

talk about energy. I wanted to rebut the previous comments that were made obviously attacking President Bush I think unfairly. But sometimes there is a priority. My priority tonight was to put aside the discussion on the budget, to put aside the discussion on our energy problem, to try and relay a message about how deadly and how dangerous these houseboats are, and how important it is for us, Mr. Speaker, and how important it is for everyone that we come in contact with when we go out on our Memorial Day break, to know exactly what the danger of these houseboats are. It is very, very important.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, let me just thank specifically the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. LOBIONDO), the gentleman called a hearing on boating safety, and to thank my colleagues that have given us the time and their energy to get this message out. I do want to issue a deep appreciation to the families and so on who are willing to help us get this message out.

I wish Mr. Speaker and all of my colleagues a safe Memorial Day weekend.

QUALITY OF AMERICAN DEMOCRACY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ISSA). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentleman from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to be joined this evening by the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO), my good friend.

Mr. Speaker, I want to begin, as the first Independent elected to Congress in 40 years and I have been here now for 11 years, I want to talk about some issues that are often not addressed by my colleagues in the House or the Senate and some issues that are not talked about on television or radio with our corporate media but issues that need to be discussed and debated and thought about.

The first issue that I want to talk about is the most important issue. That is the quality of American democracy.

Mr. Speaker, we have an American flag behind us, and the American flag reflects the struggle and the deaths of so many Americans who fought and died to preserve our democracy. Democracy is a big deal. It means that the people, ordinary people, working people, low-income people, people who are not wealthy and powerful, but ordinary people having the right to control their own lives and making the decisions which impact on their children and on the future of the country, that is a big deal and something that we kind of take for granted.

What I am extremely concerned about, that the quality of our democracy and our democratic traditions are

deteriorating, and that more and more people are giving up on our democratic process or not paying attention to what is going on and believe for many very good reasons that this institution, that Washington, D.C., is controlled by big money interests who do not pay attention to the lives and struggles of ordinary people, to the middle class. People are saying why should I bother to vote, why should I bother to participate. The deck is stacked against me, big money controls both political parties, big money controls the agenda.

Let me just say a word about what goes on in this country in terms of money. Let me quote if I can, Mr. Speaker, from today's Washington Post. "Vice President CHENEY held a reception at his official residence last night for \$100,000 donors to the Republican Party, giving the Democrats, after years of enduring GOP criticism of their use of the perks of office for fund-raising a chance to accuse Republicans of engaging in the same practices. CHENEY's hospitality was a prelude to tonight's Presidential gala, a black-tie dinner that is expected to raise at least \$15 million for the Republican National Committee, and will mark President Bush's post-inaugural debut as a major fund-raising draw for his party."

Mr. Speaker, we ended our debate over education kind of early this evening, about 5:00, for a very special occasion. And the occasion was because many of our Republican colleagues were racing out to this \$15 million fund-raising dinner.

In my State of Vermont and all over this country, people sit back and they cannot believe it. They cannot believe that there are people who go to fund-raising dinners for \$25,000 a plate, Republican dinners and Democratic dinners, people who contribute hundreds of thousands of dollars to both political parties. People say, "What is going on in this country. That is not what democracy is supposed to be."

Now, what people also understand is that folks do not go to fund-raising dinners like the one that the Republicans are holding tonight and do not contribute hundreds of thousands of dollars to the Republican Party or the Democratic Party because they believe in the democratic process. No one thinks that.

The reason that people contribute huge sums of money, the reason that corporate America is throwing hundreds of millions of dollars into the political process is that when you contribute, you gain access to the people who make the decisions, and they make decisions that benefit you.

Does anybody think that at tonight's fund-raising dinner for the Republican Party the major donors are coming up to the President and saying, "Mr. President, you have got to raise the minimum wage because American

workers cannot make it on \$5.15 an hour."

Does anyone think that is what is being discussed tonight? Do you think that the donors of the Republican Party are saying, "Mr. President, what are we going to do about the fact that 43 million Americans have no health insurance, and many more are under-insured? Mr. President, we have to move that issue." I do not think so.

I think what is happening tonight is the President is taking some bows for his tax proposal which will give hundreds of billions of dollars in tax breaks to the wealthiest 1 percent of the population, people who make a minimum income of \$375,000; and that is why people contribute to the political process.

Mr. Speaker, I would say the major issue as a Nation we have got to face is how do we revitalize American democracy. How do we go from having the lowest voter turnout of any major industrialized Nation to the highest voter turnout.

In next year's election, 2002, the estimate is 36 percent of the American people are going to vote. Almost two-thirds of the American people are saying, "I am not going to participate in terms of who is going to the Congress, Senate, who is going to be the governor of my State. It does not matter."

What is even scarier is that the voter turnout for young people is even lower, which portends very badly for the future of this country in terms of democratic participation.

I hope tonight, along with the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO), we will be exploring the role that big money plays in the political process, in terms of energy, tax breaks, in terms of our environment, and I think there is a lot to be discussed in that respect.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to a gentleman who has played a fantastic role in this Congress in taking on the big oil companies and fighting for an energy policy that makes a lot of sense to working Americans, rather than just Exxon and the big oil companies.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman. Just in following up on that train of thought, there is 1 billion, "b" as in billion, that is 1,000 million dollars spent by candidates for Congress in this last cycle; by far a new record, more than a \$200 million increase.

