

about everyday Americans. We're talking about what happens at the absolute top of the food chain.

These large banks and institutions that you see right now that are teetering on the brink, the Lehman Brothers of the world that are no longer part of the process now, and the ones that we have to come in and bail out with an \$85 billion bailout at taxpayer expense, these are things we want to avoid. So that's what we're talking about. We are not talking about the small businesses and the corner banks.

Mr. PERLMUTTER. I just think one last comment I'd like to make is that there has been a transfer of wealth the likes of which we've never seen in this country. Whether it's to the big oil companies or to some of the Wall Street firms and to other nations, that has come out of the pockets of middle America.

And it is time that we come up with new ways to power this Nation. It is time that we, this country, instead of living on a borrow-and-spend philosophy, which is what has been the Bush administration's approach and is what MCCAIN wants to pursue, that we start remembering the values that made us so strong, of thrift and sacrifice and investment, and opportunity for all, not just a select few at the very top.

The focus has been on the top 1 percent. It needs to be on the rest of America. And when it's there, that's when we're strong. That's when we are that shining light at the top of the hill, the beacon at the top of the hill.

We are a great Nation, and we have stumbled because of bad leadership over the last 8 years. But come November 4th, things are going to change, and we will have a new direction.

Mr. ALTMIRE. I thank the gentleman from Colorado.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN), I thank Mr. MURPHY from Connecticut, and I thank the Speaker for allowing us this time to discuss the economic crisis in this country. I think it's safe to say that this is not the last time the 30-Something Working Group will address this issue on the floor.

And I would also say that I do look forward to my good friend Mr. WESTMORELAND, who is going to come after us, and I'm sure he's going to have something to say. He sat patiently through the entire hour and listened to us speak, and I know he comes from a different point of view. And I would encourage those interested in this topic to listen to what he has to say as well. We've had many conversations about this and the energy issue and other things. So we look forward to hearing him.

#### ENERGY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of Jan-

uary 18, 2007, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. WESTMORELAND) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Mr. Speaker, I don't know how many people have been watching the last hour, and I don't know that I can straighten it out in the next hour. But I do want to start out with something that is kind of elementary, I guess, to most people, but I want to explain the makeup of Congress. And excuse my penmanship.

□ 2130

The House consists of 435 Members. The Democrats have 235, and that's because of the loss of the late Stephanie Tubbs Jones.

The Republicans have 199 Members.

You can see that the Democrat number is larger than our number.

To get anything passed in this body, it takes 218 votes. You can see that the Democrats have more than 218 votes. In the Senate, 100 Members; Democrats have 51, Republicans have 49.

The Democrats have had the majority in Congress since January of 2007. And so what that says to me is that all of the stuff that I have heard in the last hour, Mr. Speaker, if they've got all the answers, why haven't they been brought to the floor?

Now I'm sure that's a question that many of us are asking because if they are in control and they've got all of the brilliant ideas that's going to save the world, then why haven't they brought them to the floor and put 218 votes up to pass it out of the House? That's got to be a question on a lot of people's minds.

Now in order to gain the majority, there were some things said and some things promised during the campaign cycle that led up to the new majority.

Here is one of their promises: "Members should have at least 24 hours to examine bill and conference report text prior to floor consideration. Rules governing floor debate must be reported before 10 p.m. for a bill to be considered the following day."

This was Speaker PELOSI in a New Direction for America, 2006.

Let me say that the sham of an energy bill that was brought to this floor yesterday was presented the night before to the Rules Committee at 10:45. This is just a little example of what we've been faced with and the fact that the new majority won that majority by saying such things as this that the people believed that they would actually carry on.

I will tell you that this is not a rule. They did not make this a rule. This was one of those empty promises.

Let's look at something else. Speaker PELOSI in 2006 before they gained the majority: "Bills should generally come to the floor under a procedure that allows open, full, and fair debate consisting of a full amendment process

that grants the minority the right to offer its alternatives, including a substitute."

Since the new majority has been in in 2007 and 2008, they have had over 60 closed rules, which means that there are no amendments, you can't bring your ideas here and have them openly debated. The last energy bill that was here was one of those rules. I might add in the 109th Congress when Republicans were in control, we had just about half of that amount in closed rules.

Now here is the thing that I think that most people will get a grasp on, Mr. Speaker. This was by Representative PAUL KANJORSKI when he was in his hometown after becoming the majority. He was in his hometown, and he was asked about the Democrats' promise to bring back the troops from Iraq. And as he was talking—but this kind of relates to everything that has been said by them to gain the majority—before he said this, he said, "In our desire to win back the majority, we sort of stretched the truth and people ate it up."

Well, you know, that's something.

But then we got to the point where we're at today with the energy crisis. In 2007 when the Democrats took over, gas was about \$2.10 a gallon. Unemployment was 4.5 percent. Today, gas is over \$4 a gallon and employment is 6.1 percent, but yet they want to blame the Republicans. Now they're constantly blaming President Bush. I don't know, Mr. Speaker, but I have never seen President Bush in this body casting a vote.

In fact, if you've studied your government, you know that there's an executive branch, there's a legislative branch, and there's a judicial branch. The legislative branch is responsible for making laws.

Now if you go back to the first chart, you can remember that they have more than enough to pass anything that they want to in this body, and they control the Senate.

