NO PLACE IN THE CIVILIZED WORLD

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ADERHOLT). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, on Wednesday, the new President of Iran made comments that chillingly confirm the hate, intolerance and militant intent to destroy Israel and her people that is shared by too many in the Arab world. Speaking to 4,000 students at a conference called “The World Without Zionism,” the Iranian leader declared, “Israel must be wiped off the map.”

I want to make this perfectly clear. I have been to Israel 8 times, 3 times in the last 2 years, and on each of those most recent visits, our Israeli allies have expressed increasing concern about Iran’s support for terrorism and its continuing effort to develop and acquire nuclear weapons.

The President will have to determine whether these dangerous comments only confirm our worst suspicions and fears about the Iranian government’s intentions and malevolence. These remarks must inspire a renewed commitment by the United States and by our allies to do everything within our power to prevent Iran from acquiring weapons of mass destruction.

Those who rationalize acts of terrorism should reassess their opinion as to why Israel must be ever vigilant and must take all measures necessary to respond to terrorism and ensure the safety, security and sovereignty of its people and its land.

The American people are right to be alarmed by Iran’s action in the international community. Iran seeks to be taken seriously, and the Iranian leader declared that Iran would be wiped off the map. Peace will be possible in the international community only if the international community is united and committed to dealing with Iran without any tempering rejects and severely criticizes such comments when they are made.

Mr. Speaker, we were right today to overwhelmingly and unanimously express our outrage at the President of Iran’s suggestion that Israel would be wiped off the map. Peace will be possible in the international community only if the international community is united and committed to dealing with Iran without any tempering rejects and severely criticizes such comments when they are made.

I find it humorous and sometimes hysterical that the other side can look over to the Democrats and blame us for all the big spending and all the deficits. They look over here and they point to my friends on the left for all the big spending and all the deficits.

I hereby appoint the Honorable Mac Thornberry to act as Speaker pro tempore to sign enrolled bills and joint resolutions through November 1, 2005.

APPPOINTMENT OF HON. MAC THORNBERRY TO ACT AS SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE TO SIGN ENROLLED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS THROUGH NOVEMBER 1, 2005

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the appointment is approved.

There was no objection.

30-SOMETHING WORKING GROUP

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker’s announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN) is recognized for 5 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to be down here.

This is a pretty sad day in the United States of America with the recent news regarding the Chief of Staff of the Vice President being indicted on five counts of making false statements, perjury, obstruction of justice.

The 30-Something Group has been talking about for quite some time on this floor the culture of corruption that we have seen in this Chamber, on Capitol Hill, and now we have come to find that this is also extended into the executive branch, the Republican one-party rule. Inevitably when one party controls all the levers of government, inevitably it leads to corruption, and today we saw another taste of that.

My friend from Florida is here, and before we get into the corruption and the greed that has been going on in the way that this government has just been corrupted, I want to talk for a few minutes about what our friend was saying who was here prior to us.

I want to make this perfectly clear. The Republicans control the House of Representatives. The Republicans control the Senate. The Republicans control the White House. We have a one-party government here in Washington, DC.

I find it humorous and sometimes hysterical that the other side can look over to the Democrats and blame us for all the big spending and all the deficits. They look over here and they point to my friends on the left for all the big spending and all the deficits.

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I find it humorous and sometimes hysterical that the other side can look over to the Democrats and blame us for all the big spending and all the deficits. They look over here and they point to my friends on the left for all the big spending and all the deficits. We are not running the government. One-party rule. Take responsibility for your own actions.

My friend who was here prior was talking about all the Democrats want to do is spend. The Republican majority has cut the debt and balanced the budget, getting this country almost all the way into bankruptcy. Our national debt just went to $8 trillion.
The Republicans have controlled this House since 1994. They have had the White House since 2000 and the Senate on and off, but it had control of the Senate for the past few years. They have been able to implement their agenda and keep saying that we want to raise taxes.

