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 well sizes 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 the ability 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, 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 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 organizations that I have 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 reflects 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 proffers that natural gas is a clean-burn ing gas and that there would be little to no risk to expanding that drilling. Well, we who live here in the State of Florida, and we have 77 million people who visited our State just last year alone and $55.5 billion in taxable sales is generated by tourism, most of which is the result of our beautiful beaches and 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 eye-sight 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 sources 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 gone through in south Florida and un- der 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.

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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 cut. This budget cut would hand down, and I am joined by Mr. Good and Mr. Mica, Florida, 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 area 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
their houses, and I am talking about people who are in their 80s and 90s, one of the apartments that the building captain in the condominium brought me into included this kind of damage. This is the result of Hurricane Wilma, and this is just one example. There are hundreds of these condominium units and apartment buildings and homes and mobile homes that look just like this.

There is a perception, whether it was created by the media or created by the lack of attention by the national media on what happened with Hurricane Wilma, that everything is fine in south Florida. Everything is not fine, Mr. Speaker, in south Florida.

This is the third floor apartment, and that is the ceiling of the apartment. And as we can see, we can look right through the ceiling at the sky. This is this woman’s master bedroom; and literally during the storm, I minute after she walked out of that master bedroom, the roof caved in on her bed. A minute earlier and it would have caved in on her.

When we talk about the affordable housing problem that we already had, now we have thousands of people in south Florida whose homes have been condemned, who are faced with nowhere to go because the average price of a house just in Broward is $348,000 a year. The rental units, the monthly rent is sky high. And FEMA has literally only 300 inspectors in our State going through these homes to determine whether these people are going to qualify for assistance.

I yield to the gentleman from Florida.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. Wasserman Schultz) for yielding to me, and I can tell her right now that I shudder when I think about not only the devastation that took place in Hurricane Wilma but what took place in Rita and took place in Katrina and what happened today in the Budget Committee.

I want to make sure that the Members, Mr. Speaker, are fully aware about an act that I did not take part in, an act that not one Democrat on that committee took part in, an act that at least one Republican did not take part in, that is, delivering another catastrophic event to the victims of these three natural disasters.

The cuts that were made today in the Budget Committee, that I must add without one Democratic vote, but with Democratic amendments, to make sure that those victims do not become victims again. This is devastation to these individuals; cutting Medicare, cutting programs that will help everyday working Americans, delivering another blow to the gut of the individuals who need us the most.

Let me tell you what the majority side is saying. “Oh, we have to make these offsets to help the Katrina victims.”

Hello. No. We have to slap them in the back of the head and push them to the floor because they cannot fight us like the special interests that got what they wanted in this budget, that we are going to make them victims again.

That is what that means.

So, I think we are bringing to light not only Katrina, not only Rita, but also Wilma; that many senators in our district, and we talked about this a couple of nights ago, or even over the past weeks, we have been fighting for a supplemental commission so we can review not only the Federal response, but the State response and the local response.

Now, I just want to take two more minutes. Down in Florida with Wilma, when the response was not what it should have been, Governor Bush of Florida jumped out in front of the train and said, “If you want to blame someone, blame me.” Well, you know something. I have a message, not only for the Governor, but for anyone willing to step in front of an unorganized response to people in need, because I would say to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. Delahunt) and the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. Ryan), it could be you next. It could be a terrorist attack.

So I guess the Governor could not do it in Mississippi, he could not do it in Louisiana, he could not do it in Alabama, he could not run over to Texas and jump in to FEMA and say “blame me.” This is bigger than an individual. This is making sure we can respond to Americans.

I would say to the gentlewoman from Florida, I would make this point to what the gentlewoman is pointing out that what you can say to this senior that you are in his bedroom there, I believe that is his bedroom where the ceiling came down, or another person’s bedroom fell down into their home.

