in the ground, tens of thousands of more jobs will be created as refineries expand both in Texas and in Louisiana to refine this. And out of the whole project, the estimate is clear that it is going to be 100,000 jobs or more.

Now where's the downside? Environmental issues are being raised. And in talks about going through the great State of Nebraska—Mr. TERRY's State—some people are opposing it for environmental reasons. But if you pulled out a map of the pipelines going east and west in this country, I haven't counted them, but I would say almost half of them pass through the State of Nebraska. They've been there for years, and they have never been an environmental problem to the State of Nebraska.

If you look at the pipeline map of the State of Texas and Louisiana, it looks like a spider web of pipelines. You never hear of major pipeline disasters in our States. Pipelines are the safest and most economical way of transporting petroleum and other products.

With unemployment just recently dropping below 9 percent for the first time in a long time—not much below, and we will probably go back above 9 percent as soon as the temporary holiday employment is over—when we are sitting here with above 9 percent unemployment, why in the world wouldn't we want to join with our neighbors, our friends and those people who have been our friends forever, the Canadians, take the resource that they are properly capturing in their part of the world and are willing to share with us down here, to refine the products and build this pipeline and build prosperity right down the middle of the country. Where's the downside?

Mr. Speaker, I join my friend LEE TERRY of Nebraska in supporting the Keystone XL pipeline. It is a plus for America, and more importantly, it's a plus for the working men and women of this country. And it's another step towards energy independence in North America.

With that, I thank my friend LEE TERRY for allowing me to participate in this discussion.

Mr. TERRY. I thank the gentleman from Texas. I do appreciate your insight and your support.

Let me take this opportunity—we've had two speakers already that have talked in support of the Keystone pipeline. Now let me give kind of a tutorial of what we're talking about. It is a 1,700-mile pipeline from the oil sands of Alberta coming down through Montana, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, and as our two previous speakers said, then down into southeast Texas and Louisiana, where most of the refineries are. It will break off at different points in Kansas and then also to the east, to other refineries. But there are very few refineries in the Midwest. So most of the refineries will then refine this into a variety of fuels—mostly for our automobiles, and then diesel and aviation fuel as well. It will produce 700,000 barrels per day once it's built.

What does that mean to us by way of energy security? Well, first of all, we import on a daily basis almost 900,000 barrels of oil per day from Venezuela. So this one pipeline, starting in Canada, ending in Texas, would nearly offset 100 percent of what we import to this country from Venezuela. Our reliance on OPEC oil—our major OPEC exporter to us is Saudi Arabia, where they export around 1.2 million barrels per day. Now when this is fully built and the oil sands are really humming, they think they can get up to 1.1 million per day through this pipeline.

□ 1500

That then would nearly offset what we have to buy from Saudi Arabia. We

use about 19 million barrels per day in the United States. We produce domestically within the United States about 8½, flirting with 9 now with the Bakken finds in North Dakota. So if we can import from just miles over the Canadian border, we go a long way to making us more secure.

Now, on a different hour we can maybe talk about other resources we can use in transportation fuels so we can be 100 percent secure, not relying on foreign countries, especially like Venezuela.

But when we talk about what is on the minds of most Americans, and that's jobs, yes, the unemployment rate has finally dipped below 9 percent. Of course, you have to put an asterisk because 300,000 of that in the last month were just people who were chronically unemployed and have given up and are no longer counted. So the reality we saw in a recent poll, I think it may have been Gallup, said that the real unemployment rate is somewhere around 11 percent.

They want to see Congress do something to create jobs. They want to see us stop bickering about things, probably like Keystone pipeline that seemed to be for many people a no-brainer, energy security and American jobs.

So let's talk about the jobs. Obviously, in a 1,700-mile pipeline, you will need a lot of labor to build that, especially within the 2-year timeframe that they have now. So all estimates, except for one produced by the environmental extremists that are in opposition done by a Cornell University professor that says it won't create any jobs; and, besides, if it did, they are temporary and dirty—that logic befuddles me because all construction jobs are temporary. So, obviously, he doesn't like construction jobs. That's the only thing I can think of. You know, we don't count construction jobs.