We do not want to raise taxes. We want to reduce spending here, as the rhetoric on the other side, but we do not want to do it on the backs of the middle class.

We want to reduce corporate welfare to the tune of $16 billion in the two energy bills being voted to subsidize oil companies, and they are coming out with the highest profits that they have had in a long, long time, record profits just in the last quarter.

We want to end corporate welfare to the pharmaceutical companies, $700 billion in spending on a Medicare prescription drug bill that does nothing to reduce the cost of prescription drugs.

Democrats wanted reimportation from Canada to help reduce the cost. Democrats wanted to give the Secretary of Health and Human Services the ability to negotiate drug prices by basically going, on behalf of all of the Medicare recipients, to Merck and Pfizer and all of these big drug companies, and basically say, if you want a contract, let us talk price. If we took 10 or 20 percent of the savings of that bill, $700 billion over the next decade, saved 10 percent, that is $70 billion which would pay for Hurricane Katrina. But we could save closer to 20 or 30 percent, which would be $140 billion of the taxpayers’ money that we could save. We do not want to raise taxes.

Now, do we think that we should be giving tax cuts to Bill Gates and Warren Buffett, and at the same time cut Medicaid, which is a health care program for poor kids and poor families? Meanwhile, middle-class America’s health care is going up 15-20 percent. My God, we cannot do anything to help average people because we have to take care of these huge corporations and keep the corporate welfare going.

Let me say this before we get back to our message. This is very simple to connect the dots. This body taxes the American people. The American people send their money down here. The Republican Congress gives that money, to the tune of $16 billion in the last few months, to the energy companies. Can you imagine, your tax dollars going to subsidize oil companies. American tax dollars coming down here, and the Republican majority takes it and gives it to the pharmaceutical companies to buy prescription drugs for seniors; great idea. Is it a good idea to do anything about controlling the costs?

What the Republican majority does is then they go to the shake-down street, which are all of the lobbyists are. They go and shake down all the lobbyists who they just spent a bunch of tax dollars on, and the lobbyists who they shake down fill up the Republican campaign committee coffers to the tune of millions and millions and millions of dollars. Hundreds of millions of dollars is spent lobbying. This is corrupt to the core. This is not the way we do business.

We understand there is money in politics, but to use the hard-working public’s money that average people send down here and to give it to corporations is atrocious. Our good friend Cal Thomas, who is one of the most conservative Republican columnists in the country, said in The Washington Times, which is not a liberal newspaper, gives his friends in the majority a little tug, start with the poor to pay for Hurricane Katrina, start with the rich. He goes on to say, which I tend to forget about, the corporate subsidies to the big agribusinesses, this is Cal Thomas, not the gentlewoman from Florida or me, this is our conservative Republican friend Cal Thomas, 72 percent of farm subsidy money goes to 10 percent of the recipients: the richest farmers, corporations, estates and other entities.

Mr. Speaker, this is ridiculous that we are going to cut lunch programs, food stamps, cut student loans for average people trying to send their kids to school, and yet provide corporate welfare to the top 10 percent richest farm agribusinesses, multinational corporations.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. Wasserman Schultz).

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to be here with you again and have an opportunity to have our 30-something Working Group talk about the issues that are important to the average American today in the 21st century. We also want to thank the gentlewoman from California (Ms. Pelosi), the Democrat leader, for bringing together this group and have this time on the floor to talk about these important issues.

This is a sad week in the United States, when this is a week in which we started on Monday with my home State of Florida, my district in south Florida, being hit by a Category 3 hurricane, Hurricane Wilma. Today, 5 days later, we still have 80 percent of the way to go with the aftermath power. We have considerable difficulties in getting them ice and water. We have a Governor of my home State who has held up our State as the model for response to and preparation for natural disasters, yet if you went street by street and saw the devastation and asked my constituents and the constituents of Mr. MEEK, if you asked our constituents if they think that the money the Federal Government should have provided, they would be ready to pull out our hair one by one. I am going back down there tonight, and I am planning to spend the weekend and going to distribution sites and talking to my constituents.