Ms. Wasserman Schultz. The woman had to leave that apartment.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. So it is a condemned apartment. She cannot live in it. Not only are there only 300 FEMA inspectors of over 100,000 and counting condemned residences in Dade, Broward and Palm Beach Counties. Even in Broward County, well over the number. We are going to send 300 people down there to inspect before we are able to assist them. That is the reason why we need an independent Katrina commission, to make sure we are able to respond to Americans in need.

So when folks come to the floor and start talking about, well, you know, I do not know why they are complaining, because everything seems to be okay and the lights are on here in the Chamber and democracy is strong, we have Americans out there that are suffering and we have to give them voice.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, if the gentlewoman will yield, I want to share with the Speaker and the American people to get this in the Congressional Record some of the e-mails that Brownie was sending on the day of the Katrina tragedy and the days after the Katrina tragedy.

First of all, this is about cronyism in politics at its best, a culture of cronyism and a culture of corruption. We see it all the time at the local, some- time you have to look a little further away that the cronyism has permeated, permeated, the Federal Government with President Bush’s friends is really absolutely sickening.

This is an article today out of CNN.com. The quotes are posted on websites. The gentleman from Louisiana, Mr. Melancon, from New Orleans, has all of the quotes posted on his website from Brown, the former head of FEMA on the day of the Katrina tragedy. This is just startling. This is just startling.

First let me say that Mr. Brown spent a decade as the Stewards and Judges Commissioner of the International Arabian Horse Association. How he ended up as the head of the FEMA agency is beyond my ability as a person being put into my head, to conceptualize, I cannot believe that the President would put someone who was the Commissioner of the International Arabian Horse Association in charge of FEMA. He did not get an appointment as an ambassador to a country that has a lot of beaches. He ends up in charge of FEMA after 9/11.

Here is what he says, one of the e-mails. Brown wrote to Cindy Taylor, FEMA’s deputy director of public affairs the morning of the hurricane, “Can I quit now? Can I come home?”

A few days later Brown wrote to an acquaintance, “I am trapped now. Please rescue me.”

I mean, give me a break. A few days later, Brown is talking to his PR director, his press secretary, Sharon Worth, about his attire, asking her, can you imagine this, asking her “‘Tie or not for tonight? Button down blue shirt?” He is asking her about what he should wear.

This is a couple days after Katrina, when the American people were watching on all the cable news channels people suffering in pools of water, flooding everywhere, nothing to eat, people who do not have their insulin, old folks starving to death, dehydrating, no water, no ice, and this guy is saying “I am trapped now, please rescue me?” Is that the kind of leadership we want? No. The United States wants leadership and we get cronyism.

A few days later, she says, this is his press secretary again, “Please roll up the sleeves of your shirt, all shirts. Even the President rolled his sleeves to just below the elbow. In this crisis and on TV you just need to look more hard-working.”

You got to be kidding me. This is what the FEMA director was saying during Katrina? He is talking with his press secretary, who said roll up your shirt sleeves so you look like you are working.
Mr. MEEK of Florida. This is the person that we still have on the payroll to teach us what to do.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Still on the payroll for $148,000.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. A culture of corruption.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. This iscronyism at its best, because this fellow is not the least bit qualified to be in charge of FEMA. The top 8 or 10 people of FEMA were all political appointments of people who were not qualified.

We want an independent commission to oversee this whole process. Why? Because this could have been a terrorist attack, and we have got someone in charge of responding to the terrorist attack who is talking about rolling up his shirt sleeves so he looks good on CNN.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, it is worse. It got worse from there. It was not just what he was doing with his attire, rolling up his shirt sleeves, but what he was wearing that they continued to talk about. On August 29, the day of the storm, Brown exchanged e-mails about his attire with Ms. Taylor.

An hour later he added, If you look at my lovely FEMA attire, you will really vomit. I am a fashion God."

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. And we are getting lectured to by people telling us that party on that side of the aisle is responsible? Is this responsible? Is that that party on that side of the aisle that we are talking about? And Brown replied, "I got it at Nordstrom's. Are you proud of me?"