Well, as mentioned by Judge CARTER, there are labor agreements. The people, this 20,000 that is estimated to be the direct jobs, those people who are directly working on the pipeline from Teamsters to Earth-movers to sheet metal workers to pipe fitters to laborers, to the electricians that will build all of the electronics for the pump stations along the way, this will create 20,000 jobs. And those are just direct jobs. As we heard from Judge CARTER that doesn't count the spinoffs that occur in the refinery expansions, the extra jobs that will be needed to handle the extra oil in the refineries, and the suppliers.

In fact, there is a business just south of my district in Auburn, Nebraska, that makes parts for oil refineries. They will have increased orders in people going back to work.

It was interesting, just yesterday there was an article online from a Fox affiliate in Little Rock, Arkansas, who had to lay off 500 people. Why? They make pipe. They make pipelines, and they are the fabricator of metal going

into the pipelines. They have an order from TransCanadian pipeline for this project. Because this has been stalled out and they don't need to fill an order because there is no order to fill yet, they have laid off 500 people. They are projecting that unless this gets started, they will have to lay off more people, and it will probably be within the next week that they will lay off a few hundred more people. Think of that, being laid off—laid off your job on the eve of Christmas.

So these folks that say there's no jobs created, tell that to the 500, and maybe the 800 total, that are laid off just at one pipeline-making facility in Arkansas that their jobs are worthless; so we don't care if they are laid off. That's the message that I hear from those that are opposing this pipeline, because it is providing hydrocarbons, and they just want to flip the switch.

Now, let's talk about this pipeline. I want to rebut some of the arguments that I've heard lately about it.

Number one is that we are rushing it. We are rushing this pipeline. Well, number one, this pipeline application was filed 3 years, 3 months ago. The average time it takes to permit a pipeline—transcontinental, coming over our border—has been around 18 months. So we're double the time. More than double the time that it usually takes. Why? Well, because of the environmentalists. The far left of the environmental movement has raised environmental concerns, mostly due to the fact that it is a heavy crude that will come in from Canada, which confuses me because Venezuela is an equally heavy crude, but somehow that's okay. Well, okay with some, but not with me.

So to engineer this pipeline, what the pipeline company has to do is provide with their application an environmental study, and they have decided that since there are environmental concerns that they are going to over-engineer this pipeline; they will, in sensitive areas, like coming through Nebraska where it would have crossed the Sandhills, but our Governor has talked them into moving it off of that sensitive ecosystem in the Sandhills. So when they move it 50 miles to the east in Nebraska, they will double-case it. They said they will put it in cement.

Another item that is over-engineered above and beyond pipeline standards is pump stations. Why are pump stations necessary? Well, you've got to pump it through the pipeline. Even though it goes north to south, you still need pressure in there to move it. The pump stations usually are several hundred, a couple hundred, miles apart. They have agreed to put more pump stations in. Why is that important? Well, it is the way they determine if there's a leak. So by moving the pump stations closer, they can, in a more timely fashion, determine if there's a leak.

Also, they have promised in areas where there is water and sensitivity that they will put employees perma-

nently in that area. That is unique to any pipeline in the United States.

The unwritten standard of the industry is if there is a decrease in pressure, they get there within 4 to 5 hours. This pipeline has not only moved the pump stations closer so they can read it earlier in time if there's a drop in pressure, i.e. a leak, but they will have somebody close enough that they could be there within 1 hour. That's five times better than the national unwritten standard.

□ 1510

So the fact that this will cause environmental harm is just wrong, other than the fact that it's an oil and it's going to be refined and there will be carbon emissions from that. But the point I want to make is the refineries in the United States are state of the art in pollution technologies. Our refineries in the United States, in refining oil to our fuel, emits far less carbon in that process than any other refineries around the world. So I would ask the environmentalists that are opposing this that if they send the oil over to China, why wouldn't you want it refined where it's going to emit the least amount of carbon in the manufacturing process?

