

AMERICA'S IMMIGRATION POLICY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, before I pass this microphone over to my good friend and colleague, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. HAYWORTH), I cannot help but express some of the frustration with sitting here and listening to this. I am really grateful that the American people do not have the same sentiment that I have heard tonight on the floor of Congress.

When I go to the coffee shop and to the break room in my district, I do not hear anything like this rhetoric that I have heard here tonight.

When I hear that we have cut food stamps, I was involved in that. We did not cut food stamps. What we did was we changed the regulations so you have to be on some other kind of benefit so there was less fraud. There is \$1 billion of fraud going into the wrong people in food stamps just in the last year that I have a report. We only touched about 20 percent of the fraud, Mr. Speaker.

Fuel prices. Help us open up drilling on the outer continental shelf. Help us drill in ANWR. Let us develop the energy that we have in this country, and we will not be looking at \$3 dollar fuel. We know who is to blame. It is the environmental extremists. And if Exxon Mobil made \$10 billion in the last quarter, let us take a look and see where they invest it. If they invest it in that drilling, the American people will reap the benefits.

There are a whole series of things here tonight, Mr. Speaker, and that frustrates me greatly. But I wanted to talk a little bit about the immigration issue.

I would ask my friend, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. HAYWORTH) if he would pick that issue up.

Mr. HAYWORTH. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from Iowa; and before I get to the topic at hand, I, too, would like to offer a few observations about the preceding presentation in the people's House.

Those who have heard me speak from time to time know that quite often I cite the observation of that great American author, Mark Twain, who said, history does not repeat itself, but it rhymes. In the preceding hour, here on the floor of the people's House, we may have heard from the, quote, 30-Something Coalition, but it was that same old something, those tired and shop-worn charges, those assertions that the American people can only regard, to put it diplomatically, as unrealistic.

We heard a Member from Florida talk about cuts in school lunch programs. We heard a Member from Massachusetts repeat what was a blatantly false charge about Medicare withering on the vine, when in fact the discussion had to do with the bureaucrats in a four letter organization felony as HICFA.

Indeed, there are fundamentally different ways to address the challenges we confront. My friends on the left honestly and sincerely believe that Government is the answer; and though their rhetoric is devoid of it, they seem to be concerned with budgets that affect the care and feeding and the propagation of Washington bureaucrats and the employees' unions they engender rather than solving real problems affecting real people.

It is somewhat mind-boggling to hear the same old charges; and it is interesting, the selective memory of those on the left. For it was one of their celebrated leaders, John F. Kennedy, who said a rising tide lifts all boats, who said that by reducing taxation across the board and allowing the American people to save, spend and invest their own money economic prosperity can result.

And that is not a partisan argument, nor was it the sole domain of Jack Kennedy. Indeed, whether it was Calvin Coolidge or Jack Kennedy or Ronald Reagan or, more recently, George W. Bush, working with this governing majority in Congress, letting the American people have and keep more of their own money to save, spend and invest, we in fact have had an economic rebirth through the difficulties of 9/11, through the challenges posed by the natural disasters.

The American economy continues to grow. Are there challenges? You bet. Are there challenges we confront in energy? Absolutely. But the key is, as I was happy to offer, tax credits for solar energy in our sweeping energy bill, as many of us have embraced and asked us to take a look at new technologies, neither do we abandon the notion of maximizing existing supplies, using rational conservation and moving forward.

Of course, it cannot begin to compare with outlandish charges. This gets to the crux of the challenge. We have an awesome responsibility. It is to help govern this country. Our friends on the left, be they 30-something, or 40-something or 50-something, or 60-something, choose not to join us in governing. They choose to carp and complain and issue malicious and libelous charges. They offer no plan. They offer complaints.

In stark contrast, our governing majority has a plan to bring budget reform that results in real savings. And yet, even as they decry what they call fiscal irresponsibility, they attack the reform process that results in real savings.

One note about the incorrect information on student loans. We actually increased money going to students. We tightened down the margins on the lenders. We do not hurt the students. But, of course, our friends on the left always equate compassion with the amount of money taken from the American people to go to Washington bureaucrats; and I believe, regardless of the age, regardless of the time, that

is precisely the wrong formula. Just as they mistakenly address compassion by the number of people on welfare. No, true compassion is the number of people who leave the welfare rolls and go to work.

And for those who cite curious cases played up in the dominant media culture about CIA agents who send spouses on trips around the world to offer talking points in a partisan campaign and somehow defend that and seem to act as if there is no connection between the former, thank goodness, the former dictator of Iraq who now sits in a prison cell awaiting trial and other perpetrators of islamofascism, for those who would so readily forget the lessons of 9/11, we say to the American people, yes, the challenges are grave. We live in challenging times. But we dare not shrink from the challenge and make the curious divorcement of, oh, yes, we support our troops but not the conflict.

As one observer explained, that is like saying, gee, I support a football team. I just do not want them to win the game.

Were it so simple to compare war to a game, but we know something far more serious is at stake. We know over very national survival is at stake; and we believe that we should support our troops, yes, and work for an outcome that results in victory.

That brings us to the subject at hand tonight, our border security and our national security. And despite the prattlings of the preceding hour, in many ways our Commander in Chief has answered the call in the wake of 9/11.

But when it comes to the border issues, the fact is the record is troubling, and it results in constructive criticism. Just as many within our party offered constructive criticism about the selection of a Supreme Court judge, reasonable people can offer constructive criticism.