We have trucks and generators and lift stations, and lift stations still that have no power. We have the biggest city in my district, the city of Ft. Lauderdale, which literally is faced with a backup in their sewage system because we did not get generators to them. They are stuck in West Palm Beach. Our Coast Guard and FEMA have not been responsive. I have people older than 85 stuck in high-rise towers with glass blown out of their windows and no elevators working because there is no power. These are people who cannot get themselves down 12 to 25 floors.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. What is the temperature?

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. It has cooled down. There was a cold front that pushed Wilma and made her go faster, reached us right after that. It has not been, mercifully, hot. It has been in the upper 60s. But the way our climate is, when that cold front leaves, they could be hot again. The earliest anticipation that my constituents are expected to have power restored completely is November 22. This is from the model State.

That is how we started out. We are talking about FEMA that is still woefully unprepared to respond to natural disasters.

Let me move to the very next day, where we now unfortunately have had our 2,000th casualty in the Iraq war, and today, sadly, we have had the Vice President of the United States’ Chief of Staff indicted on five counts, one of which was leaking the name of a covert CIA agent with the express, clearly the intent of advancing the administration’s agenda that they were hell-bent on to get us into the Iraq war, because that CIA agent’s husband had just come back from Niger and said there was no evidence that weapons of mass destruction were being acquired by Saddam Hussein and his allies in Iraq.

So the most sinister of intentions that the Vice President’s Chief of Staff clearly had was to continue to advance the administration’s agenda to get us into the Iraq war, that we entered into under false pretenses with misinformation, and now the 2,000th American has died as a result of that.

When is the partisan politics and the people in the administration who are hell-bent on being right, hell-bent on having it their way, when is it going to stop? When are we going to have some bipartisan outreach?

I have been here for 11 months, and it has been incredibly shocking to me that we have folks like the gentlewoman from Tennessee who was willingly lambasting a group of her colleagues on our side of the aisle who have no ability to do the things like she is accusing. When are people like her going to sit down around the negotiating table and say, I agree and should agree on more things than we disagree?

It is so sad the Republican leadership in this country is only concerned about congressional record
being right, is only concerned about having it their way. Clearly, as the results of this week show, they will do anything, will do anything including lie to the government, lie to the press and expose an undercover CIA agent's identity in order to have their way and get us into another ill-advised and unnecessary war, which now we have no idea how long we will be in the midst of.

I am raising young children, as are many, many people across this country. I was fortunate and used to be able to say thanks to the efforts of our predecessors, of the generations before us, for the effort and sacrifice they made to keep us free. Now, it is really unbelievable, the blatan lies that are in this, that are astounding to me.

Count 5, the perjury count, where they have a series of questions, and the question from the lawyer to Mr. Libby is highly specific. It is: Did Matthew Cooper or other reporters know when he gave this testimony, it was false? I mean, these accusations, and let us remember that they are accusations, but they are very serious accusations, that once the accusations came out in the previous administration which were for personal circumstances, we went into a situation on this House floor where we had impeachment managers, we had a trial, we had a process by which the President of the United States prior to this President was actually impeached on the floor of the House of Representatives and the accusations that were made against him were far less dire.

Where is that outrage? Where is anyone on the other side who was calling for his head? Why are they not calling for the head of this administration? Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I'm claiming my time, I think the silence speaks for itself. Let us quickly go through this. June 12, the Vice President tells Libby about Joe Wilson's wife. In September the Vice President is on Meet the Press with Tim Russert and he says, I do not even know who Joe Wilson is. Can one imagine? We look at him and we believe him. Here is Scott McClellan on October 3. So June the VP told Libby. In September he lied about it on Meet the Press. Then in October McClellan says, Those individuals, Karl Rove, Abrams, and Lewis Libby, assured me they were not involved with the Iraq probe. These are the same people that told us they were weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. These are the same people that told us we would be greeted as liberators. These are the same people who said we could use the oil money for reconstruction. Have they told the truth since they have been in office?