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This is the day of the storm. He is still being paid $148,000 a year to advise FEMA, according to Secretary Chertoff, and change, give or take a dollar or two, to advise FEMA about what they should be doing in the aftermath.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. And we are getting lectured to by people telling us that party on that side of the aisle is responsible? Is this responsible? Is that that party on that side of the aisle that we are talking about? And Brown replied, "I got it at Nordstrom's. Are you proud of me?"

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. The only thing that they are doing here is they have a lopsided partisan committee that is supposedly reviewing the aftermath of Katrina and FEMA's response. You know, I would feel much better about any review, although I strongly believe that there should be an independent Katrina commission, as do 81 percent of Americans, but if they had been hearing the discussion between him and Brown.

We have had three storms in two months, from Katrina to Rita and from Rita to Wilma. They have learned nothing. After my district and that of the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK), the Top 8 or 10 people in FEMA, including the top 8 or 10 people in FEMA, are not qualified, so at least they have that right now, but unfortunately FEMA still is not getting it right.

We still 10 days after the storm do not have a disaster recovery center established in Broward County or in Miami Dade County, a permanent one. There are seven mobile units between the two counties. We have more than 136,000 people in Broward alone who have applied for assistance, and they cannot get it yet because FEMA only has 300 inspectors in the whole state and they can do about 10 a day in terms of the inspections.

I yield to the gentleman from Massachusetts.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, I think it has become clear to us, and, again, also I think it is important to note that many on the other side of the aisle have started to speak out. I know that requires considerable courage and that has to be acknowledged. But it is clear that if there could be an appropriate description of this administration, put aside philosophical differences, the fact is that they reflect an ideology that really in many respects is outside of the traditional, mainstream of Republican principles. But the word that I would use to characterize it is that, yes, it is cronyism, but at a fundamental level it has been an administration that has been incompetent.

So this is a question of ability to govern. We know that they do not like government. They see government as a problem. They do not like to govern. So I guess it is understandable. They want to starve government. They want to limit it. And that is a valid argument.

But there are times in this country when you need government. You need a strong military. You need to prepare to defend your homeland. You need the kind of programs that can be run forthrightly, honestly and effectively that give every American a chance; a chance for an education, a chance for housing, for health care.

I think that this is all part of what we become when we are born as American citizens. We are participants in a social compact that says we are individuals and we have individual liberties and we will always advocate for those liberties, not just for those freedoms.

But, at the same time, we have mutual responsibilities to each other. That is the essence of our greatness.

But if you do not like government, if you do not see a role for government, then you do not do a very good job when it comes to governance.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. If the gentlewoman will yield further, I think the point really is that not only do they disrespect government, and if you disrespect something, it tends to not work appropriately, they see government as their little sandbox, and they see government as their opportunity to take care of their political contributors, to bolster their own political party.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, it was the Founders that created representative government. The Founders believed in a government. The Constitution created the government. We should be proud of our government. Because this government has served well the American people for better than two centuries. But they do not like to govern. They do not care about governance. They do not need government. They do not need student loans. They do not need Medicare. They certainly do not need Medicaid. They do not need the kind of services that government can provide, because they believe that America could be best served by a society where individuals go their own separate ways.

Well, there has to be a balance if we are going to have a strong country and a strong America.

Yes, we can be critical, we can be very critical of the administration, but let us understand too that Congress has earned its share of blame for the mistakes of this administration, for the incompetence of this administration.

Every student of American Government knows that it is the responsibility of Congress to oversee the executive, to take a look at what government agencies are doing.

But this Congress, and maybe this is a by-product of having a single party control all aspects of government, and we can understand that. It is difficult to criticize a President of your own party. You are reluctant to do that. That is natural. But more and more of our friends on the other side of the aisle are speaking out, and more Republicans outside of this institution are speaking out.