Item. Congress Daily, this morning, Thursday, November 3, Homeland Secretary unveils border security initiative. Homeland Security Secretary Chertoff Wednesday rolled out a multi-year plan to secure the Nation's border and reduce illegal immigration, dubbing the proposal as the, quote, enforcement complement to President Bush's temporary guest worker program.

□ 2130

Constructive criticism number one, in accompanying documents released yesterday in Houston, Texas, Secretary Chertoff said his Department had a 5-year plan to gain operational control of the borders.

Mr. Speaker, the American people and our Nation cannot wait 5 years for operational control of our borders. The attacks of 9/11 came almost a half decade ago. Are we then to wait 10 years in wartime to secure our borders? That is wrong. That is the wrong time table. Border security at once because border

security is synonymous with national security.

The other troubling aspect of the dispatch in this morning's Congress Daily, the enforcement complement to President Bush's temporary guest worker program.

Mr. Speaker, I have introduced, and my colleagues who join me tonight on this floor have sponsored, the Enforcement First Initiative. The American people demand enforcement first. Call it putting the cart before the horse, but those who talk about a guest worker program have it exactly backwards. What we should do is enforce existing laws, close loopholes and then and only then engage in a debate about guest worker programs.

Indeed, this debate about border security, national security, illegal immigration, and the euphemism that accompanies it of undocumented workers, an Orwellian turn of phrase if there ever was one because many of these alleged undocumented have documents galore, and should we also point out that under the existing framework we have visa programs literally from A to Z under the existing legal framework, but again back to the situation at hand.

A fair question could be posed in this fashion: If people are not obeying existing laws, what makes us think they would obey any new laws? So Enforcement First offers a comprehensive approach saying that this government shall enforce existing law and that we shall work to eliminate loopholes that exist that result in the gaming of our system, that result in the drain on taxpayers and that deny this fundamental truth that even those who may profoundly disagree with us who preceded us here in the well certainly have to embrace and that is that this is a Nation of laws.

Therefore, if we are a Nation of laws and a Nation of immigrants, immigration should occur within a legal framework, not through the machinations of illegal schemes and scams that threaten our national security.

Why do I say that? Well, one need look only so far as the testimony in open session in the other body from our former colleague Porter Goss, now Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, joined by others, who offered the testimony that their major concern is that someone meaning to do harm to this Nation might utilize our porous border to do so, to come here illegally. Indeed, we have seen other reports that al Qaeda operatives and others who embrace Islamofascism have instructed their minions on a mission in this hemisphere to seek to gain entry to the United States through our porous southern border.

The Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation in testimony before a House subcommittee chaired by our friend, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CULBERSON), confirmed the gentleman from Texas's (Mr. CULBERSON) assertion that illegals who come from na-

tion-states embracing Islamofascism have attempted to gain entry into our country by blending into the mass exodus north of illegals and utilizing Hispanic surnames.

Mr. Speaker, I offer these words not to sow the seeds of panic, but instead to offer a renewal of a sense of purpose in the wake of 9/11, mindful of the challenges a sovereign Nation of laws confronts. We must have heightened border security. It leads to greater national security. There must be internal enforcement. There must be a closing of loopholes, and that is the idea behind the notion of Enforcement First.

So, Mr. Speaker, I say respectfully and diplomatically to the Secretary of Homeland Security, enforcement is not a commitment to a guest worker program. Enforcement is the long overdue step to protect our Nation from external threats in a time of war. And then once we do that, we can effectively discuss a guest worker program.

My friend from Iowa who was very gracious to yield time. I will remain, but I want to yield back to him because other friends join us tonight during this hour.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. HAYWORTH) for his eloquent presentation on a lot of things that all us that we heard about here tonight and also the border control and the immigration issue and the future of our country.

As I listen to that group that comes here nearly every night, and it was interesting to see the gray hair amongst the 30-somethings that we had, it is extraordinarily depressing to hear that viewpoint. I happened to at random bounce across some Web pages that must be the perpetrators of that kind of thought process because it just does not connect with the rational reality of what is going on here with our authorization bills, our appropriations bills, the responsibility that we have, the fiscal responsibility, the vision we have for America. And I do not think that you could read the facts and connect the lingo that is coming from the other side and measure the two together. But it is depressing and I think sometimes that if I felt like that I do not think I could get out of bed every morning and go to work in this place and drag everybody else down when we are trying to lift this country up.

Their vision seems to be, I will say, surrender and get out of Iraq, turn that over to Zarqawi, let that be a terrorist center for the world. Let them come in here and attack us whenever they want. Do not take any self-defense mechanism. Soak the rich. Starve the businesses. Get rid of the jobs. And the list goes on and on and on of the lamentations that we heard.

We are an optimistic party. Even though when they say the name of our party it comes off as profanity, it really is an optimistic party. We have always reached for the stars and brought this country forward. The tax cuts that

we did turned this economy around from the depths of September 11's trough and, in fact, this year we have \$274 billion in additional revenue beyond what was calculated by CBO and anticipated because of the tax cuts that we provided, and we need to make them permanent.

On the immigration issue, which is our subject here tonight, that is important to our national security issues, the issue of the citizenship and immigration services and the job that they are supposed to be doing and the great difficulty they have in carrying out that task, the internal problems that they have, we have the gentleman on my left from Virginia (Mr. GOODE), and I would be happy to yield to him.