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I yield to the gentlewoman from Texas.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank the distinguished gentleman and the distinguished gentlewoman for their comments.

This is a moment in history today that it seems that we simply pause. This morning we did exactly that. We passed a resolution allowing an American icon to lie in state, Rosa Parks. Now, just a few hours after that vote, we are here on the floor. Really, as I listened to my two distinguished colleagues for this very thoughtful discussion, we are looking at a constitutional breach in the system of government.

I sat as a member of the House Judiciary Committee during the impeachment hearings of President William Jefferson Clinton; and, of course, as members of the Members knew I argued vigorously this issue. We argued that his objections were not a governmental action. That was the distinction that we made on this whole question of whether or not the government itself was being fractured. Today we now have, and, again, one is innocent until proven guilty, a fractured government, five counts against an individual with an ongoing investigation that suggests a number of frauds in the system that go to the very points of this discussion: one, did government officials not tell the truth? Two, did government officials not tell the truth to Members of the United States Congress? Three, on the basis of those non-truths, did the United States Congress take a vote to remove fraud from the government ultimately to go to war? And in the course of going to war, did we not see the loss of lives of 2,000 of our brave young men and women and some thousands of injured bodies that now lie in hospitals languishing.

And in the course of this expose that the gentleman has now offered, in holding up the indictment, he has enumerated a chronological schedule that shows that over and over again there was repetitiveness in the government, in this instance, the White House, denying that key staff members knew nothing of the pronouncement that an undercover CIA agent was who she was and who she was related to; and now we are finding out about allegations and lies they were involved in. Today we now know is not a conviction and there is a lesser standard through the grand jury and its level of being able to indict.

But there is an indictment that I assume will now go forward, that there are now suggestions and allegations that not only was the Iraq probe being told but that they were woven into the infrastructure of the closest levels of government, including the
President of the United States of America.

I will simply say this: those very difficult days of sending this body through an impeachment proceeding brought us almost to the brink of governmental collapse. The American people were concerned. The world was concerned. This institutional body was concerned. Those of us who had such great respect for this body being respected for when it moved, it moved on truth and standing. I would argue to this that the impeachment proceedings went beyond the jurisdiction of this body because we used a non-governmental act for a governmental action, which was impeachment.

In this instance I am going to leave with this question: What will this body now do to accept our, if you will, institutional responsibility to ask the questions, whether the Constitution has been breached and whether or not, in fact, there are fractures in government now beg the investigatory hearings need to begin in order to heal or to reform those fractures?

I thank the distinguished gentlewoman from Florida and the gentleman from Ohio, certainly States that have had constitutional breaches as we have looked at elections of 2000 and 2004, for their presentation on the floor and allowing me to come over from my office watching them during this moment in history that requires our study and our consideration.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker. I thank the gentlewoman for her comments. It continues just to be unbelievable. Count four, the perjury count, it runs deep.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. It is a culture.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, what has become clear as of today is that the culture of corruption in the party and this administration and the leadership in this institution has become institutionalized. It runs deep.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. It is a culture.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. It is a culture of corruption. A culture is one that is deep-seated, one that is the product of an accumulation within groups of people. The administration, various members of the leadership here in our institution, from top to bottom, the people running this country are under suspicion. And we have what I have referred to as the three Cs: the culture of corruption, the cronyism, and the question of competence.

Because now, as of today, there is no question that these are problems that are not competent to run our government. They are not competent to respond to natural disasters. Look at Katrina and her aftermath. Look at Wilma and her aftermath, which is still ongoing. If they are not competent to respond to natural disasters, what are we going to do when we are hit with a man-made disaster, with a terrorist act?

I have talked to Members on both sides of the aisle this week who have privately worried out loud that they are not sure what would happen in their own community if they were hit with either a natural or a man-made disaster because there is deep-seated worry and concern about this administration’s ability to take care of the American people. And never mind their ability. They are clearly focused only on themselves and their ability to accomplish their own goals and to heck with what anyone else thinks.