I have to say sadly most of that money came from powerful special interests whose interests is not good public policy, not universal health care, not how to rein in the outrageous cost of prescription drugs, not how to have a sustainable energy policy for the United States of America that benefits small business, big business and residential ratepayers and working people alike, but no, they are narrow special interests.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to read sort of a roll call here from the energy industry of their contributions. Now,

number one, it is hard to choose. I do not know whether to go to Enron because the CEO of Enron is Mr. Ken Lay, who is the largest single contributor to George Bush, \$2 million over George Bush's political lifetime, and all of his company executives were required to give substantial funds to President Bush, and they raised millions of dollars. This is one company.

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What is at stake for them? Well, last year, they had a billion dollars of income or a billion dollars of revenue and \$100 million of income, a lot of it through manipulating energy markets. They do not produce things. They just manipulated energy markets.

So I am going to give them the number one spot, as I said, \$2 million from the CEO of Enron. When Mr. CHENEY, who wrote our national energy policy, was asked to name people who he had met with, he said, well, I met with lots of people, lots of people; but the only one he could name, the only person that CHENEY in that press conference, Vice President CHENEY, could name, was Ken Lay, the head of Enron, because he said they have a different take on things.

That is right. They do not produce oil and gas. They do not produce electricity. What they produce is money by speculating on these markets, driving up the price and manipulating the markets to extract the money from consumers, but they do not add anything productive to the mix.

It was reported by the Wall Street Journal last Friday that Mr. Lay of Enron chose two key regulators who he had to call over to the White House to get appointed to be on the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to make certain that policies that benefit his billion dollar company are put in place.

Number two, close behind Enron, they could have been number one, is ExxonMobil; ExxonMobil, \$15.9 billion in profits in the last year. It is a 100 percent increase. Americans are seeing it every day at the pump; and they are also seeing it in their homes, because Mobil has very substantial interests in the natural gas market which has been manipulated to extraordinary new highs.

They are kind of pikers, though. With that \$15.9 billion of profits far outstripping the billion dollars of profits of Enron, they only gave \$1.2 million to George Bush's election. They could have done a little better, but hopefully they are downtown tonight and they are making up for that deficit because certainly this so-called national energy policy which we received, this glossy, wonderful thing last week, in fact James Watt said that they dusted off his work from 20 years ago. I actually kind of think it was probably written more like 50 years ago in terms of how enlightened it is in mov-

ing us beyond the petroleum, coal, and nuclear economy. They certainly would do very well under that.

Let us go to number three here. Looks like number three goes to Chevron, \$5.1 billion of profits; 150 percent increase. Total pikers, less than a million dollars to the Republican Party, only \$770,000. I am certain, again, that they are making up for that tonight.

There is a direct linkage between this so-called national energy policy and massive, massive contributions from the energy industry in this country. It is just scandalous what is going on, the influence we have, two people from Texas, although Mr. CHENEY did move his residency to Wyoming in order to meet constitutional requirements, where he had formerly lived; but they both lived in Texas up until the election; both working previously for oil companies, Mr. CHENEY for Halliburton, and Mr. Bush a long history with the industry.

People wonder what is this big run-up in prices at the pump? What is going on with energy deregulation in California? How can the price of the electricity sold in California in 2 short years go from \$7 billion to \$70 billion? The same amount of electricity will be sold in California this year as 2 years ago. Despite what one reads in the press, they are conserving. They will consume probably as much or a little bit less than they did 2 years ago, and the price has gone up by 1,000 percent; 1,000 percent.

Every small business, every big business, every residential ratepayer is paying through the nose for the same essential commodity that keeps these lights on in this so-called deregulated market; and this national energy policy says this is such a great plan it is working so well, so well in the State of California that according to an unnumbered page in the summary of recommendations, in appendix one of President Bush's and Vice President CHENEY's national energy policy, that every State in the Union, despite, of course, the normal States' rights position of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, should be required to implement California-like deregulation because it would be unbelievably profitable for Enron.

It is such a great deal. The lights go out. You do not know if you can afford your bill, but they think this is a model for the future and we should model this in every State in the union.

It has failed every place it has been tried.

Mr. SANDERS. Let me just pick up on the point of the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO). All over this country people are driving to work. In the State of Vermont, we are one of the most rural States in the country. People put a lot of miles on their car, and what they are noticing is that the price that they are paying for gas at the pump is zooming upward.

What they should also notice is that the profits of the major oil companies have expanded enormously. During the last year, ExxonMobil saw a 102 percent increase in their profits; Chevron, a 150 percent increase in their profits; Texaco, 116 percent increase in their profits; Conoco, a 155 percent increase in their profits; Phillips Petroleum did really good, a 205 percent increase; and on and on it goes.

So while working people all over this country are paying more and more at the pump, while people are scared to death about what the heating bills will be in States like Vermont next winter, the oil companies are enjoying huge profits. Some of us think that it might be appropriate, as radical an idea as it might be, for the United States Congress to stand up for the working people, for the middle class, for those people whose heating bills and whose oil bills and gas prices are moving upward, rather than for the oil companies who have contributed so much money to the Republican Party. I know that that is a radical idea, but some of us think maybe it is long overdue that we begin to do that.