Mr. GOODE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING), and I thank the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. HAYWORTH) for their comments here tonight. I certainly learned a lot from both gentlemen and appreciated what they had to say, particularly on the immigration issue.

I want to talk a little bit before talking about illegal immigration about something that occurred just the other day in the Rayburn Building. We had a meeting of the Immigration Reform Caucus, and both the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. HAYWORTH) and the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING) are members of that and it is chaired by the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. TANCREDO), who has done yeoman's work on behalf of that group.

We were anticipating hearing from someone from the U.S. Citizen and Immigration Services. Now, as you know, the Department of Homeland Security is the secretarial agency, and underneath that agency is the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. And they are charged with doing a number of different programs, one program of which is the FAST program. And that is involving temporary adjudicators that have been hired to make citizenship and permanent residency decisions. And I agree that the backlog is long and needs to be addressed. But I want to emphasize, I think it is better to take extra time, make sure the investigations are done, have law enforcement personnel there with the investigations to make sure no criminals or terrorists or others that would do us harm come through one of these programs.

Another program is the Focus program, and that involves segregating and reviewing hundreds of pending applications for immigration benefits where there are specific concerns about potential ties to terrorists or terrorist organizations. And this gets us to what occurred in the House office buildings just the other day.

I was coming to the Immigration Reform Caucus meeting anticipating hearing from a law enforcement officer at that meeting and voicing his opinions and letting us have the opportunity to ask questions about the agency and about how they handle these

programs where they make decisions on permanency, residency, citizenship, and granting decisions for these persons who want to come to the United States of America. The handlers of that person would not let us ask questions.

I hope that situation can be rectified and that the Immigration Reform Caucus and other members on different committees will have the opportunity to ask the questions that we want to ask, because, while illegal immigration is probably the number one problem facing the United States of America, we need to be sure that legal immigration is handled in the appropriate way and that programs like FAST and programs like Focus have the appropriate oversight and that the right questions are asked.

I would like to take a few minutes now to focus on the illegal immigration problem. I want to thank, again, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING) and the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. HAYWORTH) for being here tonight talking about this issue. They have been in the trenches for months and years, and this problem is not getting any better. It is only getting worse. But I am thankful because more Members of the House of Representatives are focusing on this problem. We have more Members than ever before introducing legislation addressing different aspects of the problem.

Today, the gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER) introduced legislation that does many things. It is backed by groups such as the Federation of Americans for Immigration Reform; and having mentioned that group, I would also like to thank U.S. Border Control for their efforts in combating illegal immigration, Numbers USA for their efforts against illegal immigration. But our focus today was on a fence all along the southern border.

We have a fence now between California and Mexico south of the city of San Diego. That fence has provided a great barrier to drug smuggling, to terrorists coming into this country, and to stopping the illegal crossing.

□ 2145

We were able to see a picture of pre-fence days and then see a picture of post-fence days. The fence has improved the environment significantly in the San Diego area, and it has enhanced our border security.

What we need to do now is extend the fence from San Diego to Brownsville. There would be port of entries along the fence, but, by doing this, the security that the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. HAYWORTH) talks about that we need in this country would be significantly enhanced.

There were a number of other aspects of this legislation. Currently, we have a policy by the Department of Homeland Security and its immigration services of basically one of catch-and-release. That means if you catch some-

one in this country illegally, because of a lack of facilities to house all of them is a factor, I also think it is a philosophical not wanting to carry out what I believe the law should be in this country, differences among some of us and some of those carrying out that law, of just letting the illegals go. If this legislation passes, those illegally in the country will be committing a violation of law, and they can be caught and detained, not caught and released.

Another aspect of this legislation focuses on the diversity visa program, and that program has been in effect since the mid-years of the Clinton administration, which pushed for it. We had hoped that this program would end within a few years. It has rocked on, and this would end under this bill.

We would also end the 245(i) practice. And now what does 245(i) mean? That means if you come into the country illegally and you get the right letter from an employer or you get the right letter from a relative, that means you can stay here by paying \$1,000. We need to end that practice. 245(i) encourages persons to come across the border illegally. They say we will not have to go through the process. We will not have to be checked out. We will not have to have our background checked. We will not have to present our records and be analyzed before we get into the United States. We will just walk across the border.

Or if they are already here, say we will not have to go back. We will get a 245(i). We will just pay a little extra money, and we will move to the head of the line, and that is unfair. That is unfair to those that wait in line, and it is unfair to the millions of Americans that pay taxes.

Another aspect of this legislation, which is an attempt to compile many different items of legislation into a single bill, some of them are part of legislation that the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. HAYWORTH) has sponsored, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING), and I could list others, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. TANCREDO), the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. DEAL), the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. NORWOOD), the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CULBERSON), the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. SULLIVAN), and I could go on and on. It captures and borrows from these bills, and I have to mention this because I want to salute the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING).

One of his measures says if you are an employer and you hire illegals, then you cannot deduct the cost and the taxes paid on those illegals from your Federal income tax return, and that is the way it should be. The legislation further emphasizes that there shall be no earned income tax credit for illegals. There will be no credit for Social Security for the time that you are illegally in this country.

Under the current situation, if there were to be an amnesty, and I vigorously oppose the amnesty because it

only encourages more illegals to come across the border, if there is an amnesty, you will not be able to go back and recapture the time that you are in the country illegally.