Now, because of the long delay, I introduced a bill in the springtime to set a deadline of November 1. The environmental studies had already been done. The supplemental environmental study on top of the first one was already done and was just sitting there. So we set a date. Some of my friends on committee, like Mr. SULLIVAN from Oklahoma, and I picked an arbitrary date—well, not too arbitrary. It gave them enough time to get through it, go out for more public comment, then 60 days after that to make a decision, and that would be November 1. We passed that bill in the House, we sent it to the Senate, and HARRY REID refused to bring it up on the floor.

During that time, the State Department said that's unnecessary because we're on track to have the decision made on this pipeline by December 31—by December 31. And they first told us that March 15. And I'll read from you a U.S. Department of State Diplomacy in Action, March 15, 2011. It says the U.S. Department of State expects to make a decision on whether to grant or deny the permit before the end of 2011. April 15, 2011, they also state publicly and to our committee, the U.S. Department of State expects to make a decision on whether to grant or deny the permit by the end of 2011. So March they say that, April they say that.

And then after this House passes with overwhelming support, bipartisan support, nearly 50 Democrats joining us—the State Department says, and here is their memo to us, and it says, we don't need to have a bill to permit the Keystone XL crude oil pipeline by November 1, 2011. The bill is unnecessary because the State Department has been working diligently to complete the permit decision process for the Keystone

XL Pipeline and has publicly committed to reaching a decision before December 31, 2011. They are diligently working, July 25, diligently working, and will have the decision by December 31.

This is important. Why? Because the President of the United States, just 2 days ago, stood up and said, if I have to sign a bill with Keystone Pipeline in it, you are rushing us and may be forcing the State Department to deny it because they don't have enough time. Bull.

Their own documents from April, March, and July have said they've been working diligently and will have the decision. And by the way, if the Keystone bill is passed—it passed out of the House overwhelmingly 2 days ago. It's sitting over in the Senate with the unemployment insurance bill and a myriad of other bills that have been put together. So, really, from what they've told us already, they are already ready. They can make a decision right now. They've been studying it since April. They're done. They know what the decision is.

Do you know why the President said that? And this is what is probably most disappointing to me: politics. Yeah. Election year politics. The environmentalists have made statements like, this is where the President can get his environmental mojo back if he denies the permit. That's what one environmental group said. The others have just challenged him to kill this pipeline.

The issue is the President does not want to make a decision between his environmental groups that flat told him, this is a quote, a direct quote that has been published in *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Washington Post*, and many other newspapers. They told him, we will not mobilize our environmentalists in the 2011 election if you approve this pipeline. Amazingly, it was only days after that threat was made to the President that he decided that he will not make a decision until after the election.

Folks, politics—energy politics—is now causing layoffs in Arkansas right before the holidays. There's people sitting in my union halls in Omaha, Nebraska, ready to go to work, but the President says, I'm not even going to tell you if you're going to go to work on this until 2013.

Mr. President, I respectfully ask that you act on this permit, put aside election year politics, make a decision on the merits of this project, and listen to your agencies. The State Department chose this route as the most environmentally safe route. This will employ 20,000 people; secondary, tertiary jobs in support, perhaps another 100,000. If we started using all of our resources in the United States, we could employ millions. Let's do the right thing for this country.

I want to ask my friend from Tulsa, Oklahoma, the vice chairman of the Energy and Power Subcommittee, if he

would brief us on his feelings about Keystone Pipeline.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Thank you, Congressman TERRY, and I just want to thank you so much for all you've done. I've seen you work in the committee to get this through the committee process. You've been tenacious, and I thank you. I thank you for getting this through the House floor, and now, getting it across the finish line, which is really what we need to do. And I thank you, along with the tens of thousands of people that want to thank you, as well, that will have a job.

And that's what we're talking about here. Like you said, my friend, it's creating jobs. And we talk about creating jobs here in America, and politicians really don't do it, but we have a chance to do something. And these aren't government jobs. These aren't census takers or IRS agents. These are private-sector jobs. And so I thank you, Congressman TERRY, for all you've done in creating those jobs.