It is the responsibility of the majority to work with the minority, in this case Democrats, to exercise oversight, to take a look at what is wrong, what is going wrong in this country today, and they refuse to. They are afraid, because if they start to peel off the War Party, they are going to find something very ugly. And as Joe Galaway recently wrote, and he happens to be the senior military correspondent for the Knight Ridder news agencies, that when the time comes to point a finger, do not forget, and he is speaking about the war, those who people the marble Halls of the U.S. Congress whose first duties seems to be to protect the Republican Party and their President.

That is the problem. How many times have Members, senior Members of the minority requested investigations, inquiries, oversight hearings into real problems? We heard earlier, for example, from this side, people talking about the troops and the need, the need to respect our troops. Yet, it was the Democrats that started to question the Department of Defense about why our troops were not outfitted with body armor. Why were they being compelled to use Humvees that were not properly armored? It was Democrats along with a few courageous Republicans who said, you know what, we are not adequately funding health care for veterans. We can wave
the flag and speak of patriotism and send these young men and women to Iraq, but when they come home, they are not going to have the kind of health care that they deserve.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I just want to chime in to let the gentle

tman from Massachusetts know, sir, that we can do better.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Together we can do better.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. That is the reason why the Democrats fought hard in the Budget Committee to make sure that the Medicare cuts did not take place or put an extra burden on sen

tiors, to make sure that we replaced the burden that the majority side here in this House, the Republicans, have put on students as it relates to student aid and student loans. $14 billion in fees for students. That means $14 billion in fees and taxes for parents in America, for grandparents in America.

We need to do better. I am so glad that we sleep with our fists balled up here ready to fight on behalf of Americans every day. That is the reason why I feel excited every time we get the opport

unity to come to this floor to offer an amendment to this floor here in this special order, to be able to let not only the majority side know, the Republican majority because, I must say, and I want to remind everyone, the Republicans are in control of this House, the Senate, and the White

House. And they have that anything to say, and that includes Members, about how the Democrats said this and the Democrats said that and they are doing this, we are not doing anything as it relates to pulling this country in re

verse.

I am going to tell my colleagues right now, what went down in the Budget Committee today is shameful; it is really shameful. I just want to, as we work here as a working group, I just want to say, I want to make sure that the majority side, when that budget comes to this floor, that they abide by the rules of the House of Representa

tives. If there is a 15-minute vote, then let it be a 15-minute vote. If there is a grace period, 17, 20 minutes, okay. But we do not want to be here on this floor watching the majority side, the Repub

lican side, twist arms to get the votes to pass an unjust budget.

Now, we held up a report earlier that the EPIC for $35 billion in cuts for the very people they are trying to help, or they say they are trying to help; and then in the end game, it is $50 billion in cuts. Not a mumbled word, not a mumbled word about billion

aires and moving that tax cut away from billionaires, just some of it for the offset. Not a mumbled word, not a mumbled word to the oil industry that is dancing in the street and people around here are putting in $5 and $10 in their tank because they cannot afford to fill their tank up. It is not because they like going to gas stations; it is the fact that they cannot afford to fill their tank up. So it does not matter what you are driving. You can be driv

ing a small, compact car. $5 is $5, $10 is $10, $20 is $20. They cannot afford to fill up their gas tank because it costs so much, leave alone the fact that it is getting cold.

Mr. RYAN. Mr. Speaker, the truth is, and the facts are very clear, that the majority party, the Republicans in Congress, do believe in the welfare state. They are advocates of the welfare state, but it is restricted. It is restricted to a con

stituency, and that constituency is corporate America. Not small business America, not even midsized business, not even our non-profits, or our universities, or our welfare calls, whether they be pharmaceutical com

panies that they have given more than $100 billion worth of taxpayers' money in subsidies, but also oil companies, at the same time when oil companies are breaking records, and I want to remind everyone, Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, there is also another welfare state: Iraq. We have forgotten to even bring this up tonight, but there is a welfare state in Iraq. And as they are cutting programs in the United States on stu

dent loans, do we know what they are doing in Iraq? They rehabbed 2,717 schools in Iraq. They trained 36,000 teachers in Iraq. As they are cutting Medicaid and Medicare in the United States, they have trained 2,000 health educators in Iraq, 3.2 million children vaccinated in Iraq, 110 primary health care centers built in Iraq. We have a welfare state in Iraq right now that is being funded by the American taxpayer at the same time that the Republican majority here, for the people of the United States citizens that live right here in this country.