It also focuses on the practice that some who come from across our southern border want to have children in this country. They want to create an American baby because, under our current law, anyone born in the United States of America is an automatic citizen, and that helps those illegally here stay in this country. Under our bill, coming across the border and having a baby of illegal aliens who did not go through the proper process will not grant that child automatic citizenship.

So this is indeed a comprehensive measure that will address illegal immigration, and it is my hope that we will be able to get legislation to the floor of the House of Representatives, hopefully before Christmas, if not, certainly by the first part of next year, so that we can take a stand and send to the American people the message that we are serious about stopping illegal immigration.

We do not want amnesty for illegals. We want to preserve and protect the United States of America. We want border security; and, as the Congressman from Arizona says, we want enforcement first.

If we do that and if we can get the other body and if we can get the executive branch down the road from the United States Capitol to come along and get on this train, America will be safer, will be more prosperous and will be more of a land of opportunity for the hard-working and tax-paying citizens of this country.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODE) for his presentation and with clarity I appreciate.

I want to add that we are taking a look into the functionality and the failure to function in citizenship and immigration services. It is this Congress' responsibility to have oversight. It is this Congress' responsibility to investigate. If we believe there is impropriety in some place, lack of efficiency, we are to bring this all together. This is our responsibility to the taxpayers of America, and it is our constitutional duty.

Because there are a couple of minders there that will not allow an individual to speak, then that does not mean that we are going to back away from this. It just means we are going to resolve the situation eventually in the appropriate fashion, with patience and professionalism. That is the perspective that I think we need to take a look at with this.

I want to touch back on an immigration issue, but the moment that I do that, I want to transition over to the energy policy. So, in the interim, I would be happy to yield a few minutes to the gentleman from Arizona for his concluding thoughts with regard to immigration.

Mr. HAYWORTH. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from Iowa, and I look forward to hearing from our colleague from Pennsylvania who, again in stark contrast to those who preceded us in the well, takes a thoughtful look at the challenges we confront and offers some common-sense solutions, especially in the realm of natural gas and where we are headed as a Nation in terms of energy exploration for existing technologies and, quite frankly, bringing on-line new technologies to deal with energy.

But as I heard both my colleague from Virginia and my colleague from Iowa talk about the spectacle that occurred in the hallway of the Rayburn House Office Building yesterday, I just was astonished by the seeming triumph and insensitivity of the bureaucracy.

Two minders accompanying a law enforcement officer essentially to put him on notice that his role in his employment with the Federal Government could very well be threatened. We have visited totalitarian nations where there are minders who follow us, some very cleverly concealed, some as hotel personnel, but to see that spectacle in this grand republic and see it utilized really to try and supercede the legitimate questions of constitutional officers was very disappointing.

I would echo, Mr. Speaker, the words of my colleague from Iowa, there will be oversight. Count on it. The Congress will live up to its constitutional responsibilities. I will put those Washington bureaucrats on notice, those who believe they can get in the way of constitutional officers doing their jobs, that the people will demand answers through their constitutional representatives. But we understand the answer, in summation to our challenge for national security and border security, it is enforcement first. It is not amnesty. It is not the embrace of putting illegals in the front of the line and making a mockery of an orderly, lawful, immigration process.

Borders are necessary. There is graffiti written in Spanish on one of the borders adjoining my State which reads, Borders are scars upon the earth. Mr. Speaker, borders are not scars upon the earth. Borders are reasonable and necessary to maintain the sovereignty of nation states; and, as the poet wrote, good fences make good neighbors.

I salute the gentleman from Virginia joining with the chairman of the House Armed Services Committee with the True legislation today. I am pleased to be a cosponsor. I thank my friends from Virginia and from Iowa, others within the Immigration Reform Caucus. I thank them for the time, and I look forward with interest to hearing from our colleague from Pennsylvania with references to the challenges we confront here early in the 21st century for this Nation's energy needs.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Arizona and the gentleman from Virginia on this

enlightening discussion we have had on immigration. I am quite pleased that an individual from Arizona would have the phrase, good fences make good neighbors. I thought that was an Iowa phrase.

I want to point out, too, that when you build a fence or a wall to contain people, if you do that to keep them from leaving a place like it might have been East Germany, then that is wrong from a philosophical standpoint. If you have a place that is such an attraction that you build that fence to keep them out, that is a moral thing to do. There is a big difference.

So, the fence in Israel, for example, between the West Bank and Israel proper, that is a fence to protect the people from the folks on the other side that want to come across with bombs. It is not immoral to build a fence to protect yourself from people that are assaulting.

In fact, the southern border in the last year over 1,159,000 illegals that were collared at the border, so to speak. We heard T.J. Bonner, a border patrol, say here a couple of days ago that approximately 4 million came across the southern border during that period of time and we collared 1,159,000. Of those 1,159,000, all but 1,640 of them promised to go back. We cannot verify that any of them went back, but we did actually adjudicate 1,640 of the 1,159,000 to go back to their home country.

So we have got a very small percentage here. The catch-and-release program is real. I got into a little buy-in when I made that statement that it was a seven times catch-and-release program before they were adjudicated for deportation. Some of the bureaucrats took issue with that and wanted to have a meeting. So they brought eight of their people into the room, and the first statement was I am wrong, we need to retract the statement. An hour and 45 minutes later, they admitted that, even though that was not the written policy, it was the practice, and in fact, it might be more than seven times catch-and-release. That is how bad it is.

I want to say just a couple of words about the new IDEA bill that the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODE) mentioned that I have drafted and that we have significant cosponsors on.