I do not know if my friend, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO), wants to go there yet; but there is another issue that he has alerted me to awhile back that I think is a fascinating issue. It deals obviously with energy. It deals with trade. It deals with money and politics. And that is the issue of OPEC.

I must confess to my colleagues and to the American people that I am not a great fan of unfettered free trade. I voted against NAFTA. I voted against GATT. I am strongly opposed to the Most Favored Nation status, or PNTR, with China. We will talk about that in a little while.

What is interesting is a majority of the Members of the House, a majority of the Members of the Senate and the President of the United States, they disagree with me. They say free trade is just a wonderful, wonderful thing and that everybody does well when we have no limitations to production, to distribution, products go in and out of people's countries. That is the way we have to go.

I have a question and I want to credit my friend from Oregon for raising this issue a couple of months ago or longer than that, and that is everybody in the world understands that OPEC, the oil-producing countries, are a cartel. That is why they are in existence. In fact, in a couple of weeks they are going to be meeting, as they do periodically, to decide as to how much oil they will produce and what the price, in fact, of oil will be on the world market. It is a cartel. Their existence, their reason for existence, is to control oil production.

I find it amazing, and I would like my friend from Oregon to comment on

it, how it could be that the representative from the United States Trade Department, operating under the Secretary of the Treasury, has not raced off to Geneva, Switzerland, where the WTO is and raised the complaint about OPEC's policies being a clear violation of international trade. I find it amazing that all of the proponents of free trade, who think it is a great idea that corporations run to China and hire workers there at 20 cents an hour when they throw Americans out on the street, that is great. Where are they when it comes to taking on OPEC and the oil industry that works with OPEC?

Mr. Speaker, I would yield to my friend from Oregon for some comments on that.

Mr. DEFAZIO. The gentleman raises a very interesting point. In fact, I consulted with experts at the Congressional Research Service. Like the gentleman, I opposed the formation of the World Trade Organization; I opposed NAFTA; opposed Most Favored Nation status for China, and unfortunately and pathetically the Clinton administration was as bad as the Reagan administration and the Bush I administration and the Bush II administration on these issues. There seems to be sort of a thread that runs through there.

I was concerned when I read about Mr. Chavez, the President of Venezuela, who is head of OPEC, saying, we can squeeze them. All we have to do is constrain production.

I thought, well, wait a minute. What about this free trade stuff that I hear from President Clinton and I am hearing now from President Bush? They are all for rules-based free trade. That is why we are going to have the WTO and put China in there. We are going to have rules, by God; we are going to have rules. Well, I checked out the rules.

I am not a lawyer, but it is pretty clear when I read the rules that OPEC cannot do what they are doing under the rules. So I consulted with the Congressional Research Service, and I said I am not a lawyer and I read this stuff and it kind of looks to me like OPEC, the seven countries in OPEC now, I did raise this issue with Vice President CHENEY and he looked at me very smugly and said did I not know that Saudi Arabia was not in OPEC?

I said, well, Mr. Vice President, I know that Saudi Arabia is not in OPEC, but the seven members who are in OPEC are members of the World Trade Organization. Saudi Arabia is an observer nation, and they want to be in the WTO so they have to follow the rules, too. Did not have much of a rejoinder to that.

I have sent a letter to President Bush and Vice President CHENEY and their trade representative asking them on behalf of the consumers of the United States, who are footing the bill every

day when they pull up to the gas pump, to file a complaint for illegal constraint of trade and production under the World Trade Organization agreement and GATT by the OPEC nations. There has been a resounding silence.

I think what is really going on here is one finds that the American oil companies use the constriction of production by OPEC as an excuse to raise the price even more. I mean, we go back to the ExxonMobil profits, that \$15.9 billion, that is \$159,000 million in profits, a 102 percent increase by ExxonMobil. It had to come from somewhere.

It came from two places. Mobil was manipulating and constricting gas supply to drive up the price across the country to people who use natural gas to produce energy to heat their homes or run their business; and Exxon, specializing on the other side of the equation, and Mobil to some extent, was using the excuse of constricted supply from OPEC to drive up the price twice as much as OPEC had and increase their profits.

So it appears that the Bush administration, no big surprise given their oil background, will not use the rules-based trade that they want us to be in. In fact, they want to expand this to a giant super NAFTA which covers the entire western hemisphere. They will not use the rules of that to file a complaint against the OPEC countries, a complaint that according to the legal resources I have contacted the United States would win recouping billions of dollars of refunds for U.S. consumers.

Now, why will they not do that? If I were President of the United States and I had an opportunity to go out against foreign nations who are manipulating a product that is essential to my economy, I would do it in a second; and I would refund that money to all the American consumers who had been gouged by this manipulation. Strangely enough, the Bush administration will not do that.

As I say, to be fair, the Clinton administration before them would not do it either. It is a pathetic comment.