And another thing, too, that this does is it lessens our dependence on OPEC oil. Now I'm tired, along with many other people, of sending \$1 billion or more every single day to foreign countries to subsidize their economies and their nations at the expense of our own. And it's a national security issue, as well.

But this Keystone Pipeline really creates jobs. Keystone is the largest infrastructure project ready for construction in the U.S., and it's privately funded, requiring no spending. The \$7 billion pricetag will support jobs in the U.S. and create demand for U.S. products. Keystone Pipeline will create, as my friend said, 20,000 new jobs directly and support hundreds of thousands of jobs in the coming years. More than 1,400 companies across the U.S. sell their products and services for oil sands work.

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Keystone XL will lead to more economic activity.

Canada is the United States' number one trading partner. In 2010, two-way trade in goods and services between the U.S. and Canada was more than \$640 billion each day; \$1.7 billion worth of goods and services traversed the U.S.-Canadian border.

It will boost national security. Canada is the most reliable and secure oil supplier for Americans outside the U.S. The real foreign alternative to oil sands are from volatile nations like Venezuela. Keystone XL will encourage greater oil production in the Bakken areas of North Dakota and Montana. Trade with Canada complements an all-of-the-above domestic energy strategy: more domestic oil, more alternative fuels, and more auto innovation.

Global demand for oil will continue to increase dramatically, meaning that the oil sands will be produced. The question is whether Americans will directly benefit; or if the oil will be exported to Asia, primarily China.

Canada is one of America's top allies in meeting security threats around the world. Oil sands production is a major economic engine for Canada, and the government supports Keystone XL.

America's foreign policy must not be dictated by EPA, which opposes the Keystone XL pipeline. And like Congressman LEE TERRY said, the Obama administration puts electoral politics ahead of national security interests by putting off a decision on Keystone XL until after the elections. That is crazy. The State Department conducted more than 3 years of rigorous analysis and was widely expected to approve Keystone XL by the end of this year, before the White House came under environmentalist pressures.

The Obama administration has put environmentalists ahead of American workers. As one example, Keystone XL is supported by several major unions—United Association of Journeymen and Apprentices of Plumbing and Pipefitting Industry of the U.S. In Canada, International Union of Operating Engineers, Laborers' International Union of North America, International Brotherhood of Teamsters, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Building and Construction Trade Department, AFL-CIO.

Now, this is one of the best Christmas gifts we can give the American people by creating jobs, lessening our dependence on foreign oil, and stop sending \$1 billion every single day to foreign countries.

Again, I want to thank Congressman LEE TERRY for all the work he has done on this.

Mr. TERRY. Thank you, Mr. SULLIVAN, and I appreciate your support on this issue.

At this time I'd like to recognize the gentleman from Illinois, one of the new phenoms on our Energy and Commerce Committee, Mr. KINZINGER.

Mr. KINZINGER of Illinois. I thank the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. TERRY). And listening to the words of the gentleman from Oklahoma, very well spoken.

You know, I often ask what are the top issues, what are the top things Americans are concerned with right now? Obviously, number one is jobs. Number two is jobs and economy. I hear people talk a lot about energy in the 11th District of Illinois. So we have jobs, economy, energy, and I also hear some people talk about their concern with national defense.

You know, amazingly to me, when you look at those issues of concern—jobs, energy, national defense—there's one thing we can do which is going to address all of those concerns and it would address them now, and that is the Keystone pipeline.

I actually sent a letter the other day, Mr. Speaker, to my colleague in Illinois, Senator DICK DURBIN. He is the whip over in the Senate. And I asked him and I asked the Senate to just, you know what, let's just have an up-or-down vote, basically, on this Keystone

pipeline. Let's stop the parliamentary parlor tricks and the smoke and mirrors and just have a vote, "yes" or "no," on the Keystone pipeline. You know, the interesting thing is they're not going to do it right now because they're afraid it might pass, because I think it would.