It is clear for us, build a fence on the border, beef up the border patrol, but we need domestic enforcement. We know that the administration has not sanctioned a single employer for hiring illegals in the last year. That is an issue that needs to be enforced as well. But, on top of that, how do we dry up the jobs magnet? How do we get a policy in place and get some administration agency that actually is willing to enforce that policy?

So I looked around the country, and I thought who really are the junkyard dogs of bureaucracy? Who likes to go to work and who does their job? Who has a reputation that you know they are going to follow through? The times

I have been audited I can tell you it is the IRS. So I said, well, let us see if we can find a way to get the IRS into this game and enforce this illegal immigration.

So that is where the idea comes from to remove Federal deductibility for wages and benefits that are paid to illegals. Let the IRS come and do a normal audit, and if the employer uses the InstaCheck program so they can verify over the Internet in an instant whether that employee is legal to be hired, go back on the Social Security Administration database and Department of Homeland Security database, come back with a positive hit, hire that person.

We put safe harbor in the bill. If you are a responsible employer, you use InstaCheck, the basic pilot program to verify the employability, then the IRS will not touch you on that hire. But if they run the numbers when they do the audit, use the InstaCheck, and it finds out that the Social Security numbers and the identification does not match anything, then the wages and benefits that you spend on that employee become not a deductible expense but taxable income.

□ 2200

So, for example, if you are a corporation and in a 34 percent tax bracket and you are paying \$10 an hour to illegals, the IRS will come in and say, well, no, that \$10 an hour is not a deduction. We are going to tax that at 34 percent, and we are going to add the interest and penalty on there. Now that becomes about a \$6 an hour penalty on the \$10 an hour person, so now the illegals cost you \$16 an hour. In theory, a least, a legal employee that you could hire for \$16 an hour becomes a rational decision.

As that happens, then the illegals that are here working at this discount rate because it is rational for employers to hire the illegals, they are cheaper for a lot of reasons, it becomes rational instead to say, no, sorry, I cannot put you to work because the IRS sometime in the next 6 years can come back and audit me and I will have to pay the bill. So I might as well pay it to somebody who is here legally for the right reason.

This changes this great migration of four million people pouring across our southern border, and it sends them back again. Because what are they going to do if they cannot get employment here? It is a jobs magnet.

New ideas. It is one piece of many things, as Mr. GOODE spoke about and Mr. HAYWORTH did. So I am part of all of this. I want to stand here with it. If we have any more ideas, I want to hear them all. We need them from the American people. The American people are the ones who will move this Congress, so they need to write letters and send the message, and this Congress will hear you.

So I thank the gentleman on the immigration issue tonight. I also had two

subjects in mind that I feel is important to bring up, and energy is the other one.

As we listened to the minority party on the other side do their 60 minutes of nightly lamentations, we heard about the cost of gas, the cost of energy, and I did make a few remarks about how we can help that cause. But I would point out that I represent maybe the number one corn-producing congressional district in America. If you are going to raise anything, you have to have nitrogen fertilizer to do that. All crops take nitrogen. Corn takes a lot of nitrogen. About 90 percent of the cost of nitrogen fertilizer is the cost of natural gas.

Natural gas has gone up 400 to 500 percent over the last 3 years, and we see the cost of natural gas going in the area of \$14.50 per million BTUs. We look around the world, and Mr. PETERSON will give us more details on this in a moment, and we see not far away, natural gas coming out of Venezuela of \$1.60 compared to the U.S. at \$14.50.

The other day they said they were going to go ahead and build the natural gas pipeline from Alaska down to the lower 48 States. It is 4,700-some miles from the north slope down to Kansas City, the heart of America. Up there, there is 38 trillion cubic feet of natural gas that we know of. There is probably more in ANWR that we will open up, and hopefully we will drill there for oil as well. So, 4,700 some miles from the north slope of Alaska to Kansas City. Build the pipeline down to the lower 48, and we can get 38 trillion cubic feet of natural gas.

Venezuela is making fertilizer and selling it to us now off of gas that costs about \$1.60. Russia is doing the same thing off of natural gas that costs us 95 cents. We are losing our fertilizer industry in America. It does not take very much to control food production if you have control of the fertilizer itself.

But down there in that gulf area, for example, all that gas in Venezuela, Venezuela is 2,700 miles from Kansas City, for example. So that gas is closer. But closer than that yet is all of this natural gas that we have on the Outer Continental Shelf of America, with 200 miles, 406 trillion cubic feet of natural gas.

Now, tell me, would you go to Alaska for 38 trillion cubic feet of natural gas and build a 4,000-some mile pipeline to get it down to the lower 48? Would you go to Venezuela and ship that gas in as liquified natural gas and go through the exchange process and the plants at the terminals that it takes to handle that? Or would you just go down there nice and close, where we already have a system all set up, and plug right into that existing massive quantity of 406 trillion cubic feet of natural gas that we have on the Outer Continental Shelf?

To continue to be hostage to energy prices at \$14.50 per million BTUs when the rest of the world is getting along on numbers like 95 cents or \$1.60. China is up to about \$4 something. But we are

at a great disadvantage. And if we only open up this natural gas marginally, we will only lower the price marginally and we will still pay a great price economically, because we know that energy is the price of everything we have and everything we own.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, I would be happy to yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PETERSON), who is really the lead on this issue, and I am very happy and proud that he has taken this issue to this Congress.

Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Iowa, the gentleman from Virginia, and the gentleman from Arizona for the good job they did bringing up the security issue of this country. The number one issue is immigration enforcement, protecting our borders, and handling that issue in a much better way than we have historically done in this country.

But the economic issue facing this country is the price of energy and the availability of energy. Natural gas is the clean fuel. It is almost the perfect fuel. It is what we heat our homes with. It is what we heat most of our schools, our hospitals, our YMCAs, our churches, our colleges, our universities. Most of our small businesses and mostly all commercial businesses run on that. Many, many industries use it in many, many ways. So 25 percent of the energy in this country is natural gas.

We have heard a lot of discussion about oil and gasoline prices. In fact, on the evening news the American public understands the issue pretty well because it is reported well. But natural gas is not reported well. It is not talked about and not understood much.

Gasoline prices were double, they were at their peak after Katrina. Natural gas prices were 700 percent what they were 5 years ago. Now that is just a huge increase. A gallon of milk would be \$28. I think we would have panic in this country if a gallon of milk were at \$28, yet there is no panic in the country about natural gas, except from those who use a lot of it, but they are having a hard time getting government to listen at any level.

You just heard my friend from Iowa talking about the fertilizer industry and the tremendous amount of energy that is used for fertilizing natural gas. Petrochemical is one of the best-paying industries we have left in America. All the chemicals we buy at the hardware and grocery store, all the chemicals we use in the manufacturing process, one of the basic ingredients is natural gas. Plus, natural gas is used to heat those products and make them in the first place. Most petrochemicals, 40 to 50 percent of the cost of production is natural gas, thus putting them at a huge competitive disadvantage compared to the rest of the world.

Polymers and plastics. We all know how polymers and plastics are such a major part of our life. Almost every-

thing we touch has polymers and plastics as a part of it. Even for you ladies, skin softeners and makeup, the basic ingredient for skin softeners is a product derived out of natural gas.

We heard about the plight of the farmers. The farmers have a real energy issue, because it hits them from when they plant, it hits them when they harvest, it hits them when they dry their grain, using natural gas usually. They just get hit again and again, and it has been very difficult for them to be profitable.

Why is natural gas such an issue? It is not a world price. When we pay \$60 in this country for oil, the whole world does. When we pay \$65, the whole world does. But when we pay \$14.50, we are at 12-something today, we are an island to ourselves. The rest of the world is much cheaper. Europe is under half what we pay. Now, our big competitors, Japan, Taiwan, and China, they are a third of what we pay. When you add cheap labor to those countries and the ability to engineer, they are bright countries, very sophisticated countries, they have learned from us. When you give them another advantage of the energy they use to make products, and especially products that consume a lot of natural gas, you give them this huge advantage.

The rest of the world is under 2. As my colleague said, Russia is 95 cents, and I think North Africa is 80 cents. How can our employers and our companies compete when energy is a large part of their cost and they have to compete with other countries? They cannot. Our large employers are hanging on hoping government will do something about this crisis, and something major. Not tinker, but something major, and soon. Soon.

If we do not, I think Representative PEARCE said a few weeks ago here on the floor that we are going to solve this, that we are going to change this, and we can do it now and save a million or two jobs in this country, some of the best jobs we have left, or we can do it later and hope we can recover, and many of those jobs we will never get back.

How did this happen? Well, for decades, natural gas was two bucks. Oil was \$10. Nothing could compete with that. Renewables could not really grow because those prices were so cheap that nothing could compete. That went on for decades.

Ten years ago, a major shift in policy also happened. Congress legislatively for a time permitted natural gas unlimitedly to be used to make electricity. We used to use make about 6 to 7 percent of our electricity with natural gas, and it was only allowed at peak power. That is early in the morning and into the evening, when we use more electricity than we normally do. You can turn a gas plant on and off, but you cannot do that with coal and nuclear, so gas was allowed to be used for peak power.

Well, they took the prohibition away about 10 years ago; and now 25 percent

of the electricity in this country is made with natural gas.

Well, there were those who predicted that if we did not open up supply that would cause a shortage down the road. And when a few years went by, that is exactly what has happened, because we have it locked up.

How did it get locked up? Well, there was a moratorium many years ago, about 25 years ago, put on by President Bush. It was supposed to be a temporary moratorium where we would have an inventory and that inventory would take a few years. But then he did not win reelection. President Clinton came in, and he extended the moratorium through 2012, and our current President has not touched it.

Shortly thereafter, Congress placed a moratorium on the OCS. So now we have a Presidential moratorium and we have a legislative moratorium that has been preventing the production of natural gas on the Outer Continental Shelf for about 20 some years.

Now, what is the Continental Shelf? Well, the first three miles of our offshore is owned by the States and then from 3 to 200 miles is owned by the Federal Government. So 200 miles is what is called the Continental Shelf, and that is where many countries produce a huge amount of their energy because there is lots of it there.

Now many feel that that 400 trillion cubic feet that was mentioned is way underestimated. Because the work that was done was over 30 years ago, and the measuring devices we have today, the seismographic instruments, are so much more accurate. But government has prevented that from being done.

We actually had a bill that the State of Florida prevented from passing so we could not measure. In fact, the current energy bill had a measurement in there but did not have funding in it, so it was a paper measurement, which I do not know how you do that. We were not going to be able to spend any money. But they are protesting that measurements not be done today, the State of Florida.