So what is the problem? We don't know. We want to understand why we are constantly being blamed. They talked about the economic problems. They've been in control since January of 2007. They passed a housing bill that gave Secretary Paulson the ability to do what he's doing with some of these bailouts. The majority of Republicans voted against that bill. So when are we going to take some responsibility and stop all of the blame shifting?

We've got some Members here tonight that might want to explain some of that to you because it's a problem when the people in control want to blame somebody else for their problems. I heard them mention the SCHIP. Why didn't they proceed with it, continue on with that leadership if they thought that was the right thing to do rather than caving? No idea. I have no idea.

Why have they not done some of the other things that they talk about that would help with the economic crisis that we find ourselves in today? Hopefully we will give you some of those answers.

Now I would like to recognize my good friend from the State of Tennessee (Mr. WAMP).

Mr. WAMP. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I want to start by saying I have been here in the House for 14 years, and I do not believe that either party has an exclusive on integrity or ideas. I think that both parties have plenty to improve on, but I wanted to come tonight to say that not a single issue in many months, if not years, has so divided the two parties down the lines of what is best for America and what's best for the special interests in this issue of energy, because I really believe that extremism is what is causing the majority party to be in retreat from serving the needs and meeting the needs of the American people.

I'm talking about environmental extremists, and I say this with great respect because I think conservation and preservation and environmental responsibility are very important. And I have an excellent record of supporting all of the alternatives on energy as the cochairman of the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Caucus here in the House for 8 years. I have helped lead the tax incentives for renewable and energy efficiency programs, helped put it in the Energy Policy Act of 2005, one of the most significant developments in the history of our country for these alternatives, and I believe in these programs.

But I have to tell you, when it comes time now at this critical moment in American history for new energy capacity and new production at a time where the prices for consumers are unsustainable, environmental extremism, which is a special interest—when you look at the Environmental Defense Fund and Sierra Club and all of these entities that are filing suit to keep our country from going after new supplies, which does directly bring prices down for regular people who are hurting badly, then extremism and special interests are trumping the will of the American people.

And that's where, frankly, a very liberal mindset from places like California should not dictate national policy that impacts consumers in Tennessee. And that is happening today.

Monday, the price of gasoline in Knoxville, Tennessee, was \$4.99 a gallon. Let me tell you that is \$2.50 above sustainability based on market conditions and our economy. And something has to give. And the American people are on our side. And what happened here last night was extremism and radicalism trumped mainstream values and positions for the American people.

Then I was asked today on National Public Radio why then would the majority party tomorrow bring up this issue of speculation in the marketplace again on energy when we've already voted on that earlier in the year. And the reason is they are reeling over what happened last night where, as Members are going to tell you and even call people by name, dozens of Democrats that cosponsored a reasonable compromise bill that we offered last night in the only option we had to offer an alternative, cosponsored this mainstream, compromise, middle-ground bill and then voted against it so that they could protect the liberal, California-driven, no-energy bill, which is the equivalent of drinking out of a straw when our country needs a fire hose right now. Right now.

And these hurricanes prove again any refinery capacity lost, any natural disaster, any disruption can cripple our country overnight.

We need to diversify our supply, increase our supply, have a robust, manufactured-driven economy where we are solving our own energy problems and providing these solutions to the world. We can do it. I have got to tell you we have candidates at the Presidential level, here in the Congress, that are willing to do this. But last night we were stymied by a majority that's in the back pocket of the extremists. And that's the truth.

Now I am about as nonpartisan as anybody can be in this body and be in one party or the other, but that is now happening, and it's very frustrating because people are calling me from all across my district saying, "Why are you not doing something about it?" And we are trying.

Last night was a closed rule. No options, no alternatives except the one alternative, which was a bill sponsored by Members of both parties, written by Members of both parties. And the very people that sponsored it in the majority party voted against it so that they could protect themselves.

And then tomorrow they're going to then change the subject to try to get the message back on Wall Street in a week where Wall Street, obviously, is suffering more and more losses, and I will guarantee you the conservatives in this body, people like me and the people on the floor tonight, are not supporting bailouts and not supporting propping up corporations that lent more credit than they should have. We're not for bailing out anybody, and they're going to try tomorrow to convince the American people that this is still all about Wall Street investors running up the price of oil instead of the radical groups keeping us from going after energy supplies in our country.

We need the alternatives, we need the investment; but what are we going to do in the meantime while we're bring-

ing those to the marketplace? I'm not talking about months; I'm talking about years before we have those alternatives ready for the market. And what do we do as a transition, a bridge to get there? Increase capacity. Prices will come down as we increase the capacity. The energy that we have at our disposal—and we need all of it, all across the Outer Continental Shelf, not 50 miles offshore. It limits it to just a little bitty amount, and then the lawsuits just will be filed. Four hundred and eighty-seven Outer Continental Shelf permits are under litigation, immediately sued by these radical groups.

So to the average American, understand: extremism on policies like this, locking up our energy resources, have brought us to our knees and we actually have to have some kind of explosion here on the floor of the House for the majority to let us unleash this and send a bill to this President who will sign it. And they knew that last night if they would have allowed their own Members who cosponsored this bill to vote for it, we would have something working through the Senate, the President would sign it, and we would begin production. And as soon as we go after this new energy, the prices will come down.