So they take your public tax dollars and they give $15.5 billion of it to the oil companies, $100 million of it to the pharmaceutical companies, do nothing to reduce the cost of pharmaceuticals; they give between $200 billion and $300 billion to the welfare state in Iraq and, at the same time, they are cutting pro

grams here in the United States of America. That is just corrupt. They put their party before the country.

We want to take this country in a new direction, change what is going on in this country, and create some inde

pendence from shakedown street.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, I have to tell my colleagues something about corruption. My colleagues have not seen anything yet.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman were yield, we tell them in our Something Working Group here, I used to say every week; but now it’s every night, about third

party validators, and I think it is im

portant to have third-party validators so that we show the people who are hearing us tonight that this is not Tim Ryan’s opinion or Debbie Wasserman Schultz’s opinion or Kendrick Meeke’s opinion or Bill Delahunt’s opinion; this opinion is shared by many, many others.

The Republican leadership here, they talk a good line about faith and values. In fact, they base almost their entire campaigns, the things they make to the country, about how we need to restore values and faith, and there should be more faith injected into every aspect of our government. Well, let us see what the people of faith, our faith leaders are saying about these budget cuts that we are going to be considering next week.

Today, there were leaders from various faiths that joined in prayer at the Capitol. Those leaders included Reverend Dr. Bob Edgar, who is the general secretary of the National Council of Churches; Reverend Rabbi David Saperstein, director of the Religious Action Center for Reform Judaism; and Eleanor Olddings Ivory, director, Washington office, the Presbyterian Church. They had a press conference before the prayer and they called for a moral budget and urged Congress to stop immoral budget priorities. Let me just outline a few of the things that they said.

Reverend Wallis said, “As this moral battle for the budget unfolds, I am calling on Members of Congress, some of whom make much out of their faith, to start some Bible studies before they cast votes to cut food stamps, Medi

caid, child care and more that hurt the weakest in our Nation. Reverend Edgar of the National Council of Churches said, “We gather today just days after Rosa Parks, the mother of the civil rights movement, lie in State honor here in the Capitol and as we celebrate her life and the strong witness she had for justice, we recognize that justice is hanging in the balance as this proposed budget, if passed, would hurt those who are most in need in our society: children, the elderly, and those living in poverty.”

I just want to quote from the remarks that Rabbi Saperstein made. He quoted the Bible and used the Bible’s words to help our Republican colleagues understand the impact that they are making. He urges us to “deal thy bread to the hungry,” not “steal thy bread from the hungry.”

Remember Proverbs’ stern warning: “Do not steal from the weak because he is weak and do not oppress the poor in the gate.”

Listen to the voiceless and to the Biblical imperative: “Speak out for those who cannot speak for the rights of the destitute.”

These are the third-party validators who are our religious leaders that are urging this Republican leadership not to go down this path, not to pull out
Mr. DELAHUNT of Massachusetts. Well, let me say, I was a Baptist. I do not have a lot of time, you know. I am a Baptist. But I do not have a lot of time, you know, Christian, Baptist. But here is the issue. I just wanted to make sure that we know exactly what we are doing. We know what we are doing. We want to make sure that we illuminate what they are doing because, when it comes down to it, if the Republican majority in this House was doing such a great job, then why do only 35 percent of the American people feel that we are doing a good job? Now if it is only 35 percent of the American people, just do the math. A supermajority of Americans feel that we are not doing our job. Why do they feel that way? I am not sure. Why is the President, why is the Republican minority what they are doing to the American people feel when it comes down to it, if the Republicans, Democrats, Independents, those that are thinking about voting, registering to vote, get involved in this process.

