Constitution forbids a speech police by Congress.

George Washington said it very well when he said, ''If the freedom of speech is taken away, then dumb and silent we may be, led like sheep to the slaughter.''

And, finally, Voltaire, who lived right at the time that our revolution began, he said, ''I disapprove of what you say but I will defend to the death your right to say it.''

It's important and incumbent upon Congress that we make sure that we have open, free and even volatile, if necessary, discussion of America's issues, which are politics and religion, because that is the type of country we are, and that is what our Constitution and the first amendment stand for.

And that's just the way it is.

PEAK OIL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. BARTLETT) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland. Mr. Speaker, today oil's about $93 a barrel. It was higher than that a couple of days ago. If you look at CNBC, they're still scrolling it in red which means it's kind of out of previous limits.

There are two bills before the Congress, and I want to mention those before we start. These would be pretty good bills if we were offering them 25 years ago, but this is not 25 years ago. And I would submit that these bills are woefully inadequate to address the challenges that we have today. Let me just mention briefly what's in these bills, and I will note and I hope you will agree after we've spent these few minutes together that these bills do little more than nibble at the margins of the problem.

Our children, our grandchildren looking back on today will wonder how could we ever have thought that these bills would address the enormous challenge that we face today in energy.

H.R. 3221, the House-approved omnibus energy bill, which they say promotes efficiency and renewable energy, it includes a controversial renewable portfolio standard and a net tax increase, but it excludes increases in CAFE standards, the standards that we set for how many miles per gallon you're going to get from your car or your pick-up truck, and it also excludes mandated volume increases in biofuels.

Now, the Senate bill does quite the opposite. It increases CAFE standards and a mandated volume increase in biofuels, but excludes a renewable portfolio standard and the tax provisions.

Now, President Bush wisely has indicated that he's going to veto either one of these bills, or a combination of these bills that might come out of conference.

I note these two bills before we begin our discussion because I hope you will agree with me when we have finished our discussion that they might have been pretty good bills to start down the road that we should have been traveling for 25 years, but they're woefully inadequate to meet the challenges of today's world.

Here we have a chart which I think kind of says it very well. Here is the fellow standing by the very shrunken gas pump here because our supplies are down. He has a huge SUV beside him. He asks, ''Just why is gas so expensive?'' Gas is expensive because the demand is exceeding the supply. As a matter of fact, the world production of oil has now held constant for about 30 months, but the world's demand for oil has been steadily going up. So if you look back over the last 30 months, the price of oil has been doing exactly what you would suspect the price of oil has been doing. It's been going up because the supply has been constant and the demand has been going up.

Mr. Speaker, it was absolutely inevitable that today or some day like today near this date in history that we would be here talking about $95 oil.

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If you listen to the experts out there, they are telling you that they expect, in the next few days, that it will go through $100 per barrel.

The next chart is one that kind of puts this in perspective. Let's just refer to the upper chart. The upper chart looks back through only about a little less than 400 years. But if we extended this on to the left here about another 7,000 years, we would have gone through all of the recorded history of man, and it would look just like it looks here. In this scale, the amount of energy that we were using in 1630 and 1650 is hardly wider than a line, so it's hard to distinguish the baseline here from the energy that we were producing.

Then the Industrial Revolution started, and it started with the steam engine and that sort of thing and wood, of course. That's the brown line there. Then you see that we found coal and, boy, we produced a lot more energy with coal, so the Industrial Revolution roared on. It was stuttering when we discovered oil. Boy, then did it take off. Just look at that curve and how sharp that curve is.

If we had another curve here on population increase in the world, it would mirror this, follow this pretty exactly. For thousands of years, through 8,000 years of recorded history up until fairly recent history, the population of the world was somewhere between half a billion and 1 billion people. Now that population has exploded until there are nearly 7 billion people in the world. By the way, nearly 2.5 billion of them are in India and China.

Notice one other thing about this curve. Look what happened back in the 1970s. The oil price spike hikes of the 1970s, where oil was less, even with inflation correction oil was less than it is today, it still resulted in a world-wide recession with sufficient demand destruction that the production of energy decreased for several years. Now we are back on a big upswing slope again.

The next chart has some data that was used by 30 of our prominent Americans, Boyden Gray and Woolsey and McFarland and 27 others, among them a number of Four-Star Admirals and Generals, retired, and they wrote a letter to the President, and this was several years ago. They said, now, Mr. President, the fact that we have only 2 percent of the known reserves of oil in the world and we consume 25 percent of the world's oil and import just about two-thirds of what we use is a totally unacceptable national security risk. We really have to do something about that.

Two other data points here which are of interest, one is that although we have only 2 percent of the world's oil reserves, we produce 8 percent of the world's oil. Now, you don't have to be very far along in arithmetic in grade school to understand that if that's what's happening that we are now exploiting our oil reserves four times faster than the rest of the world.

So if there comes a time when the well will run dry, you would expect that our wells would run dry before the average well in the rest of the world, because we are pumping our oil four times faster.

Note, also, this says 5 percent of the world's population, we are a bit less than that. We are one person out of 22 in the world, and we have a fourth of all the good things in the world. The subject for another discussion is why. What's so special about the United States that this one person out of 22 is so fortunate that we have a fourth of all the good things in the world?

The next chart is a really interesting one. This chart shows what the world will look like if the size of the country was relative to the amount of oil that it had. Now, the colors here indicate how much energy you are using and the size indicates how much energy you have.

What this shows is that the countries which have the least energy are using the most energy.

But notice that Saudi Arabia here totally dominates the world. About 22 percent, almost a fourth of all the known reserves of oil in the world are in Saudi Arabia. There is Iraq and little Kuwait. Saddam Hussein thought that looked like a corner province in Iraq, and, indeed, if you look in the map, it is tiny compared to Iraq, but it has just about as much oil as Iraq.

Iran, notice how big Iran is there.

Look over here at the United States. We are dwarfed. We have only 2 percent of the world's supply of oil. The people we get most of our oil from are Canada and Mexico. Gee, they aren't very big either. Look at Venezuela, Hugo Chavez, huge, would swallow up the United States several times with its oil reserves.