□ 2145

Now, that's where we're at.

And I hate to just be that critical of the other side, and I rarely am, but tonight, this is the moment. And we've got to keep this issue out there because they're looking for ways to cover it up and go home. And tomorrow, it's change the subject. It's about speculation, or then it's going to be about price gouging, or all of these diversionary tactics to keep the American people thinking that it's something other than production.

And right now it is production. We need to go after it. The American people get it, but we need to let them know exactly what happened here this week in the House of Representatives.

Mr. WESTMORELAND. I thank the gentleman from Tennessee.

And I wonder if the \$9 billion bailout of IndyMac, the \$29 billion bailout of Bear Stearns, the \$85 billion bailout of AIG, the \$200 billion bailout of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, which, under that bill, is some of the ability that they gave Secretary Paulson to do some of these bailouts. Also, the \$300 billion exposure that they gave the American taxpayers to expand the FHA to refinance problem mortgages, and now they're talking about a \$25 billion bailout for the automakers. So the gentleman from Tennessee has some great points.

But let me speak to the energy thing that he mentioned. In the bipartisan bill, there were 25 of the 35 Democrats that sponsored this bill that voted against it; they were actually cosponsors. But let me tell you where a little of this makeup comes right quick.

Energy crisis: "There is no energy crisis on our side of the aisle." And that was from a Democratic House aide that was written in the Politico on August 5, 2008. Also, according to Speaker PELOSI, "If Democrats relented on drilling, then we might as well pack it up and go home." That was from July 11, 2008. Then we've got, "This is a political month. There's all kinds of things we try to do that will just go away after we leave." And that's Representative JOHN MURTHA.

And if I could, Mr. Speaker, I would recall you to the quote that Mr. KANJORSKI said: "We kind of stretched the truth, and the people ate it up." So this makes me believe that what we've done here, just the sham that's gone on, might be just to fool people until after we leave.

"This is all about politics, not necessarily about policy." And this comes from Karen Whalen, who is with the Natural Resources Defense Council, that she spoke of in September.

Democratic Senator MARY LANDRIEU, on the Democrats' latest energy plan, said, "It is dead on arrival in the Senate." So when they passed this sham of a bill last night so they can go home and say that they passed an energy bill, even their own party in the Senate recognizes that this thing is dead on arrival. And some of the other comments, it was just politics, it is election-year stuff.

Now, this is the last quote I'm going to show you tonight from Speaker PELOSI, but her quote is, "I'm trying to save the planet. I'm just trying to save the planet." Well, we wish that her and the Democratic majority would try to do something to relieve everyday Americans of the pain at the pump that we're facing, the loss of jobs that their economic policies that they've passed since they've been here have created, the fact that gas has been from a little over \$2 to over \$4, the fact that 17 of the refineries were closed down with Hurricane Ike and the 3,200 drilling platforms because they are in the direct path of hurricanes, when we could be expanding our energy resources to the east coast, to the west coast, to Alaska, where these hurricanes don't normally hit.

So keep in mind, Mr. Speaker, that Speaker PELOSI is trying to save the planet and not help the everyday American that is feeling the pain at the pump.

Now I want to recognize our distinguished policy chairman of the Republican Conference, the gentleman from Michigan.

Mr. MCCOTTER. I thank the gentleman from Georgia.

And I think you've hit upon, with the quote from Speaker PELOSI about trying to save the planet, one of the fundamental problems that we've run into trying to come up with a sound energy policy for the United States.

As the gentleman from Tennessee talked about, we want a bridge. We want a responsible transition from where we are today to where America becomes energy-independent and secure. We believe we need maximum American energy production, common-sense conservation, and free-market, green innovations to provide that responsible transition that does not allow for the callous infliction of economic pain upon the American people.

And when you think about what we hear in phrases like, "I'm trying to save the planet, I'm trying to save the planet," what we're really hearing is that the party that was elected to lower our gas prices, the Democratic Party, has made a subtle shift in what they're trying to accomplish. They're now trying to break us off our addiction—not to foreign oil simply; they are now trying to break our addiction to oil.

So, in short, their solution to the problem of high gas prices is to make sure that no one has access to any gas at all. And that's why another quote, which I'm sure you'll put up, is that they have described, in their own Democratic staff's words, "Drive smaller cars and wait for the wind." This is not a responsible solution.

Like many people, when I was growing up—I'm 43—I remember something called the ABC Wide World of Sports. I remember "The Agony of Defeat." And I used to like Evel Knievel. Now, there was one time when Evel Knievel, instead of just jumping over cars and busses—you know, he worked for a living, it's tough work; if you can get it, it pays well—he was going to jump something called the Snake River Canyon. And I remember watching this on a little, tiny TV screen with my dad. And my dad looked at it, just looked at Evel and his little suped-up motorcycle, he looked at this enormous Snake River Canyon, and my dad said, "That boy ain't gonna get there from here."

And when I think of the Democrats' energy strategy, whereby we have no domestic production of our own natural resources from the Outer Continental Shelf, from ANWR, from anybody else, anywhere else, and they tell us, we're going to fix this with green technological innovations, it's going to be magic, I think of poor Evel Knievel. The only difference is that, in trying to jump immediately, cold turkey, from our current petroleum-based economy into some distant green future where we do not need our own domestic energy resources, is we are not simply taking the American people over the Snake River Canyon, the Democratic majority is pushing them over an economic cliff. And they are already beginning to see where the abyss lays every time they drive by and buy gas at the pump.