Mr. SANDERS. The bottom line here is very clear, that when free trade works for the benefit of the multinationals, it is a process to be touted; it is an ideology to be cheered on. But when breaking up a cartel, which is ripping off the American people and people all over the world, that when taking on this cartel would hurt corporate America's interest, suddenly the silence is deafening.

I want to applaud the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) for raising this issue. I am going to stay on this issue.

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I think the American people want the United States Trade Representative to go to Geneva and demand free trade in terms of the production of oil. We are

concerned not only about what the rising price of oil and gas at the pumps means for people who are driving, but for the state of our whole economy and, clearly, Congress and the White House have to take some action on that.

Let me switch gears for a moment.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, just before we do that, just to go after this WTO thing for a moment, one of the concerns I have had about the WTO, and we are part of it, and I led the Democratic side with the gentleman from Texas (Mr. PAUL) leading the Republican side, on a vote to withdraw from the WTO last fall, and we were defeated resoundingly; I do not think we even got 100 votes, and people around the country should check out their Members of Congress and see how many of them voted to withdraw from this manipulated trade organization, which is set up for multinational corporations, not for consumers, not for the environment, not for people who consume energy, not for people concerned about working conditions, but for the corporations; that the U.S. has changed laws, weakened laws because the WTO has found against us because we wanted to protect dolphins; the WTO has found against the United States for clean air. We have to import dirty gasoline from overseas under WTO rules from Venezuela because they found our clean air restrictions were an illegal international trade constraint.

Under NAFTA, the horrible pollution of our water table about the substance called MTBE, the United States may have to pay Canada hundreds of millions of dollars under NAFTA to stop the production and the introduction of MTBE into poisoning our water supply, because of that trade agreement, and the U.S. accedes to all of these things. We pay the penalties, we repeal the laws. Not myself, but other Members of Congress vote for these things because they bow to the World Trade Organization and to the NAFTA tribunals.

But somehow, when it comes to the American consumers, when it comes to people pulling up to the pump in their cars, when it comes to people from my rural areas pulling up, and we hear a lot about Americans and their brand-new SUVs and the bad gas mileage, but I have a heck of a lot more people in my district who are driving their beat-up pickup trucks to the pump in the few rural gas stations we have left in my State, they are getting gouged twice as much as some of the big city folks, and somehow, the United States of America, the President of the United States cannot stand up for them in the World Trade Organization and against OPEC. I find that absolutely pathetic.

I would trace it back to the Rollcall I was reading before. The profits: Exxon-Mobil, \$15.9 billion; Chevron, \$5.1 billion; Texaco, \$2.5 billion; Conoco, \$1.9 billion; Philips Petroleum, \$1.9

billion; Duke Energy, \$1.8 billion; I am sorry, we are getting into electricity; maybe we will get to that later. Occidental Petroleum, \$1.6 billion; and so on and so on. The list goes on and on. I think that has a little bit more to do with it than the fact that American consumers are getting gouged.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. Speaker, while we are on the issue of trade, I want to touch on an issue, talk about amazing issues, we talked about the WTO and OPEC. This one, in many respects, is even more amazing, and that is the Permanent Normalized Trade Relations with China. Let us talk a little bit about that and talk about it in two respects. Number one, what is going on?

Well, for a start, it seems to me that overall, our trade policy is almost by definition a disaster. Today, the United States has over a \$400 billion trade deficit, which means that products that used to be manufactured in the United States by workers here who are making a living wage are now being manufactured in China, Mexico, many other countries around the world where people are being paid 20 cents or 30 cents an hour. Now, I find it very hard to talk about "free trade" and fairness in trade when American workers are being asked to compete against desperate people in China who make 20 cents an hour, who cannot form a union, who, if they stood up and asked for the most basic, elemental, democratic rights, they would be thrown in jail, and that is our competition.

Now, what is also very interesting about what is going on in terms of our relationships to China is how little we are hearing from the media on this issue.

If we look at our relations to China, and I am not anti-China, anti-Chinese, I do not want a Cold War with China, I want to see China integrated into the world economy, China has a fantastic history, and so forth and so on. I am not anti-Chinese. But why would we want to continue a trade policy with a country in which we have an \$84 billion trade deficit, record-breaking trade deficit with China? If one is in Vermont, if one is in any State of the country, walk into the local department store and look at the labels of the products that we are buying, and we are not talking about cheap 50 cent products?

We are talking about a wide variety of products, some of them very, very good quality. One of the most important economic realities that has taken place in this country in the last decade is that the major multinational corporations have, to a significant degree, stopped investing in New England, stopped investing in the Midwest and many other sections of our country, but instead are investing billions and billions of dollars building state-of-the-art factories in China. And the reason

for their doing that is, I guess, China is a great place to do business. Workers are forced to work for starvation wages, they cannot form unions, they cannot stand up for their rights; environmental regulations are weak or nonexistent.

What a fantastic place to do business. You can bribe government officials all over the place. It is a fantastic place. Why would one want to invest in the United States, pay workers here a living wage, have to obey environmental regulations and so forth and so on?

So what we are seeing is a huge amount of investment in China. And the support of this trade agreement, which has been a disaster for American workers by corporate America and their representatives in the United States Congress.