Because I can tell you right now, I have some good friends that are Republicans, and they are very upset about what is going on right now. I have good friends that are Independents, and they make comments as it relates to what is happening here in this House. But folks, what is fiscal responsibility? Okay, you know I am a fiscal conservative because I say I am, not because of our acts. This is a President that has not vetoed one spending bill. Not one. Not one.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I want to share with the American people something we shared with them earlier in the last hour or 2 hours ago about being fiscally responsible. In fact, in the last 224 years, as you indicate, they borrowed $1 trillion from outside sources, other countries. Forty-two presidents, 224 years over a trillion dollars.

In the last 4 years, the Republican President with the Republican House and the Republican Senate have borrowed more than what we have borrowed in the previous 224 years, over a trillion dollars from foreign countries, China, Japan, Saudi Arabia. Here is the kicker. See, now they are the bank. Now China is the bank. Now they are ahead of us, taking our jobs. And we are familiar now with the floodwaters. There was a problem with a levee in New Orleans in terms of the structural defects. But the one that I am talking about, the dam that I am talking about, that is 2,000 miles long, that is held together with taxpayer dollars, American taxpayer dollars, was not built in New Orleans. It was built in Mosul, Iraq.

Where are our priorities? Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Our priorities, apparently the priorities of this administration are in appointing unqualified people to run Government agencies like Michael Brown, whose priorities clearly were more on what kind of shirt he was wearing, as opposed to making sure that the people in the gulf coast States who were about to get and then did get hit by Katrina did get taken care of. And about whether to roll up their shirtsleeves and by appointing their college roommate to jobs, to making sure that you have well-qualified people in the Government.

It does not stop at Michael Brown. You have people who have been found to be wholly unqualified up and down the Government. If you have corruption, you have corruption, through and through, from the top. At the White House, the first person working in the White House in 130 years to be indicted in 130 years. You know, you had quite a few scandals in White Houses past just in the Republican party. We have a White House official, an administration official working in the White House been indicted before 130 years ago. That is where their priorities are.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. If I may, I mean, it is just not an indictment that someone ran out and took a plane and took a plane to go see a basketball game and flew back on some private purpose, half of that from the Chinese Central Bank, the Communist Central Chinese Bank. As you indicate, they are educating some 600,000 engineers. How do they pay for that? Well, you know how they paid for part of it? The American taxpayer, Mr. Speaker. Why are not they doing certain things? Why are not they doing certain things?
company or something. It is not that. It is not something that reflects on personal judgment.

No, this is outing, Mr. Speaker, a clandestine CIA agent. That individual that goes in, and guess what? Guess what was his name? Tom. He is looking for clearances to go in. That is totally impossible. You have talked to me. We were contacting those countries that have weapons of mass destruction. To harm who? The United States of America. And because she was out, and now, you know, I am hearing that in the White House they are saying that the defense is going to be there. You know, I have had a lot of conversations in a day. I did not quite remember talking to a reporter about a CIA agent.

I am concerned, Mr. Speaker, because if that is something that you can forget, the time that you outed a CIA agent, and you forget it. You are like, oh, well, you know, I got coffee. Then I walked over here. You know, you do not just out a CIA agent.

Mr. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, it is totally hard to keep track of all of the lies.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. You cannot violate national security when you have a security clearance, hello, that the four of us have. I said the other night, you know, for political gain, talk about the things that I know as a Member of the Armed Services Committee, talk about the things that I know as a Member of the Homeland Security Committee for political gain, that would be horrible and a crime.

And it took place. You know, if it was just politics, I mean, people can understand. But someone could have lost their life. We do not know yet. And now her cover has been blown. A whole front that the CIA has has been blown. And those individuals that she has relationships with have been blown, all because some folks thought it would be good for political gain to be reelected to the White House.

Now I am going to tell you something right now, ladies and gentlemen, that we cannot allow this activity to continue.