Now, as we heard about the process last night, people think, why does proc-

ess matter? I don't know. It seems to me that as a sovereign citizen of our free republic, we live in a democracy for a reason; that the will of one person will not be imposed upon any sovereign citizen of the United States, certainly not by the subservient Members of Congress because we work for these people. These people are our bosses, and they want their voices heard on the floor of this House. And on an issue as critical as American energy and how we transition to a secure future not only for ourselves, but more importantly, for our children, they expect to have their voices heard through their elected representatives.

And as the gentleman from Georgia pointed out, we heard several promises about what an open process this was going to be, how every vote was going to count, how every voice was going to be heard and we would come together in a bipartisan fashion to serve the American people. And yet, what did we see? We saw a bill drafted in the dead of night by a Speaker, handed to her Rules Committee, no amendments allowed, and voted, rubber-stamped by her Democratic Congress, with no debate on this floor, no dissent about amendments, no chance to offer alternatives, no committee process. Silence, silence, in terms of input on this bill.

And then we saw something that I thought I would never see. We saw 24 people who had co-sponsored a bipartisan bill, who had sang its praises to their public and to the rest of the American people, and they voted against it—and I didn't really hear a good reason put forward—so they could pass a sham drill bill.

Now, we've heard a lot about why the Republicans didn't do certain things over the course of their majority. And we paid a heavy price—and a rightful price, as many of us have admitted. We were put into minority, from majority to minority status by the American people, and we are learning a painful lesson. But let us not forget the people who obstructed a sound, sane, productive American energy policy for the entire time they were in the minority. They act as if they had no hand in it.

When we were in the majority, we tried, we tried mightily. Many times the House would pass legislation and it would get to the Senate, yet the Democratic minority did everything they could to prevent the expansion of American domestic energy production to the level sufficient that it would serve the American people and lower the gas prices. The only difference now that they're in the majority is they have to pretend that they're trying to lower them.

And that's why, when you pass a bill out of this House called a compromise bill when you have not talked to anyone on this side of the aisle about what goes in the bill, it means it's a compromise amongst yourselves. That is a

unilateral compromise. So let's be clear about who compromised with who.

And then when it comes to the floor, it's called "landmark legislation," it's going to create jobs. And if you vote against this, you are a captive of Big Oil because you don't want to lock up 88 percent of America's reserves?

As our friend STEVE SCALISE from Louisiana said, the Democratic "sham drill bill" might as well have been written by OPEC; it's going to make them a lot of money when America doesn't produce its own oil and gas.

And the best part is their unilateral compromise the Speaker cut with whomever, they didn't bother to talk to the Senate. As Senator LANDRIEU from Louisiana mentioned, that bill is dead on arrival in the Senate. How do the statements we've heard yesterday, the justifications, the compromise, landmark legislation, when your own Democratic Senators think it's dead on arrival?

Where is the hope for the economically struggling families across America? Where is your sense of responsibility, not only to the people of this country, but to their House right here, to this institution? Where is the hope for the American people who are suffering under energy prices, skyrocketing since you took power in this place? There isn't. Because it's a sham.

And it is the Democratic Senate that will prove it. It is not Republican Luddites that don't want to go forward towards a more "green" future. What it is is the Democratic Senate telling the Democratic House we can't stomach your bill.

Now, the thing that I think that everybody should remember is there is a solution to this. If and when this happens, if the Democratic Senate refuses to pass the Democratic House "lethargy bill," this Democratic majority here in the House, the Democratic majority in the Senate, this Democratic Congress can say we will not leave here until a real piece of energy legislation helping the American people is signed into law, until we have done the job we have been elected to do on behalf of the American people. I do not think that is too much to ask. I do not think that is something that the American people should be denied.

I yield back to the gentleman.

Mr. WESTMORELAND. I want to thank the Policy Committee chairman. And you're exactly right, we owe it to the American people to stay here until we can put our partisanship aside, do a bipartisan bill that the American people—and we thought we had that last night with the motion to recommit, with all the Democratic cosponsors that were on it—to have a bill that we could pass, send to the Senate, and hopefully get some agreement on.

But you mentioned the process, that the process is important because, you

know, when the process is broken, the product is flawed.

Mr. Speaker, I don't want to get too elementary, but this is a book that we give to children that come to this body, and it says, "How Our Laws Are Made." The beginning of a bill: Propose a bill, introduce a bill, committee action, subcommittee action. The bill is reported, considered on the House floor. Vote the bill. Refer to the Senate.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this is if we were going through the proper process that our Founding Fathers and people who had the idea—this is the process that was set up, and this is what we teach our young people that come to the Capitol.

Now, I will show you the chart that is being used right now by the majority. You have the beginning of the bill, propose a bill. And then you kind of go through the introduction, the committee action, the subcommittee action, and the bill is reported. It basically just kind of comes to the floor of the House.

So what we're teaching our kids is not exactly right. And so I think while the majority is in control of Congress, they may want to shift this a little bit and give the children a more accurate depiction of what's going on in the Congress.

And I will yield to the gentleman from Tennessee.