We have an administration that was hell bent on being right and was willing to do anything to make sure that their agenda was met. Never mind basic human decency. We all raise our children, and I raise my children, to understand what right from wrong is, to know that we have to tell the truth, to know that we need to do right by people. And in my faith’s tradition, we have an important stress on taking care of one another in our community and giving back. We have the saying of what is called “tikkun olam.” And there is absolutely no hint of any of that in this administration or, quite frankly, among the leadership in this institution.

Because to a person, the accusations, and I will respectfully say again that these are accusations and that no one has been found guilty of anything or been accused of anything as yet, but whether it is the accusations against our former leader from this institution, or all the way up to the Vice President’s Chief of Staff and the accusations made against him today in the indictments that have been handed down, we are talking about decisions they made so they could accomplish their own political goals.

That is just heinous, and I want to know when the hearings are going to be called. I want to know where the press conference was not held to schedule the special committee, the bipartisan committee that should be
brought together to do an investigation. I want to know where the outrage is. I want to know why we are not having impeachment hearings. I am waiting to hear that, because it is a little bit more important, when you send people up to war and accomplish your own goals, than when you lie about personal circumstances, totally and completely different. It is just disgusting.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Reclaiming my time, we do not want to make light of it, but the time that President Clinton had to deal with in his impeachment. That is private behavior. If he committed perjury, that is wrong, and we are all against it.

You are talking about outing a CIA agent. You are talking about lying to FBI agents. This is the Chief of Staff of the Vice President of the United States, not some intern. This is one of the architects of the war.

Now, we all know that all the nonsense before the war was not true, and now you are willing to lie to a Federal grand jury? You are willing to lie to FBI agents? You are willing to lie to Tim Russert? You sure as heck are going to be willing to lie to the American people. Why? To further one of the parties over what is best for the country.

Mr. RYAN. I am talking to one of the people that are up and running on their own without any generators. Unfortunately, the oil companies have not in most cases purchased generators to be used in the event of an actual disaster. So what we are talking about here is how deep this culture of corruption and cronyism and incompetence runs. If you could say it is an isolated instance and you have a rogue staff person who just became so focused on taking care of his boss that he decided he was going to say anything to accomplish his boss’s goal, then you could say, you know what, you get rid of that cancer, and, okay, the cancer is cut out, and the body is whole and well again.

But, unfortunately, this is an administration that is so infested with cancer, this is a party up and down the halls and walls of government that is so infested with cancer that it is impossible to cut it out completely. It runs that deep.

Next year what the American people are going to have to ask themselves is if they want this to continue. Do they want to continue to go in this direction? Do they want to continue traveling down this path, being dragged down this path, having another 1,000 soldiers die in a war that was not only ill-advised, but we were led into through deception, and then not only through deception but through deliberate acts of deception to ensure that they would be able to drag us into war? Then, on top of that, let us talk about some of the other things that they are willing to do and be hell-bent on accomplishing their goals. Talk about what happens right here just in the last few months since I have been a Member of Congress.

Basically the Republicans here have created a democracy-free zone. We talk about how we are going to have democracy, and how participatory this institution is, and how we are all elected in our own right, and we all have the same rights and privileges, we have the same number of about 633,000 people that sent us here.

Yet it is pretty clear that we do not all have the same ability to cast our vote and have it stand and mean something and cast it freely and willingly, because the Members on the other side have not been allowed to cast their votes by their leadership and leave that as their opinion standing all by itself because they get their arms twisted off.

We have votes like the energy vote that we had a couple of weeks ago that was called as a 5-minute vote and was held open for 40 minutes, 40 minutes, because we were killing that bill, because it was a terrible bill that was not going to do anything to reduce gas prices, that was not going to improve our energy situation that we are in such dire straits in this country. It was going to put more money in the pockets of the oil company executives and the oil companies’ profit margin.