Now Canada, a very environmentally sensitive country, the U.K., Belgium, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, New Zealand and Australia, they all produce both gas and oil. We are only talking about natural gas, but they produce both gas and oil on their Continental Shelf, and that is really where most of the world does it.

Now what is the advantage of that? I think my friend from Iowa said that very well. It is where the population is. As you go up and down our coastlines, and 85 percent of our coastline today is part of the moratorium. We only have 15 percent we produce in. That is where the population is. We do not have to build 5,000 mile high-pressure expensive lines. You just hook into the cities where the population base is and then hook into the system that is already serving them that comes in from Texas and Oklahoma and the gulf, and the system is hooked together. It is by far,

by far the best place we can produce and produce quickly.

Now why are we doing that? Well, number one, it is the Florida delegation; and the government of Florida has had a huge influence in this body. They have actually prevented it, and they are currently opposing all measures to open up the Outer Continental Shelf.

We have the Peterson-Abercrombie plan, and I think my friend from Iowa is a sponsor of that, and what we want to do is to move the moratorium. We want to give the States control of the first 20 miles. You can only see production for about 12 miles. So, after 12 miles, even from a tall building, you cannot see it. So we will say, all right, States can control 20 miles, both gas and oil. From 20 miles out, gas will be open for production in all the Outer Continental Shelf. And Florida will be included. They should help out, too. And then oil would be left up to the States, and they could petition the Department of the Interior to remove the moratorium on oil if they so chose to.

That gives us a huge opportunity to produce the gas that is needed, in my view, to give our industries and give our citizens the ability to have affordable natural gas to heat our homes, to run our businesses and fuel the big industries that are going to leave this country.

There has never been a natural gas production well that has ever harmed a beach or that has ever been a problem even on land. A natural gas well is a six-inch hole in the ground. You put a steel casing in cement at the bottom and at the top, and you let gas out into a pipeline.

This is not a threat to any environment. It is not a threat to creatures. In fact, in the gulf, the best fishing is where we produce both oil and gas, and all the fishermen will tell you that.

I keep hearing about all this potential pollution. And then someone said the other day in a debate it would be 7 to 10 years before we could get production. It will take a few years, but it will not take 7 to 10 years. That was a very inaccurate statement.

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Now, what is interesting about Florida, which is really the opposition here, they use 233 times more natural gas, they are huge users, than they produce; and they sit in the best, most fertile fields of the country. All around them are huge fields of natural gas and some of the best natural gas, and they are not only not wanting us to produce it, but they have actually prevented us from leasing tract 181, which was not under moratorium and that was scheduled to be released under the Clinton administration to be leased and has not been leased today due to much of the protesting of Florida. And that is unfair to the rest of this country.

I love my friends from Florida who are here. They are great people. But the Florida government leadership, the

Florida State government leadership, in my view, has been very wrong on this issue and has not only prevented production off their shores but has really prevented production that was very vital to this country's economic future and prevented us from having the gas reserves we need so that prices could be normal. If natural gas prices were normal, we could be expanding the use of it.

I have a bus system in State College, Pennsylvania that is all natural gas. Today they are paying a premium to do that. In all the cities all of our buses, all of our school buses, our transit systems, all of our taxi cabs, our short-haul vehicles, our service trucks could all be on natural gas, and we would have cleaner air in the cities, and some of those cities could reach clean air attainment.

Natural gas can be the bridge to our future. It can be the bridge to renewables or a bigger part of our energy portfolio. There are so many ways natural gas can displace other fuels, especially oil and our need for oil. It can displace the need for more refineries if we fuel part of our transportation system with clean burning natural gas.

And one other fact on Florida, 75 percent of the electricity they use is generated by natural gas, and that is because just recently they tore down their coal plants and went to natural gas.

I want to share with the Members, though the Florida delegation and the Florida State government is vehemently against any change, here is what the Associated Industries of Florida said recently in a letter to MMS, the Mineral Management Service: "We appreciate that MMS is going to be reviewing all of the current OCS areas, including the areas that have until now been off limits due to the moratorium, which include the Atlantic, Pacific, and Eastern Gulf of Mexico regions. Research documents that these areas hold substantial undiscovered but technically recoverable energy resources that will be absolutely critical to America's national security and to the continued growth of our economy and to securing jobs for virtually every sector of our economy."

Now, the Associated Industries of Florida gets it. They go on to say: "If America doesn't look to expanding exploration and drilling in these OCSs, then America will unnecessarily pay a high price," like we are today, "and incur a heavy burden. The U.S. Energy Information Administration forecasts that by 2025 petroleum demand will increase by 39 percent and natural gas demand will increase by 34 percent."

Higher energy prices have exacted a toll on our economy already by slowing our growth from between .5 percent to 1 percent based on pre-hurricane prices. Farmers have paid \$6 billion more for energy in the last 2 years. Natural gas costs for the chemical industry in America have increased by \$10 billion since 2003. And of the 120 chemical

plants being built around the world with price tags of \$1 billion or more each, only one is being built in the United States.

"As a result, Associated Industries of Florida recommends to the MMS that expanded lease sales are important to our country, to our citizens, and to our way of life. To not utilize all of our available energy resources, when it can be accomplished in an environmentally sensitive way, would be a disservice to our country. We need to ensure that we have a bright future by adopting an expansive OCS leasing program."

Osram Sylvania, a big company that owns a lot of plants in this country, here is what they said: "In the past 5 years, we have seen natural gas prices escalate from \$3 per MCF to well over \$10 on the spot market. As compared to natural gas costs in 2000, our bills in 2005 will be \$24 million higher."