Mr. WAMP. Again, I am not critical most of the time of either party here in the House, but this is an inconvenient truth that I need to share as well. Because it's easy to forget now in September, but I've been on the Appropriations Committee for 12 years. Every year, by June, the Appropriations bills are moving through the House.

Mr. WESTMORELAND. How many do we have now?

Mr. WAMP. The end of the fiscal year is 13 days from now, and one bill has been off this House floor.

But here's what happened, beginning in June, is we started debating at the committee this issue of energy—because virtually every bill has a component of energy, whether it's the defense bill, where there is a huge energy consumption piece of all of our defense activities. And when we started debating energy at these bills, they stopped the process.

□ 2200

And we don't have the appropriations bills at all, and the fiscal year ends in 13 days.

Now, here is the problem with it because it gets really ugly. Even under a stopgap funding bill, like a continuing resolution which we're now expecting to carry us several months into the fiscal year, you won't believe the waste associated with the budgets of all of these agencies because they don't know what they're going to get. They may be

laying people off now. We're already hearing about this because they don't have certainty in their budgets because the people running the House stopped the trains, stopped the process, stopped the bills over this issue of energy. They're in retreat on this issue of energy.

A lot of people criticize our party as the party of "all about drilling." It's not just the drilling. What about nuclear energy? The very chairman of their new global warming committee, the gentleman from Massachusetts, is the most anti-nuclear activist who I know of in the country, let alone in the House. They're standing against nuclear and against a host of other alternatives, not just oil and gas.

It's the idea of, if you don't use coal and you don't use nuclear and you don't use oil, the alternatives will somehow surface, but I've got to tell you, when you limit your supplies, the lights go out, and the gas prices go up, and the availability of energy goes down. Consumers are hurting, and that's why we have got to get over this.

These, again, are special interests that have taken control through these people being elevated to power, and they just punt the process. We are not moving appropriations bills. The global warming committee now is kind of in the driver's seat. Let's just shut it all down, and we will reduce the carbon footprint, but at what cost—American competitiveness? American prices? Our ability to even survive? What about bankruptcies? What about the people? What about the common man who now doesn't even have a voice in this place because they're shutting down the process?

Now I've got to tell you that I haven't complained in 14 years, but it's time to complain. It's actually time to be righteously indignant about this and force them to stay here until we get something done, something real for the consumer.

I yield back.

Mr. WESTMORELAND. I'd like to ask the gentleman from Tennessee a question.

You're on the Appropriations Committee. On the bill that we passed here yesterday, I believe there were some appropriations in there or earmarks in there. I think there was \$1.2 billion for Mr. RANGEL for the New York City liberty bonds. Was that not in the energy package that we had?

Mr. WAMP. Actually, our leadership raised that, and they just tabled it. They just quash it and go on. These are air-dropped. Again, this didn't go through the committee process.

Listen, if the Congress is going to exert its constitutional right to direct funding, there's a provision that you have to go through—the subcommittee, the full committee. It has to be vetted. It has to be filed. It has to be before the House, and people have to have the

right to offer amendments to strike it. Did that happen yesterday? No, not at all.

Once again, these are the things that the American people are so angry about, and I've got to tell you that it's time for reform, but if anybody thinks reform is going to come from this new majority, they'd better think twice.

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Thank you.

Now it's my privilege to recognize the gentlelady—and I say gentlelady—from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX).

Ms. FOXX. Well, I thank my colleagues tonight for being here on the floor, and especially, I thank my colleague from Georgia for leading this Special Order.

We've talked a little bit about the Constitution; we've touched on it. Our colleague from Tennessee is bringing wonderful energy to this issue of energy tonight, and I am so grateful for his being here because, as he said, he generally is not a very partisan person. He doesn't come here and talk very vociferously about issues that are before the House. He's doing it now, and you can tell he is really is passionate about this because this is a passionate issue for many of us.

Today is Constitution Day, and I think it's very important that we highlight some issues related to the Constitution as they relate to what happened on this floor last night and as to what has been pointed out tonight.

We have not followed the Constitution in the way that we should have followed it. We haven't followed the way the House has operated in the past. We haven't even followed the promises that were made by the Speaker in 2006 when she said this would be the most open Congress, that this would be the most fair Congress. Bills should go to committee. They should come to the floor and be amendable, but none of that has happened.

One of the things that bothers me the most about our not dealing with issues as they relate to the Constitution is how the Congress is trying to blame our President for everything bad that has happened in the last 2 years.

When I go out and talk to schoolchildren especially, I point out to them that the first article in the Constitution, article I, is about the Congress. That is not an accident. The founders wanted the Congress to be the strongest part of our government. We have three branches of government—the legislative, the executive and the judicial branches. They intended the Congress to be the most important. We're the ones who pass the laws. We're the ones who can make things happen in this country and who can make things happen in a hurry, but what the Democrats, who are in charge of the Congress and have been for the past 20 months, want to keep doing is saying, "It's not our fault that these things are happening. It's not our fault."

Ladies and gentlemen, it is their fault, and the blame has to be laid solely at their feet. Not only are they not taking on the responsibility to create more American-made energy, which will help every American in this country, but they seem to be almost anti American energy. We have been proposing that we be pro American energy. They are not.