The American people desperately need jobs. So let me ask you specifically, What does this mean for the Midwest? For the Midwest, we're talking about 20,000 construction jobs. We're talking for the country about 800,000 barrels of oil a day from our friends to the north. And that means less oil from places like the Middle East, Venezuela, Angola and Nigeria; and \$5.2 billion in new property taxes to State and local governments that are basically bankrupt today. And how much does this cost the taxpayer? Any guess? The answer is zero. This is free. In fact, it saves the taxpayer a lot of money because ultimately fuel is going to be more secure.

Middle class families are now on notice that the President and HARRY REID want to reject a payroll tax extension linked to job-creating, private sector construction projects. We passed a payroll tax cut extension just a couple of days ago in this House. We found a way to pay for it so that we're not robbing the Social Security fund. And we also were talking about the real job-creation opportunity that we have in the Keystone pipeline. And amazingly, the President said no, probably because he wants to assuage his base.

But when you look at it, 18 to 24 months is what it takes, on average, to approve a project like this; that's 1½ years to 2 years. That's a long time. This process is upwards of 39 months now, and the thing we hear from the administration is we need another year to make sure we do this correctly. I mean, are we in an era in this country where it takes 4 or 5 years, 10 years to approve projects? And then we wonder why we're not able to keep on the front lines of innovation and the front lines of energy production and security. This is an example of that.

Ladies and gentlemen, I strongly believe in national security and the national defense of this country. And the best way we can do that is to have energy security here at home. Production of our own energy is great. We have to do that. That has to be the priority. But in the meantime, I'd sure rather have 800,000 barrels a day coming from Canada into here than having to import that much oil from places in the Middle East that don't like us. This makes sense.

So we talked about getting people back to work. This is a shot in the arm right now; it's a shot in the arm today. This has bipartisan support. This isn't a Republican thing; this isn't a Democrat thing. Frankly, this is a bipartisan American jobs act, this Keystone pipeline, but politics has infected this process.

So all I would ask is for Senator DURBIN, in this letter I sent him, or Sen-

ator HARRY REID, please just bring the Keystone pipeline up for a vote. Let's extend the payroll tax cut and make sure that we're paying for it and not taking away from Social Security. These are all very good opportunities to get America back to work.

With that, I want to say thank you to the gentleman from Nebraska for the opportunity to talk about this very important jobs-creation opportunity for the American people.

Mr. TERRY. I thank you for your support for this effort for American jobs.

At this time I'd like to recognize another one of our freshman phenoms on the Energy and Commerce Committee, the gentleman from Virginia, MORGAN GRIFFITH.

Mr. GRIFFITH of Virginia. Thank you, And I appreciate that. I'm not sure about phenom, but I'm very appreciative to be on the Energy and Commerce Committee.

We have a lot of issues in my district. For those of you who are watching this who aren't familiar with my district, I represent southwest Virginia. It is a big energy-producing region of the State of Virginia.

And in Virginia, we understand that we should use our own resources to create jobs. So I come here today for jobs to be created in the United States—not in Virginia directly, but in another part of this great Nation, because the issues are often the same. And for some reason, this administration is standing in the way of the creation of jobs in the energy industry.

In Virginia, we have asked repeatedly to be able to drill off our coast in order to find oil and natural gas. We want to use our resources to create jobs. We started asking for this in Virginia back in 2004. At that time we had Democrat Governors, and they blocked our efforts to send this to the Federal Government. Later, having a change of heart, one of the Governors decided, as they were on their way out the door, that they would send the request forward. But to this date the President has not realized that we can create jobs. But our jobs, unlike the jobs in Nebraska and other parts of the United States affected by Keystone, they would be several years down the road.

□ 1530

What we have here is the Nation's best shovel-ready project. In reality, it's ready to go. And while it's not American oil, it's Canadian oil. And one would have to believe that the Canadians don't care about their environment to be opposed to this pipeline.

One would have to believe that the President of the United States would prefer to see the oil from Canada going to China. One would have to believe that the President of the United States would prefer for us to buy oil from other nations, like Venezuela and some of the Arab nations that don't care for us one iota, than to do this pipeline.