As we started talking, I was handed a piece of paper here, because I was incorrect. The Congress approval rating is at 31. At 31. So anyone that wants to come to the floor chest-beating and patting yourself on the back, talking about I am doing a great job, let me tell you something. On both sides of the aisle, we have to step it up on our leadership. We have to step it up on our leadership, and we have to do it together on behalf of Americans. We have to do it together on behalf of Americans, not Democrats, not Republicans, not Independents, not the special interests, not the folks that showed up at the fund-raiser last night.

We have got to make sure that we represent the United States of America and the people that pay taxes. They were Federalized when we were elected. So if folks feel, oh, well, I am here or here, and I do not need to worry about that, you are a Member of the United States Congress. You are a Member of the 109th Congress, and you have a responsibility to lead.

If you do not want to lead, I am going to tell you something, as sure my name is Congressman MEEK, I feel that the American people, Democrat, Republican, Independents have even going back to what the gentleman was talking about, 224 years of individuals that were fiscally responsible, the Whig Party, okay, these individuals will rise up to make sure that we protect our country.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Do you know why? Because the kids that have to pay this debt, that $8 trillion, they are not just Republican kids, they are not just Democratic kids, they are kids born in the United States of America.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Do you know what the tragedy of this is? Let us put aside for a moment indictments and a discussion of who might be indicted in the future or misconduct that violates criminal statutes.

What is truly unfortunate here is that we have reached a point where there is a culture that exists here in Washington where if there is disagreement, if there is dissent that it is described as unpatriotic.

We have heard that I think earlier this evening on the floor, the inference being that if there is disagreement, somehow motives can be inferred that that courageous individual, in my judgment, who speaks out in opposition is somehow unpatriotic.

There was an interesting article or column just recently by Jim Hoagland in The Washington Post where he said, Mr. Speaker, he wrote a letter to President Bush, he said, Mr. President, would it not have been easier if you had just written a letter to the editor in response to the opinion piece that was produced by Mr. WILSON? Would that not have been welcomed by the American people, by Members of Congress?

But what has happened is no, let us design a plan to impugn that individual's integrity. Let us try to destroy that individual. Let us try to discredit him or her. That is not what democracy is about. In fact, today I read the White House had prepared a series of talking points attacking the former National Security Adviser, Brent Scowcroft, who recently went public in saying that the policies of this Bush administration as it relates to Iraq and the Middle East are a failure. They were preparing, according to Mr. Hoagland, that column, attacking points to attack him. We have got to get away from this politics of destruction and ad hominem attacks and questioning individual's patriotism. That is not what we are about.

Mrs. WINTER. Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate that they do not appear to have any interest in that. Yet again, the cronyism and the culture of corruption continues because one would think that after Brownie they would have learned, who is still on the payroll.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. $148,000 a year.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. $148,000 a year. They may have learned and bring in additional people who are qualified. Yet, the President just picked the FDIC, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, chairman to run the gulf coast recovery. Let us pursue his qualification. He gave $100,000 to President Bush’s Presidential campaign.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Corruption.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. He has 30 years’ experience in the financial services industry.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Cronyism.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. It does not stop.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Incompetence.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Because they have no interest in it stopping.

We are approaching the end of our hour, and I want to yield to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN) and ask him to give out our Web site.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. 30somethingdems@mail.house.gov.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. ETHERIDGE (at the request of Ms. HELFERS) for today on account of family obligations.

Miss McMorris (at the request of Mr. BLUNT) for today on account of business in her district.

Mr. TIAHRT (at the request of Mr. BLUNT) for today on account of family obligations.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

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

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

Mr. SCHIFF, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. Brown of Ohio, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. WOOLSEY, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. EMANUEL, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. DEFAZIO, for 5 minutes, today.

Mrs. McCARTHY, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. STUPAK, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. MCDERMOTT, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. LEWIS of California, for 5 minutes, November 4.

Ms. HARRIS, for 5 minutes, today.

BILLY PRESENTED TO THE PRESIDENT

Jeff Trandahl, Clerk of the House reports that on November 1, 2005, he presented to the President of the United States...