Mr. Speaker, again, I thank the gentleman for yielding to me.

THE 30-SOMETHING GROUP: THE DEMOCRATIC BUDGET PROPOSAL

THE SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, first I want to thank the Democratic leader (Ms. PELOSI) of California for the opportunity to spend some time talking about the issues of concern to Americans across this country, and as a member of the 30-something Democrats, and I know I will be joined by my colleagues in a few moments, we have appreciated hearing from the literally hundreds of Americans both in our generation and across the generational spectrum over the last weeks since we have been talking about those issues on the floor here.

My good friend from Pennsylvania, I cannot help but spend a few moments talking about some of the matters that he has just addressed, being that I am a Representative of the State of Florida; and I had an opportunity to engage in a very interesting and informative and timely dialogue with the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PETERSON) just yesterday.

Unfortunately, the industry organization that he just cited, which he also cited in our debate the other night, Associated Industries of Florida, that is not an organization, if the Members are familiar with Florida politics, that is at all representative of the average business organization in our State. Associated Industries of Florida is primarily made up of the most major corporations in Florida. Every major oil company is a member of Associated Industries. So it makes quite a bit of sense that the opinion of Associated Industries would reflect what Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania just described.

Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania advocates for more drilling off the coast of

Florida, California, all around the coastline of our country. He particularly focuses on natural gas and professes that natural gas is a clean-burning gas and that there would be little to no risk to expanding that drilling. Well, when one is a representative from the State of Florida, and we have 77 million people who visited our State just last year alone and \$56.5 billion in taxable sales is generated by tourism, most of which is the result of our beautiful beaches and our pristine coastline, one can clearly see why most Floridians would have a significant problem with the possibility of there being oil rigs off our beaches within the eyesight of tourists or our residents.

And Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania has continually represented that natural gas is a potential alternative energy source. Well, just off the Florida coastline, the Minerals Management Service, which is a government agency under the Department of the Interior, has documented that there is only about a 70-day supply of natural gas off the coastline of Florida in the gulf under current consumption rates in the United States. That to me does not appear to take us into the rest of the century in terms of dealing with our energy needs.

What we should be doing is uniting as Members of Congress representing this country and dealing with our long-term energy crisis by exploring alternative energy sources, not going to the same old energy sources and trying to drill our way out of this problem. Drilling is not the solution. There is far too much environmental risk to drilling, whether we are drilling for natural gas or drilling for oil; and the proposal that we will be considering that is attached to the budget reconciliation bill, the budget-cut document that we will be considering, at the earliest, next week, includes a terrible proposal that would expand drilling off the coastline of Florida and bring drilling within 125 miles of Florida's coast on the gulf.

That is a totally inappropriate proposal. It makes absolutely no sense. It would jeopardize our environment, and I am hopeful that my colleagues from Florida and other colleagues who represent coastal communities which will also be in jeopardy if this provision passes will join us in opposing this budget reconciliation bill, not the least of which, because there are many other reasons why it should be opposed because of the dire cuts that are in the budget that are going to rain terror down on Americans across this country; but to add insult to injury, it also has a terrible provision in it that would allow drilling off the coastline around our entire country.

So with that having been said, I want to talk a little bit about what we talked about in the previous hour and turn the conversation back to the budget reconciliation bill. There are a number of significant problems with the budget cuts that the Republican

leadership is proposing. But one of the things that I wanted to turn to is what Democrats think we should be doing in terms of the budget.

Democrats want to bring the budget back into balance. What we proposed in the Budget Committee today included a proposal that would bring the budget back into balance by 2012. The Democratic budget also has a smaller deficit than the Republican budget every year and would accumulate less debt and waste fewer resources on interest payments that are needed to service the national debt. We would include budget enforcement measures to protect Social Security.

We would do more for education. The Democratic proposal provides \$4.5 billion more for appropriated education and training programs than the Republican budget for 2006 and \$41 billion more over the next 5 years. We also reject the \$21 billion in cuts that the Republican budget requires the Education and Workforce Committee to make over the next 5 years. Those are cuts that could fall on students loans and school lunches.

These are not the same old tired complaints. It is insulting to suggest that cutting school lunches and financial aid are tired complaints. If one is struggling to be able to give their children breakfast and lunch on a daily basis and make sure that they are provided with nutrition and they do not financially have the ability to ensure that they can do it themselves, staring down budget cuts that take that opportunity away from them is nothing short of cowardly. This is a cowardly budget reconciliation bill. It does not show any guts at all, and it abandons the American people.

Let us talk about housing. In the previous hour, we talked a little bit about the housing cuts that this budget-cut bill would hand down, and I am joined by my good and close friend whom I had an opportunity to serve with in now three different Chambers, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK). His district and my district were hit badly by a category 3 storm last week, Hurricane Wilma; and we were talking in the last hour about housing and the issues related to affordable housing that our constituents were already facing.

I want to just point out this picture here. Over the weekend I had an opportunity to go door to door in my district because there are so many senior citizens trapped in their homes without power. We still have half a million people who do not have power in south Florida. And, unfortunately, whether it is because of hurricane fatigue or just the fact that there was so much damage in the gulf coast region that it may be difficult to feel the pain that we are going through in south Florida and understand it, but there is not nearly as much attention as we need focused on what happened in south Florida.

When I was going to door to door in my district to try to help some of the folks who have trouble getting out of