One would have to believe that, for some reason, we want to be dependent,

and this President wants us to be dependent on other nations who don't care for us, who don't appreciate our democratic, republican form of government, and who don't understand that jobs and the economy are a driving concern, something that we must pay attention to and that we must do it now.

And here we have thousands of jobs, thousands of jobs. We've heard the number 20,000. Those are direct jobs. You can multiply that number out beyond and beyond. And they're being stopped.

And if are you an energy producer and you see something that makes as much sense as the Keystone pipeline being stopped dead in its tracks because the President doesn't want to make a decision until next year, and maybe the next year after that, you have to believe that it's not worth investing here in the United States for energy concerns.

I had a fellow came up to me recently back home. He said, MORGAN, I want to tell you something. He showed me the article he'd found. He said, I've always invested in American energy. That's where I've always put my money. He said, But right now the situation is so uncertain—and this was before we knew the President was going to delay this very reasonable project, the Keystone pipeline. He said, I'm now investing in southern Africa with a consortium that has, I believe it was Australians, South Africans, and Brazilians working on a project in Mozambique. He said, I didn't want to do it, but I don't know what choice I have when you look at what is coming out of the administration, when they don't want us to invest in American energy.

So, ladies and gentlemen, I have to tell you, I came here today—this does not directly affect my district, but it does affect my country, and I care deeply about my country.

Our country needs jobs. We need affordable energy. Keystone pipeline helps us both have jobs and affordable energy. And that is why it's important for every person in the United States to understand that we must have the Keystone pipeline; and the sooner we start, the sooner those jobs occur, and the sooner we get more oil supply that's not from our adversaries in the world, the people who would like to see the United States torn down, but from our friend Canada, who understands that together we can build a more prosperous North America.

Ladies and gentlemen, with that, I would like to thank the gentleman from Nebraska for yielding.

Mr. TERRY. I thank the gentleman from Virginia.

I'd like to just take the last couple of minutes to close here.

What we have is a \$7 billion infrastructure project for the United States of America that will immediately employ 20,000 workers. It's a 2-year-plus project. It will add—then, that's not even counting the spin-off jobs to support and to expand the refineries, the

permanent jobs that will be created there.

So I ask the people that are watching here today and the American public to let Congress know, to let the President know that it's important to you that we create jobs in America. This project, when approved, would start the next day moving ground, employing people.

Let's do that. Let's get America back to work. Let's help create American jobs.

I yield back the balance of my time. Mr. BERG. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Nebraska for yielding.

Once again, President Obama has chosen to put politics over the American people by punting on the Keystone Pipeline decision until after his 2012 campaign.

The construction of the pipeline will create thousands of good-paying jobs, spur economic growth, and help break our national dependence on foreign oil. This pipeline has received bipartisan support. It will increase America's access to safe and secure energy supplies and would bring more than 1.2 million barrels of oil into U.S. markets each day. Its construction could create tens of thousands of new jobs, many of which could be seen in North Dakota. In fact, Bakken Field crude oil is expected to account for 25 percent of the pipeline's expanded capacity.

North Dakota is a national example of why we need a common sense, long-term energy plan. Our energy sector has created thousands of good, high-paying jobs. In fact, our state has the lowest unemployment in the nation. But this wasn't an accident. It was the result of common sense policy—a long-term energy plan called EMPOWER North Dakota that encouraged energy development, rather than putting up new regulatory barriers.

But instead of looking to North Dakota for solutions that could help our economy, create good jobs, and help American become energy independent, the Obama administration continues to create new roadblocks to expanding domestic energy production.

I strongly urge President Obama to look ahead for the next generation, not the next election, and expedite the approval of the Keystone expansion.

REINING IN SPENDING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) is recognized for 30 minutes.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, there is so much going on these days. We have the responsibility of reining in spending, if we will just simply live up to it.

We know that our friends at the other end of the hall, the majority in the Senate, want to spend, want to tax more, not interested in making serious cuts.

It's rather amazing that this President could come into office and Speak-

er PELOSI and Leader REID could bump up the spending by \$1 trillion, and when it becomes apparent to the whole world, not just the U.S. but the whole world, that we've got to rein back in that extra trillion they began to spend, not only do they not want to cut that extra trillion that is bankrupting us, but they want to add taxes on Americans so that they can justify even more spending. It shouldn't work that way.