Now, what I found very interesting is that after we opened up our market to China, and we said to the American companies and so forth that are doing business in China, come on in, you could be Nike, you can pay your workers 20 cents an hour, you can sell your sneakers in this country for \$100, great idea, no problem. Well, in the midst of all of this, a funny thing happened. A couple of months ago, as everybody knows, an American plane was collided with by a Chinese pilot. As a result of the heroic efforts of the American pilot, 24 service people were able to stay alive as their plane crash landed in China.

Now, one would think, one might think that given the fact that we have granted permanent normalized trade relations with China, that we have allowed them to sell products into our market which results in the loss of hundreds of thousands of American jobs, lowering of the wages of American workers, one might think that in the midst of all of that, what the Chinese government might say is, we are sorry for the accident.

Obviously, we are going to release the 24 American servicemen who crash landed, and you are going to get your plane back as soon as you possibly can. That would seem to me to be the logical response of a government which now has complete access to the American market, which has been granted Permanent Most Favored Nation status. Instead, this country held prisoner 24 American service people for 11 days and still has our airplane. Where is the outrage? Where is the outrage?

Well, in fact, as my colleague from Oregon knows, in a couple of months, within a couple of months, there will be another vote on Most Favored Nation status with China. The big money people are pouring huge amounts of money into the political process, and despite the recent outrage, my expectation is that MFN with China will, once again, be passed, and that we will not revoke PNTR, as I think we should.

So let me conclude my remarks in that regard by saying, I am not anti-

Chinese. I do not want a Cold War with China. I want trade with China. But it has got to be trade based on principles that are fair for the American worker, not just corporate America, and a policy which results in a positive political relationship between China and the United States, which clearly the recent incident with the airplane indicates is not the case.

I yield to my friend for any thoughts he has on that issue.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Well, Mr. Speaker, certainly, big news in the Pacific Northwest recently was that the Boeing Company, after about a half a century, has moved its headquarters out of Seattle, and the rumor, and I have to unfortunately think it is true, is that the Boeing executives wanted to get out of town before they shipped the jobs to China. They have already outsourced some manufacturing to China. We know they would like to outsource more of their manufacturing of their planes to China. The CEO of the company has said he cannot wait until the day that he does not have to say it is an American corporation, that it is something else, a stateless company, and we know that they can get labor much cheaper in China. They are producing significant components of their planes there.

So the pressure on this administration, as the last administration, from the biggest corporations in this country, Boeing, Nike, IBM, Westinghouse, we can go down the list, is no matter what the Chinese do, so what if they sold nuclear weapons to terrorists, so what if they held our men and women hostage, so what if they are the most unfair trading nation on earth and they are stealing our jobs.

A few companies are making a little bit of money over there, and that is what drives U.S. policy and, unfortunately, and pathetically, this administration is going to be no different than the last, the Clinton administration no different than Bush I and Reagan on this issue; that is, whatever the dictators, the bloody dictators in Beijing want, they will get, no matter how high the price.

Last year the price was an \$83.8 billion deficit with China, the most unfair trading nation on earth.

Pick up the report of the U.S. Trade Representative. It is about this thick, and read page after page after page after page of the ways that the Chinese have discriminated against U.S. manufactured goods. They are not buying our goods, except when they want to make copies of them. That is the only time they buy them. They are very studiously developing a market in the U.S. and avoiding U.S. goods coming into their country.

Last year, the wheat farmers from eastern Oregon came in to see me and they were just hysterical about the idea that they could get into China if

we just only gave them permanent, Most Favored Nation status, and I said, I disagree. I gave them transcripts of radio talks by the Chinese agriculture minister saying there is no way we are going to allow our country to become dependent upon imports of food.

In fact, we intend to be exporting wheat and other goods. We only want access to their markets. And in trade we have to say nice things, but that is not what we mean and we are really going to do something totally different. I gave them the transcripts. They said, no, that is not true.

In fact, just before we voted here in this House of Representatives, a majority of our colleagues voted to give the Chinese everything they could ever dream of and, despite all of their misbehavior, they took in a boatload of wheat. Guess what? It is the last one they ever took. In fact, the same farmers came in to see me this year, they sat down quietly, and we were just sitting there on opposite sides of the office and they said, well, are you going to say it? I said, say what? They said, are you going to say you were right? I said yes, I was right, but what are we going to do about it?

Mr. Speaker, group after group of Americans has been snookered on this free trade rhetoric. They believe, and they are good Americans and they are hard-working Americans and they care about their family farms and their small businesses or their industrial small manufacturing plants. Group after group after group has come to me over the years on these trade issues and said, no, Congressman, they tell us it is going to benefit us, and group after group after group has come back 1 or 2 or 3 years later and said, we have been devastated. They are doing exactly the opposite of what they told us, and exactly the opposite has happened to our wheat folks. Not a grain of Oregon wheat has gone into China since that agreement was penciled.

Now, maybe they will take another boatload this spring because they need to get another vote here in this Congress, or maybe it will be apples from Washington or maybe it will be who-knows-what. It is a pretty cheap price to them when they are running an \$83.8 billion unfair trade surplus with the U.S.

By the Commerce Department's own numbers, that is \$1,660,000 U.S. manufacturing jobs that are gone to China. They always want to talk about oh, hey, every billion dollars of trade is 20,000 jobs. The only thing is they never talk about the net. We sent like \$16 billion worth of stuff to China and we imported over \$100 billion of stuff from China. That is the net number.