So what they did was hold that vote open so they could twist enough of their Members’ arms and work the aisles so that they could get their Members to switch. And we watched it. The board is right up above us here, our names are in lights, there is a red and green button on the whole bunch of red buttons on their side of the aisle that over the 40 minutes were switched to green.
Now, I came here with some conviction, and I came here with some backbone, and I am certainly not going to let anybody chisel my backbone away just in the name of my party. I just wonder where the backbone is? Why are they willing to just cave? Do they not have a backbone? Do they not understand that you have to represent your constituents? Do they not understand that they have to represent their constituents, not the oil companies? Do they not understand they have to represent those people who are right now having to choose between medicine and meals.

Could have low-cost prescription drugs, that our constituents, our seniors, could have low-cost prescription drugs and not put more money in the pockets of the pharmaceutical companies?

That Medicare prescription drug bill passed before I got here. How long was the vote held open? 3 hours on a 15-minute vote to do the exact same thing? That bill prohibited the government from negotiating prices, just like the Veterans Administration has that ability, negotiating prices with the pharmaceutical industry to make sure that our constituents, our seniors, our friends, do not have to pay through the nose for prescription drugs.

This is what we are talking about when we talk about an institutionalized culture of corruption, because you do not see the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI) and the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) working the aisles, twisting our arms off to change their vote, red to green or green to red. We get permission to stand and vote our conviction.

I can tell you all the way back to March, when I had a very strong opinion about the Terri Schiavo case, some Members on the floor disagreed with me, but nobody was coming here, nobody was pounding on me asking me not to do that. “Do not stand up, Debbie. Do not stand up for what you believe in.” I was allowed, even though I am a freshman, to have been here 10 weeks, I was encouraged by our leadership to stand up for what I believe in. It is just the saddest thing that does not exist on their side of the aisle.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, re-claiming my time, that is what we are asking the American people for, for an opportunity to take this country in a new direction; to change what is going on here, and stop not only the corruption that we find here, but establish a system that works, that does not put a political party before the interests of the country.

When you look at what happened through FEMA with Hurricane Katrina, the top 8 to 10 people in FEMA were political cronies. They were political hacks. “Brownie,” the man in charge of FEMA, was a lawyer for horses, someone who owns horses, or a horse’s attorney. I am not exactly sure what he was. He had the right college roommate, so he got appointed to FEMA.

Listen, we understand that you make political appointments, but if you appoint somebody who is incompetent, you put them as an ambassador to a country that has a lot of beaches; send them over there, have a nice house, drink a lot of nice wine, have a good time, make nice with whatever country that you are representing or trying to smear, you do not put that person in charge of FEMA.

My friend who was here earlier said we wanted to make FEMA bigger and more bureaucratic, and the old scare tactics, like we are not old-school Democrats, and that we are not nimble government that works. If it means a little bit more money, maybe it does, and maybe it needs to be spent. But where is the accountability? What it needs more than anything else is competent leadership.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. I am glad the gentleman brought up FEMA, because obviously that is a pretty hot issue down my way right now. Let us let people know what we were talking about the other night, because Brownie, he, the former Mr. Michael Brown, the former Under Secretary for FEMA, most people think that he is gone. Most people think he is no longer involved in FEMA’s decision-making activities.

He is still being paid $148,000 a year as an adviser, because the Secretary of Homeland Security Mr. Chertoff just extended his contract for another 30 days. They kept him on supposedly to continue to advise them on how to deal with the aftermath of Katrina.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. So you are saying, Mr. Speaker; I want to get this clear here, for the Members of the Chamber, you are telling me that Brownie, the guy that President Bush went down and said you are doing a good job, Brownie, when he really was not doing a good job at all, really was not doing the job that we have seen in the aftermath of Katrina. So you are saying he is still on the payroll?