Mr. MCCOTTER. Will the gentlelady yield for a question?

Ms. FOXX. I will yield for a question from my colleague from Michigan.

Mr. MCCOTTER. You've brought up the Constitution. Previously, we had heard throughout the energy debate that there is about \$10 billion a month being spent in Iraq.

Will the gentlelady please tell the Democratic Congress who controls the power of the purse to appropriate those billions of dollars to Iraq?

Ms. FOXX. As, I think, most people in this country know, it is the House of Representatives. The founders specifically gave the power to the House of Representatives to start revenue bills. It is, of course, the House and the Senate which must vote on all bills, but it is the House of Representatives that must begin revenue bills.

Mr. MCCOTTER. Will the gentlelady please yield for one more impertinent question?

Ms. FOXX. I'd be happy to.

Mr. MCCOTTER. If the Democratic House and the Democratic Senate chose not to appropriate money to Iraq to the tune of \$10 billion a month, could that money be spent there?

Ms. FOXX. No, it could not.

Mr. MCCOTTER. I thank the gentlelady.

Ms. FOXX. The President does not have the power to wage war without the consent of the Congress, and he could not fund any effort. He couldn't fund any department in the Federal Government without the consent of the Congress.

So, again, the founders set it up that way. They wanted the Congress to be the most powerful branch of the government, and the Congress is the most powerful branch.

What has happened in the last 20 months since the Democrats have been in charge of the Congress? Let's look at the unemployment rate. It has gone up. It was very, very low in January of '07. It has gone up over a percentage point, in fact, about a percentage point and a half since the Democrats have been in control. Look at the price of gasoline and how it has gone up since they have been in charge.

What were they doing as these gas prices were going up? Voting on bills like declaring National Passport Month, National Train Day, Great Cats and Rare Canids Act where we appropriated either \$20 million or \$50 million to other countries to help them identify rare cats in their countries. Then

the favorite of most people is the Monkey Safety Act, which also appropriated, I think, about \$50 million to teach people how to handle monkeys safely in this country.

The Congress, the Democrat-controlled Congress, has abrogated its responsibility for taking care of this situation. It has turned its back on the average American, and that is a shame.

Last night, what happened was that a sham bill passed in this House with very little support from our side and with many Democrats voting against it. That was nothing but cover for Democrats. Even the media here in Washington, D.C., the liberal media, has said that. It is only so that Democrats can go home and say, "I voted for more drilling." That's what the Republicans have been asking for, and I voted for more drilling.

What's even worse is that 24 of the Democrats who had signed onto this bipartisan bill, introduced by Representative JOHN PETERSON, who is a Republican from Pennsylvania, and Representative NEIL ABERCROMBIE, who is a Democrat from Hawaii—the bill is called the Peterson-Abercrombie bill. We offered that as an alternative. It's not a perfect bill. There are a lot of problems with it, but we thought surely the 39 Democrats who were cosponsors of that bill would have voted for it. No. Only 15 of them voted for that bill, and 24 of them voted against it, but they tell their constituents that they are working hard to bring an alternative to the situation. I just want to quote a couple of them on what they said.

Representative NANCY BOYDA, Democrat of Kansas, a freshman here, was a cosponsor of the Peterson-Abercrombie bill, but she voted against it when given the opportunity last night. She said in a press release, though, on the 4th of September:

"I've been working with a large bipartisan group of representatives to develop a comprehensive, commonsense energy bill. Our Peterson-Abercrombie bill will provide sorely needed relief for Kansas families. It will help create energy independence for America and millions of jobs to help stabilize our struggling economy," press release, Representative NANCY BOYDA, Democrat of Kansas.

Now, what our Democratic colleagues think they can do is to tell their constituents one thing and do another on the floor of the House. We are not going to let that happen. We are going to tell the American people what is going on here. Speaker PELOSI has said it will be okay if these people campaign against her and blame her for not having energy legislation. They can go out and promise it, but they don't have to do anything.

We have Representative BARON HILL, Democrat of Indiana. This is in a press release from his office on the 14th of

August 2008 while we were in the midst of being up here every day, telling the American people what the Democrats were doing. This is what his press release said:

“I hope this bipartisan Peterson-Abercrombie bill will, indeed, be brought to the floor for a vote when we return to Washington in September,” Hill said. “It would provide immediate relief while also bolstering the development of new energy sources in order to move this country closer to energy independence.” Representative BARON HILL.

You know, folks, they were right about the Peterson-Abercrombie bill. It would have helped, but that’s not what they voted for last night. They voted for a bill that creates an illusion of doing something and does absolutely nothing.

The last one I’m going to quote is a newspaper article that talks about Representative STEVE KAGEN, also a freshman, who is a Democrat from Wisconsin. This is a newspaper article from the Herald Times in Wisconsin on 9/13/08:

“Kagen, who signed onto the bill Tuesday, said the Abercrombie-Peterson bill ‘really is a comprehensive energy policy and a roadmap forward. That bill has the balance in investing in renewable sources. It raises royalty fees from those who are drilling, and it doesn’t limit drilling to four or five States.’” The title of that article was “Congress Sitting on Energy Hot Seat.”

Ladies and gentlemen, we have to hold people accountable for doing what they promise to do in this country.