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That is our job loss. Why will they not talk about that?

Mr. SANDERS. That is only half of the story. That is job loss. The other

half of the story is what our trade policy with China means in terms of driving wages down in this country.

Every worker in this country knows that if we stand up and fight for decent wages, decent benefits, we have a boss there to say, "Hey, you are lucky that you have this job because I could go to Mexico, I could go to China. Look at that factory down the road, what they did last year."

So the presence of a huge labor market in China where people are forced to work for horrendous wages has not only resulted in the loss of huge numbers of jobs, but has certainly had an impact in lowering the real wages of American workers.

The fact is, one of the things that we hear in the media, and I want to say a word about the media, because I have found media coverage of this whole issue very, very interesting.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Very interesting, or nonexistent?

Mr. SANDERS. Both; interesting for its nonexistence. We should ask ourselves why, when we look, for example, at Fox Television, owned by the right-wing billionaire Rupert Murdoch, he is making a huge effort to get into the Chinese market. He is very clear. He has said it and his family has said it, that they do not want to disturb the Chinese government and they do not want to raise these types of issues.

General Electric, which owns NBC, has significant investments in China. Westinghouse, Disney, et cetera, et cetera, many of the major multinationals who own the media in the United States, are also investing in China. The last thing they want to see is the Congress rethink its trade agreements with China.

I think not only on that issue but on the issue of media in general, the American people should do a whole lot of hard thinking as to why we hear what we hear and why we do not hear what we do not hear. I would say that the example of coverage regarding China is a perfect example about the biases of corporate media in terms of what we hear.

I would also like to touch on an issue regarding the media and what is going on in our economy. When we do hear the media for the last 10 years, what we have been hearing over and over again is a drumbeat which says, "The economy is booming; America, you have never had it so good," over and over.

I go back to Vermont. I hold many town meetings around the State. What I invariably do is say, "I just read in the newspaper or saw on TV that the economy is booming. You have never had it so good. Please raise your hand if you think that is true."

I do remember at a meeting of several hundred farmers, one guy did raise his hand. He thought the economy was going very well. Overwhelmingly, the

vast majority of the people understand the reality of their lives; that is, that in many instances the middle class is working longer hours for lower wages.

Yes, the economy is booming for all of the people who are millionaires and billionaires. In fact, they have never had it so good. But if one is in the middle class, then what one runs into is that, everything being equal, we are now working a lot more hours than we used to.

If there is a family member who would prefer to stay home with the kids and raise the kids in the house, increasingly that is becoming impossible because families now need two breadwinners in order to pay the bills.

There was a study that came out I think from the International Labor Organization several years ago in which the United States claimed the very dubious distinction of having surpassed Japan for now working longer hours than the workers of any other major country on Earth.

So it seems to me that if real wages have declined, if people are working longer and longer hours, in my State of Vermont it is not uncommon not only for people to work two jobs, sometimes they work three jobs, and often these are part-time jobs, jobs without benefits.

We have 43 million Americans who have no health insurance, tens of millions of Americans who are underinsured. We have families going deeply into debt in order to figure out how they can pay for their kids' college education. We have elderly people who are not eating adequately because they have to pay the exorbitant prices that the drug companies are demanding from us for prescription drugs. On and on it goes.

I want to know, in the midst of all of that context, where the richest 1 percent of the population owns more wealth than the bottom 99 percent, where the CEOs of major corporations now earn 500 times what their employees earn, in the midst of all that, how can the media continue to talk about the booming economy?

Let us look at reality here and what is happening to the middle class in this country.

I yield to the gentleman from Oregon.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Just to follow up on that, Mr. Speaker, the point about the extraordinary, galloping increase in CEO salaries, whether or not the corporations are profitable, and absent the whole dot.com craziness, the gentleman is right, it is more than 500 times the average line worker's salary, up from a mere 20 years ago, when it was 27 times the average line worker's salary.

Just to break that down, in 365 days in a year, though people do not work that many days, say 220, basically a CEO earns more in one-half of one day

than their line workers who work day in and day out 50 weeks a year, 40 hours a week. Something is a little bit wrong with that equation, the people who are producing the wealth.

What is the answer we get? We hear a lot of talk about the so-called surplus here in Washington, D.C., which is based upon some pretty funny budget estimates. I fear that we will be like Texas. Two years ago the legislature cut taxes twice at the behest of then Governor Bush in Texas. Now they are down there saying, hey, what were we thinking? What were we smoking? They have a \$700 million deficit, and they are going to raise taxes.

This group here, should they jam through these tax cuts, particularly these tax cuts so heavily tilted towards the people who earn over \$373,000 a year, and 43 percent of the benefits go to people who earn over that, will be in a very similar situation.

The programs for everybody else, student loans for their kids, prescription drug benefits for seniors, the Coast Guard, I had the Coast Guard come in and they said, we have to cut patrols 20 percent. The Corps of Engineers are saying, we are cutting back on flood controls. I asked, are they not part of the Bush administration? Do we not have a surplus? How come they were telling me about the cuts they are going to make?