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. He is still on the payroll being paid a $148,000-a-year contract for another 30 days.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. But the Demo- crats are the ones that waste the money. We are the ones that do not know how to handle government. Come on.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. We have two more storms that have hit us since Katrina, Rita and Wilma; and it is not like they have fixed it. It is not like Brownie has gotten it right now and we have seen the fruits of continuing his contract. Now we have people who are sitting in the dark in my two counties that I represent, Broward County and Miami-Dade County. We have lift stations that are off, all 2,000 lift stations in my county have no power. The sewage is backing up. People have to boil water, but they cannot go to work, because they do not have any power, or they have to add chlorine to their water. The ice and water trucks that were touted as being pre-positioned prior to the storm, they were lost, they could not find them because they relied on cell phones for communication.

Now, hello. How tall are cell phone towers? I would think that if you have a cell phone tower getting hit by 120- kilometre-an-hour winds, they would not be a very effective building. But obviously, in the aftermath of a storm, there are going to be kinks, there are going to be problems. I do not want to be specifically critical of the response to this storm; I want to be more generally critical, because they have learned nothing. We have had the two additional storms following Katrina, and they have learned nothing. Sixty days have gone by. They have not fixed it. They have not made adjustments. We have a guy who is not doing a good job because he was the college roommate of an ally of the President’s and put in charge of FEMA.

We have people who are sitting in harm’s way who have suffered damage, and they continue the contract of the man who was clearly declared as incompetent and removed from being in charge of Katrina, but not removed from the payroll, for what purpose was so they could continue to get advice from him. A person who was not qualified for the job to start with, because his previous experience was being head of the Arabian Horse Association. He absolutely has no qualifications.

In terms of cronyism, that was the ultimate. You had a guy get a job because he was the college roommate of an ally of the President’s and put in charge of that agency that has to be the command center for every agency in the government and directing their re-sponse to the aftermath of a hurricane, or any natural disaster. What happens is, you put an unqualified person in that position, you are going to end up having the result that we have in the aftermath of Katrina and the result that we have now seen in the after- math of Wilma.

Now we have Secretary Paulison, Acting Secretary Paulison, who is in place now. He is a constituent of mine, he does have the qualifications, he does have what he is doing; but Brownie is still on the payroll, and FEMA is now in the Department of Homeland Security. It is no longer an independent agency that answers directly to the President, it has the ability to di- rect things on their own. They have to run it up the food chain to the head of Homeland Security.

When you put obstacles in the path of a decision-maker, it makes it harder to make the decision. And in the after- math of a storm, you cannot have ob- stacles. Obstacles harm people. I am hoping that at some point someone in the administration decides that it is more important to take care of people than to accomplish their own agenda and their own goals.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. That is it. Put- ting the party that you belong to
should not come first. The Republican Party should not come over the interests of the country. All we are saying is that the Republican majority has had control of this Chamber since 1994. They control the Senate, and they control the Speaker. House, $16 billion pull in illegal alien dollars. That is the problem of the government. Welfare is emergency management, failure; poverty rates, up; tuition rates, doubled; health care costs, up 15 to 20 percent a year. The Republicans take public taxes and give it away in corporate welfare. Now, the question is, what is public tax money went to the oil companies and the energy companies and subsidies, and $700 billion in the Medicare prescription drug bill.

Now, the Democratic Party wants to lead, and we want to lead and put the interests of the country before what is necessarily best for the Democratic Party. And here is a great example:

In 1993, when we were running huge deficits, the Democratic-controlled House, the Democratic-controlled Senate, and President Clinton passed a balanced budget bill that led, without one Republican vote, to the great economic expansion in the history of the United States of America. And it was not popular and it was not fun, and many Democrats lost their seats over it. But you know what? You have got to balance your budget. And someone, more than one person was a statesman to make that decision. You put the interests of the country first, personal political interests and that of your party. That is what we want to do. That is what the Democrats want to do. We want to take this country into another direction and change what is going on here.