□ 2215

Republicans were held accountable in 2006, not just for not doing what they had promised. What we were held responsible for was being part of a party that has a philosophy that we stand for some things. We need to hold these people responsible.

The other thing that I think needs to be pointed out, and this was pointed out during the month of August several times, but not in exactly this way; but the Democrats, while letting average working Americans, all Americans, actually, suffer from the high price of gasoline, but particularly our working friends who are paying high prices and struggling, struggling every day to make ends meet and make it in this country, obey the law and do what is right, the Democrats came to the Congress saying we are going to work every day. We think the Republicans haven’t done all they should do. We are going to work every day. But from the first of August until the end of December they plan to work 14 days. Fourteen days, ladies and gentlemen.

While you are suffering, wondering how you are going to pay your bills, they are going to go home the end of

next week after having worked this week, 4 days last week, maybe only 4 days this week. It may end up being only 13 days. It may end up being only 12 days. They are going to go home and leave you wondering how are you going to pay the bills, pay for the gasoline and deal with the challenges that face you and your family.

That is unacceptable to us as Republicans. That should be unacceptable to every American. We must hold them accountable, and we must make them stay here until we have an energy policy that will bring relief to the American people.

Now I want to yield back to my colleague from Georgia, Mr. WESTMORELAND.

Mr. WESTMORELAND. I want to thank the gentlewoman from North Carolina.

As she showed on this chart here with the unemployment rate going from a little less than 4.5 percent up to over 6.1 percent, the correlation, if you will notice, is with the gas prices. All this has happened since the new Democratic majority took over.

When we look at this unemployment, we wonder is it because of record energy prices? Is it because of increased labor costs because of the minimum wage increase? Is it the assault on companies that are making too much profit? Is it the trade agreements that have been ignored? Is it the new government mandates on everything from cars to light bulbs that could be causing this unemployment rate to go up?

We need to talk about that for just a minute, and I recognize the gentleman from Tennessee.

Mr. WAMP. One final point. I was here in the late nineties when we balanced the Federal budget, and about 5 years ago I gave a speech at the National Press Club talking about how the budget got balanced. Because while a lot of people would like to believe that we somehow cut spending to balance the budget, that didn’t happen. We slowed the growth of spending below inflation for the first time in a generation. But why the budget got balanced was because revenues surpassed expenses with a robust U.S. economy, driven principally by the information sector, the likes of Bill Gates and Microsoft and us leading the world. So the speech I gave was we could do the same thing again with energy technology, with new energy solutions.

I have got to tell you now, before we leave there is going to be another push by the new majority for a second stimulus bill, and their idea of an economic stimulus is to extend unemployment benefits and to give some assistance for low income energy, which is going to be needed because this winter home heating fuel is going to be through the roof, even worse than it was last year.

But I will tell you, the most important thing we could do for the econ-

omy, again, is throw the ball deep, pass the American Energy Act, go after all the energy sources we can, create many manufacturing jobs, lead the world with our innovation with our manufacturing, with our technology deployment, throw it deep, and we could balance the budget again with a robust U.S. economy.

But as it sputters, the worst thing we can do is lock our energy resources and kind of cower down and say how can we borrow our way into prosperity? How can we bail out into prosperity? How can we just give people money?

No, we need to invest in these energy resources we have and the new technologies and all the new ideas. And nuclear, we ought to lead the world in nuclear production and not be caught in a Three Mile Island time warp of 30 years ago. Gracious, what do we have to be afraid of, our own energy and our own country? This is asinine. And we need to do that for the economy right now.

Governor Sarah Palin is saying it tonight. We ought to be saying it and doing it. We have got it in Alaska. We have it off the coast. We have got nuclear. We have the capability.

Energy, national security and the environment are together the most important challenges we face. So this is not process. This is not just a debate on the floor. This is our future, and this is whether or not our way of life is extended to the next generation. That is how important energy is tonight. We have got to stay and we have to fight for the American people here, because, frankly, they are being stymied on the floor of the House of Representatives.

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Just to follow up on that, we have shale, we have natural gas and we have the need for refineries. Not a new refinery has been built in this country. And those are good paying, mostly union jobs that are here. Those are good paying jobs that we are causing people to go to Nicaragua, Venezuela, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, other parts of the world to even have employment.

I recognize the gentleman from Michigan.

Mr. MCCOTTER. I thank the gentleman. Earlier the gentleman from Tennessee had mentioned that we are going to be looking at the prospect of a speculators bill on the floor again. My question is, regardless of the merits of the speculators bill, it is a simple proposition to anyone watching.

We have heard much debate about energy policy. I remember hearing much of this back in a very unpleasant period of our Nation’s history called the 1970s. What is old is new again. So when we hear about the speculators bill, the Democratic Congress, the Democratic majority, had come in with a reputation for being against the production of American domestic energy. Again, it was not limited to the technique of drilling. Clean coal, nuclear

energy, all sorts of alternatives they were opposed to.

Now, if you were investing your money in the energy market and you saw the anti-American energy party take power in Washington, and you understood the concept of supply and demand, that as demand goes up, if supply stays stagnant, prices skyrocket, it doesn't take a rocket scientist to know that when the Democratic majority came into Washington, it was against the domestic production of America's own energy resources, that something was going to give and the prices were going to shoot through the roof and you were going to make a lot of money.