Those were the orders from the White House: cut, cut, cut. Programs that serve the American people are being cut. Then the big bonus goes to this tiny fraction of people at the top. The American people are supposed to be happy with the crumbs they get at the table.

We cannot replace for \$400 a year the cuts in Pell grants, the cuts in services to one's parents or oneself in Medicare; or when we are out there and the boat sinks and the Coast Guard says, "Well, sorry, we had to cut back 20 percent of the patrols because the budget is tight because we had to have the tax cuts for the wealthy," and by the way, they have crews and lifeboats on their yachts, and so we are out there in our dingy boat and we sink, that is too bad.

Mr. SANDERS. The gentleman makes a very important point. Not only is the President's tax proposal grossly unfair, and the statistics that I have seen are even higher than that, that the wealthiest 1 percent end up getting 50 percent of the tax breaks.

Mr. DEFAZIO. I was being conservative, 43.

Mr. SANDERS. That is, remember, people with a minimum income of \$373,000. Meanwhile, one could be a mother raising two kids making \$22,000 a year. Do Members know what that tax cut is? Zero, not one nickel.

So it seems to me not only is the Bush tax proposal grotesquely unfair, giving huge tax breaks to the people who need it the least, but it is absolutely irresponsible.

President Bush, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO), myself, the American people, do not know what the economy will be next year, in 5 years, and certainly not in 10 years. Nobody knows.

For years and years, our conservative friends have been saying, we cannot spend money we do not have. We have to be cautious with the taxpayers' money. But they have decided to give out at minimum \$1.3 trillion or probably a lot more over a 10-year period. Meanwhile, back in Vermont and throughout this country, young people who graduate from a 4-year college are ending up at \$19,000 in debt, on average. Lower-income kids are ending up even more in debt, and that does not count the debt incurred by the young man's or woman's parents.

For the first time in many years, a lot of low-income high school graduates are thinking twice about whether or not they want to go to college. Meanwhile, Pell grants and other student aid programs for college students have in no way kept pace with the escalating cost of college, putting enormous stress on the middle class.

Yes, we have hundreds of billions of dollars available for tax breaks for the richest 1 percent; no, we cannot significantly increase Pell grants and other student aid programs for the middle class.

Just last Saturday in South Royalton, Vermont, I held a town meeting on an issue which needs an enormous amount of discussion and awareness, an increase in awareness, in public consciousness. That is the absolute crisis that exists in child care in this country today.

I find it appalling that there are people who would come up to this podium and talk about family values and their love of children and working families, and continue to ignore the crisis in child care which goes on in America today.

The reality, in my State and virtually all across this country, is that working families cannot find quality, affordable child care. It is much too expensive. Meanwhile, child care workers themselves are working for horrendously low wages. If they are running their own home centers, in some cases they are making below the minimum wage.

The turnover among child care workers is extremely high. People are not getting the training that they need.

Study after study demonstrates what common sense tells us, that the first 5 years of a child's life are the most formative years. What kind of Nation are we when we are ignoring the needs of millions of children? The end result is that while we do not put money in the front end in terms of child care, what we are doing certainly is putting money in the back end when these kids fail out of high school and end in jail,

and we are spending \$25,000 for them in jail, but we are not paying attention to their needs in child care.

The reality in child care is that huge numbers of women are now in the work force. They need help. As a society we have to pay attention. I think it makes a lot more sense to put money into child care, put money into financial aid for college students, rather than give tax breaks to people who do not need it.

I yield to my friend, the gentleman from Oregon.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Remember, as we are having this conversation, that the Republicans adjourned the House earlier today so they could go down to a \$15 million, \$25,000 a plate fundraiser. I have to say, most of the issues we are talking about here tonight are not very well represented at that event.

If I could just go back to tax cuts for a moment, one thing, of all the strange things this administration has said recently, or of this 1950s energy policy they gave us, which is just a tremendous, tremendous windfall for the oil, gas, and coal industry, was one where the administration said, well, we are putting an immediate stimulus, so-called, into the tax cut, around \$100 million, and that money can be spent by the American people to pay the higher fuel bills.

First off, of course, approximately half of that is going to go to the people at the top who are not noticing the higher prices. Then when we divide up the rest of that among all the other Americans, it is not going to pay for a tank of gas at this inflated price-gouging we are seeing at the gas pump, let alone what we are seeing with the thousand percent run-up in electric prices in the West.

It is almost kind of like a Marie Antoinette "Let them eat cake" kind of thing; we are giving them some crumbs, what is their problem? They are going to get a little bit of money back. So what if they are being gouged at the pump by Enron, Dynegy, Synergy, all these other companies, Reliant, of course, being my favorite.

Just a minute on that. I have to refer to the fact that the Reliant Energy Company, based in Houston, Texas, according to the San Francisco Chronicle on Sunday, was gaming the California energy market on 10-minute increments. That is, they actually had their plant operators in the two crummy plants they bought in California at a very cheap price, old plants, they actually had them on the line to their traders on the floor in Houston.

The traders on the floor in Houston, as soon as they saw energy prices go down, would tell them to shut the plants down. As soon as they saw energy prices go up, they would tell them to crank the plants up. Of course, this wears the plants out quickly, causes them to go down, and hurts the energy supply.