We're running a deficit. We have been for a number of years. And to have Speaker PELOSI take over this Chamber and take a \$160 billion deficit, which we shouldn't have run when the Republicans had the House in '06, and then parlay that into 10 times more deficit spending is just unfathomable. But it has happened, and it's got to stop. We owe that to future generations.

At the same time, we also know, and I think Joel Rosenberg, the author, referred to it in his book, "Inside the Revolution," that Osama bin Laden didn't just rejoice in the killing of 3,000 or so Americans on 9/11. He also actually said that one of the great things about 9/11, from Osama bin Laden's standpoint, was that they spent maybe half a million dollars in setting up and carrying out the 9/11 murders, but that also they were costing the United States billions and billions of dollars, and it may run into trillions of dollars.

But we have to defend ourselves. We have to keep with our commitment and our constitutional duty to provide for the common defense. So not only do we have the responsibility of trying to regain some maturity as a Congress in controlling our spending and not doing further damage to the economy by rewarding the, as the President called them, the "fat cats on Wall Street," those people that gave to his campaign by a 4:1 margin, the executives on Wall Street and their families, 4:1 Democrat over Republican, it's time to quit bailing out people who got themselves into those messes. We should never have done it for Wall Street. We should not have done it for the automakers.

If we had had a real payroll tax holiday—holiday, meaning you don't do something. I can't imagine having a school holiday and you only get 2 percent of the day off. I know kids that went to school with me, growing up, would never have considered a 2 percent holiday a real holiday.

The President's payroll tax holiday at 2 percent is going to go forward. We passed that out of the House, unless the Senate, down under HARRY REID, kills the bill and doesn't allow that payroll tax cut to continue.

□ 1540

But it's not a holiday. A real payroll tax holiday would have been to do what I proposed 3 years ago. Art Laffer said it would have been the best stimulus we could have done at the time, and that's the genius behind Ronald Reagan's economic policies in the early eighties. But that would have been to

say you earned the money, you're going to keep it for at least a couple months in your own paycheck, and then you decide which car manufacturer you want to bail out by deciding what car you're going to buy with the extra money you've gotten in your paycheck. That would have been a great thing to do.

Instead, we had a Presidential administration decide who they wanted to bail out, how they wanted to bail them out. We had a secret society set up by the President in the White House decide which dealers, how many dealers were going to have to be shut down, and we ended up having the unthinkable occur, a violation of the Constitution, and that is a Federal taking of property, a Federal order to take property without any due process, without any remuneration. People even had borrowed money to buy dealerships. They still owed the banks for the money they borrowed to pay for those dealerships.

Yet we had an administration that said close them. It's amazing. As I understand, most of those that were ordered closed were Republican, which started feeding into the belief that we had crony capitalism going on. If you were friends of the President, you were going to do well. If you weren't, you could lose your business without any remuneration, without any due process.

Now we have an administration that is in office in the executive branch. They've filled the positions in the Justice Department, in the top positions in the intelligence department, the State Department. They're running things from the executive branch. And they know, they've read the 9/11 Commission report, I certainly hope they have. It's interesting if we look back and see what the 9/11 Commission said. It was a very bipartisan report. Some things I didn't terribly agree with. But I knew that the people who wrote the report were doing the very best they could and doing the best to the best of their beliefs. And they had to account for how 9/11 came about, how we had 3,000-plus people killed, the worst attack on American soil on our history, how that came about.

They did the study. They found out all of the people that were involved were crying out, "Allah akbar." They were people who believed that their religion required them or encouraged them to kill innocent people, and that somehow they would be rewarded in paradise for killing innocent people. They have taken their religion, this small percentage of Islamists, and they actually believe that there is a God entity out there that will reward the devastation and killing of innocent people.

So the 9/11 Commission did a very candid report, and when you take a look at the things in that report and compare them to what this administration has done in the last 3 years to whitewash that part of history, to completely distort what really happened on