So, again what you see is the total denial of responsibility for their policies, many of which have failed to be implemented, having an impact on markets. Just as we will hear later on, or throughout the rest of the year, the 12 days or so that they even show up for the work they are paid to do, is when you promise the largest tax increase in American history in your budgets, when your chairman of the Ways and Means Committee talks about the "mother of all tax increases," this is going to have affect on markets.

This is going to have an effect on the rational, hard-working Americans, who every day know that as much as they scrimp and save, here comes big brother government to take that money right out of your pocket. So consequences of ideas, or even bad ideas especially, can be detrimental to the average, hard-working American.

Now, you and I, through the Chair the gentleman from Georgia, we know one thing: The best economic stimulus for the United States of America is an all-of-the-above energy strategy that gets that trend line on energy prices stabilized and going down so that the unemployment numbers can stabilize and start going down; so speculators start losing money because the supply of oil will be coming online and they know it; so big oil doesn't make the money as the supply floods the market to meet the demand and the prices stabilize and go down; so hard-working Americans know they are not going to have to choose between freezing and eating, they are not going to have to worry about whether they can drive to see their doctor in rural areas; so they can make sure they still work in manufacturing because the fixed cost of energy hasn't driven their job offshore or killed it altogether.

We know this, which is why we are so passionate about helping the people who have entrusted us with the opportunity to serve them in this, their House.

I will wrap it up with this, the gentleman from Georgia. There are many people who say, Republicans, you weren't great. You told us you stood for things. You told us you believed our

liberty was from God, not the government; our prosperity was from the private sector, not the public sector.

Yes, we did, and we did not do a good enough job keeping with our principles.

There is a difference between us and this Democratic majority. I want to know what the succinct enunciation of the principles upon which you base policy are. Because what I see in the energy debate, or lack thereof, and the Democrat sham energy bill is a quite simple proposition. They support the government rationing of American energy. You will get 12 percent when you are suffering. We will lock up 88 percent forever. That is the gist of their argument.

Why does this matter now? Because you hear more of the same promises that the gentleman from Georgia listed and had proven broken. And when you start to do your thinking this year, as the American people are want to do, I will be more than happy if the American voters judge this Democratic Congress not by the fact that it took America in a new direction to a 9 percent approval rating, which technically makes the Democratic Congress the most hated in American history; I want Americans to look at two numbers.

I want Americans to look at the price of gas when the Democratic Party took power in January of 2007, promising to lower them; and I want them to look at the price of gas, oh, maybe around early November 2008. And tell you me if you have changed your mind, if you no longer think this Democratic Congress deserves to be the most hated in American history. Because they have a chance to work with us. We are putting politics aside. We will compromise in a real bipartisan fashion to help the people whole elected us.

But if you refuse, there is nothing we can do, because, as the gentleman started out earlier, the math doesn't add up in our favor.

Mr. WESTMORELAND. I want to thank the gentleman for that. I have just a few minutes to close. I appreciate all the kind folks that came here tonight to help me with this.

But I want to bring up one other thing that will characterize what the Democratic majority has said. I have already quoted Mr. KANJORSKI on "we sort of stretched the truth and the people ate it up." I read you quotes from then Minority Leader PELOSI, now Speaker PELOSI, and the things that the American people were told, Mr. Speaker, to be able to gain the majority.

But I want to tell you something that is a little more fascinating, and we will have to talk about this again. This Congress passed a card check bill. We all like to be in the privacy of the voting booth. Even if somebody asks you how you are going to vote, you say, hey, that is a personal matter. Be-

cause a lot of times the polls will say one thing, the election results are something else, because people get in that voting booth and they decide to do something else; or it may not have been the popular thing to talk about with the people they were with.

We passed a card check bill that said if you wanted to become unionized it would have to be an open vote; not anymore a secret ballot, but an open vote. They passed this in this Congress. The bill was introduced by Mr. GEORGE MILLER.

But I want to read you a letter he sent to the Mexican Government in 2001. "We understand that the secret ballot is allowed but not required by Mexican labor law. However, we feel that the secret ballot is absolutely necessary in order to ensure that workers are not intimidated into voting for a union they might not otherwise choose. We respect Mexico as an important neighbor and trading partner, and we feel that the increased use of the secret ballot in union recognition elections will help bring real democracy to the Mexican workplace."

They want to bring democracy to the Mexican workplace, but they want our guys not to have that same democracy that they want the Mexican workers to have. This is right in line with everything that we have heard tonight.

This Congress is being controlled by big labor, by environmentalists and by trial lawyers. If you fit into one of those groups, then you should be doing very well. If not, you are like all the rest of us; you are suffering at the pump, you are worried about how you are going to pay your high home heating oil bill, you are worried about your job as the unemployment rate is skyrocketing with the price of gas. You are living under the failed systems we have had in this body. And remember, they have 235 Members. It only takes 218 to pass something out of this House.

Quit whining. Get out of the fetal position and do something for the American people.

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#### LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN (at the request of Mr. HOYER) for today on account of a funeral in her district.

Mr. DREIER (at the request of Mr. BOEHNER) for today on account of the death of his mother.

Mr. POE (at the request of Mr. BOEHNER) for today after 5 p.m. and the balance of the week on account of continuing recovery efforts after Hurricane Ike.

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#### SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

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