But Reliant and Enron and Dynegy and Synergy and Exxon-Mobil and all the others, they are downtown eating caviar, popping very expensive champagne, and having a good old time with the President, and the Americans are being told, do not worry, there is a tax bill moving through Congress that will help you pay for a tank of gas.

□ 2100

Now, of course, you buy more than one tank a year. You are going to be kind of netted out on this issue.

Well, we cannot do anything about that. That is the free market. It is not the free markets. It is market manipulation. It is price gouging. It is lack of action against the OPEC cartel.

It is lack of action by the Bush Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to reign in what their own staff has said are unjustifiable prices in the wholesale energy.

The pattern here just runs through everything and it all comes back to follow the money. The money runs straight down to 1500 Pennsylvania Avenue, or whatever the address is at the White House there. That is where it is going and that is where it is flowing.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ISSA). The Chair must caution Members against casting personal innuendo toward the President or the Vice President of the United States.

The gentleman may continue.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Well, I thank the Chair.

Mr. Speaker, I certainly did not impugn any motive to them. I am just stating a fact. The fact, and I can read the facts here of the contributions, Exxon-Mobil, \$1.2 million to the Republican Party in the last election cycle; Chevron, \$770,000; Enron, \$1.7 million; these are all from the Federal Election Commission, El Paso Energy, \$787,000; Arco Petroleum, \$439,000; Edison International, \$503,000; Williams Company, \$288,000; Reliance, \$642,000; Dynegy, \$305,000.

Those are facts that that money went to Bush-Cheney for their election. It is a fact, and I would regret if anybody found that that was somehow impugning pecuniary motives to this administration.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will clarify.

Remarks in debate may fairly criticize the President's positions or policies, but they may not level personal characterizations or accusations of impropriety.

To imply a cause-and-effect relationship between political contributions and actions by the President or the Vice President is not in order.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Well, I would certainly be chastened by the Chair, and I just listed the millions of dollars that flowed to candidates CHENEY and Bush.

I would just observe that they are at a \$25,000 plate fund-raiser downtown where they are going to collect a minimum of \$15 million, and many of these same companies that are doing so well in this energy policy will be present tonight.

However, I certainly would not link in any way those contributions to policy decisions by this administration. Any such linkage is merely certainly beyond the bounds of this Member to impugn.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. Speaker, I would agree with the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO), it is hard to imagine that the millions and millions of dollars that come in have any influence in public policy.

It is probably that the oil companies are concerned about the quality of our democracy and just want to get more debate and political interest out there.

We are running out of time here, and I just want to say a few words in closing, and, that is, I think what is very sad about what is going on in this country is we are, in fact, a very great Nation of great people.

We have enormous productivity. We have great wealth. We have great energy. Given that reality, this Nation today has the capability of providing a good quality of life and a decent standard of living for every man, woman, and child.

It is no longer Utopian to talk about every American having good quality health care through a national health care system as a right of citizenship. That is not Utopian. That, in fact, exists in virtually every other major country. We are the only Nation on Earth that does not guarantee health care to all people as a right of citizenship.

It is not Utopian today to say that every person in this country, regardless of income, should be able to get all of the education that they are capable of absorbing, rather than seeing so many of our young people going deeply into debt as they have to figure out a way to pay for the high costs of college education. That is not Utopian.

It is not Utopian to say that we can do, as France does, for example, and have universal high-quality child care for all of our people. It is not Utopian to say that we can provide the health care that our veterans who put their lives on the line defending this country are entitled to. That is not Utopian.

It is not Utopian to say that we can produce the energy that this country requires in an environmentally sound way rather than contributing to global warming or to acid rain or to other environmental degradation. That is not Utopian. The technology is here today.

It seems to me that what we as a Nation have to do is revitalize American democracy, get people actively involved in the political process, get people to stand up for their rights, for the

rights of their children. If we do that, we can, in fact, take back this country for the big money interests who have so much power over us today.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO).

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, if I can make a quick sentence on the energy policy. What we are putting forward is a really grand 1953 energy policy, dig, drill, burn, build, and profit, profit, profit. I would just reflect, it is time to move beyond that. We have the technology and the capability of becoming the most energy-efficient and most well-fed, housed, clothed and heated Nation on Earth with new technologies.

We just need to invest in it. The Stone Age did not end because they ran out of rocks. They evolved. We need to evolve here in the United States of America.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO), my friend, for joining me this evening.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. McNULTY) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. BONIOR, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. LIPINSKI, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. NORTON, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. DEFAZIO, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. HINOJOSA, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. KAPTUR, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. SHERMAN, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. SOUDER) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. JONES of North Carolina, for 5 minutes, today.

Mrs. EMERSON, for 5 minutes, May 24.

Mr. SOUDER, for 5 minutes, today.

SENATE BILL REFERRED

A bill of the Senate of the following title was taken from the Speaker's table and, under the rule, referred as follows:

S. 27. An act to amend the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 to provide bipartisan campaign reform; to the Committee on House Administration, in addition to the Committee on the Judiciary and the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

Mr. Trandahl, Clerk of the House, reported and found truly enrolled a bill