Let me tell you what we will do when we are in charge. One is, we will redo the prescription drug bill. We will go and we will allow for reimportation of prescription drugs from Canada that will drive down the costs which will save the taxpayer billions of dollars over the next few years. We will go back and we will put into the Medicare prescription drug bill a provision that allows the Secretary of Health and Human Services to negotiate on behalf of the Medicare recipients and on behalf of the taxpayer to Merck and Pfizer, and they will negotiate down the cost of drugs. Some people project that savings could be 20 to 30 percent. Twenty to 30 percent of $700 billion is $140 to $210 billion. We would talk Senate savings and we would invest it into the American people.

We would also take the $16 billion that we have given to oil companies and we will add that into the mix. Now, notice I did not say one time we want to raise taxes. We will take that money and we will invest it into programs that will lead to economic growth.

One, we will have a plan that will create 6 million engineers and scientists in the next 10 years. We are getting our clock cleaned by China and India. Last year China graduated 600,000 engineers, India graduated 700,000 engineers, India. Last year China graduated 210 billion. We would take those savings could be 20 to 30 percent.

The Democrats will invest in magnetic levitation trains, the fastest train technology going right now. There is only one in the world. It is in Shanghai. I was on it when I was over in China. Mr. Speaker, 270 miles an hour we are going down the pipe, and I defending our right to coffee and it did not spill. It is the latest train technology, it is a jobs program, it is good for the environment, and it reduces our dependence on foreign oil.

The Democrats will take the savings from that money and we will invest it into preventive health care. We will make sure that we are doing for the American people what we are doing for the Iraqis, and that is allow them to go to a clinic when they have a cold instead of walking into an emergency room with pneumonia.

Mr. Speaker, we want to spend less money in the end, but it means putting it up front first for prevention. And we will start an Apollo program for an alternative energy source, so that these engineers and scientists that we create will be able to eventually reduce our dependence on foreign oil so that not one more American life has to be lost defending our oil and get oil so that we can drive SUVs.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman is so right. As we close out, I just want to reiterate what the gentleman said. It is about who do you trust. It is going to be next year asking the American people to give us the opportunity to take this country in a new direction, to end the culture of corruption, to end the cronymism, to invest the kind of resources that we need to make sure that the middle class can be thriving and vibrant, and to make sure that we have a disaster response system in place that is responsive, that meets the needs of people and that does not leave them twisting in the wind as my constituents are right now, who are without gas and without water, where a hospital in my own district is not able to continue to take care of people because their employees do not have enough gas to get to work. Those are basic needs.

We want to thank the Democratic leader for giving us an opportunity to come on this floor tonight and for creating the 30-something Working Group. I know Mr. Ryan wants to give people the Web site where they can contact us.

Mr. Ryan of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK) who is down in Florida with his constituents. Send us an e-mail to 30somethingdems@mail.house.gov.

Ms. FOXX. Ms. FOXX, Mr. Speaker, I am proud of the great deal of progress being made on our global war on terror. While there is no quick path to victory, it is absolutely necessary for us to maintain our resolve. Terrorists have long waged war against the United States, well before the September 11 attacks. Americans were bombed in Lebanon in 1983, at the World Trade Center in 1993, at Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia in 1996, at the American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998, and on board the USS Cole in 2000.

Over the years, these terrorists have attacked and attacked and attacked, thinking they could kill innocent Americans without paying a price. I am proud of President Bush and our troops for standing up to these murderers and showing them we will not sit back and tolerate this behavior.

Conditions in the Middle East are improving. Despite the terrorists plans to disrupt democracy in Iraq, millions of Iraqi people embrace democracy by turning out to vote for a new Constitution. In addition, the Iraqi security forces are taking a much more prominent role in defending their country.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that Americans will continue to support our troops. They are doing the right thing because they are making the world a safer place.

A NEW DIRECTION FOR U.S. IMMIGRATION POLICY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. FOXX). Under the Speaker’s announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. Poe) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. Poe. Madam Speaker, a nation that cannot defend its borders against an illegal invasion is a nation without national sovereignty.

Madam Speaker, rhetoric rules the day. America’s doors open to immigration. A lot of people with self-promoting agendas do a lot of talking. They have hidden motives that range from political