declared an end to major combat operations in May of 2005. We need to face the fact that the situation in Iraq is not improving, nor will it improve as long as our troops remain there. Because the presence of over 160,000 soldiers in Iraq and on Iraqi soil is the main catalyst fueling Iraq’s insurgency. The time is long overdue for the U.S. to change course in Iraq and bring our troops home.

To transition from war to peace, we recommend that your administration immediately make four pivotal policy changes in Iraq. First: engage in greater multilateral cooperation with our allies. Second: pursue diplomatic non-military initiatives. Third: prepare for a robust post-conflict reconciliation process. And, fourth: withdraw the U.S. armed Forces. Multilateral cooperation. The United States must engage the international community, including the U.N. and NATO, to establish a multination security force for Iraq. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations at the United Nations, for example, is well suited for this task.

Diplomatic nonmilitary initiatives. The U.S. must pursue a diplomatic offensive to inter its role from that of Iraq’s military occupier to its reconstruction partner. This means giving Iraq back to the Iraqi people, working with them to rebuild their economic and physical infrastructure and creating Iraqi jobs.

The U.S. must also engage the United Nations to oversee Iraq’s economic and humanitarian needs, renounce any desire to control Iraqi oil, and ensure that the United States does not maintain lasting military bases in Iraq.

Post-conflict reconciliation. Establish an international peace commission to oversee Iraq’s post-war reconciliations. This group would include members of the global community who have experience in international rebuilding and conflict resolution and would be tasked with coordinating peace talks between Iraq’s various factions.

Withdrawal of the U.S. Armed Forces. The cost of the war in Iraq, both human and financial, has been staggering. Tragically, the American and Iraqi lives lost and the billions of dollars spent have failed to actually make our country safer from the threat of global terrorism. To end the war in Iraq, save lives, and prevent the U.S. from spiraling even further into debt, the U.S. must withdraw its Armed Forces now.

Mr. President, after Iraq holds its December parliamentary elections, the United States can then provide non-military support to ensure the sufficiency of Iraq. We look forward to your response to our recommendations, and we would welcome the opportunity to discuss them with you further. Mr. Speaker, I will send this letter to the President in the coming days. Not only is it long overdue from the Bush administration to end the war in Iraq; it is long overdue for this body, the Congress of America, to do our part in ending the war in Iraq.

I urge all of my colleagues to lend their signatures to this timely, important letter.

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

(Mr. BURGESS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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

(Mr. SCHIFF addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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

(Mr. LEWIS of California addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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

(Mr. McCaul of Texas addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

HURRICANE WILMA VICTIMS NEED HELP IN SOUTH FLORIDA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, this afternoon all across south Florida, there are thousands of people whose homes have been condemned. They have been condemned following a category 3 hurricane called Hurricane Wilma.

Subsequently in the last few days, it has been pouring rain. I went door to door in my district over the weekend and met hundreds of men and women in their 80s and 90s who are suffering going on across this country, now is the time to add more harm and do more damage to people who are badly in need.

Mr. Speaker, we need to do right by Americans, not pull the rug out from under them. I urge my colleagues to make sure that we provide the badly needed assistance, both to victims of Hurricane Katrina on the gulf coast and to victims of Katrina from south Florida.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BROWN of Ohio addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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 50 minutes as the designated minority leader.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to be back here on the House floor on behalf of the 30-Something Working Group. We have been coming to the floor. Mr. Speaker, for a couple of years weekly; and over the past several months we have turned it into a nightly, and sometimes bi-nightly, event, where we come down...
here and we talk about what is going on in the Nation’s capital.

We do not only talk about what is going on with regard to people who are our age, within the 30-Something Working Group, although the original mission of one group was to discuss and to lay out the facts for people who are in our generation, in their 30s with families, and how the decisions that are being made here affect that group of people.

Then, we have broadened this really to touch on all of the issues, because it seemed as though we got it further and further into the budget cuts, the tax program that the Republicans have, the war, the inability to address the natural disasters, we have broadened our mission to deal with all of these issues because all of these issues hit home to not only people who are in their 30s but people across the country.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK).

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Let me share something very quick, because I want to make sure that Members, staff, everyone understands what is going on, Mr. Speaker, The gentleman from Ohio (Mr. Ryan) hit the nail right on the head, hitting it with the hammer right on the head like a good carpenter.

I can tell you what is happening now in Washington D.C. is unprecedented in history of the United States of America. Let me say it again. What is happening now in the United States as it relates to its governance, I am not saying the everyday Americans, because folks are waking up and going to work every day. Small businesses are going to open their stores to be able to bring about the kind of commerce they need in their local communities. Kids are waking up, going to school to hopefully educate themselves. But as it relates to governance we are falling short.

We are robbing, a couple of years ago we could say future generations. I would say we are robbing Americans in the present. So when these kinds of activities that we are talking about taking place under light and under camera, then I am very concerned about what is going on in the back halls of Congress.

Now I am going to tell you right now, it is not the Meek report. It is not the Ryan report. It is not the Wasserman Schultz report. This is what is happening in our country right now. We have fiscal responsibility used as some sort of whim word or some sort of punchline. It is not being used in a way that it should be used.

It is not saying to billionaires, no, we cannot give you another tax break because we have a war going on, as a matter of fact, two. We have three natural disasters that we have to deal with our country in an unprecedented way. We have Medicare that some here in this Congress on the majority side want to cut. So we have to say no to the special interests.

Also, I am going to tell you, and I just want to make sure that folks understand what we are talking about. It is unprecedented as it relates to a lack of governance in the history of the country.

Now I am just going to point out just a few things here, and the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. Ryan), you can continue or we can move on to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. Wasserman Schultz). But I can tell you this, USA Today, I did not print this. The gentleman didn’t print this. “Outing of a CIA agent.”

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. One of our third-party validators.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. One of our third-party validators.

“Outing of a CIA agent. Louisiana can’t pay Katrina and Rita bills.” But, meanwhile, folks are running around cutting the very programs that help folks in Louisiana and Mississippi and other affected areas, in South Florida as it relates to Wilma and others, cutting programs that will help the very people that State is trying to use.

The Washington Times, a conservative paper here in Washington, D.C. It talks about issues that are coming before the Congress, and it talks about the other issues that are taking place in Capitol Hill, maybe we can help put a little more pressure on the paper talking about indictments and hearings.

The Washington Post, a big front-page picture. Not about some sort of program or something, but we are helping middle-class families, not talking about bringing the costs down of gas or heating oil or anything like that. No, it talks about the fact that the popularity, 58 percent in a poll questioned the integrity of the President of the United States.

Now I am not one to question the integrity of the President of the United States, but I can tell you this: That is interesting that individuals can out on this and indictment agents and then forget about it. Oh, like I said last night, I was going to get a cup of coffee, and I walked over—I cannot remember when I outed the CIA agent.

The bottom line is something is very wrong as it relates to what is going on in this country, as it relates to governance.

The New York Times, the same. You can pick up a paper, the Members when they go back to their districts, since we finished our business for this week, they can pick up the papers and find the same thing. We cannot explain ourselves or spin ourselves out of this situation. This Congress is rated below, 35, 31 percent. Who is counting at this particular time? But I can tell you something is very wrong.

We have to rise up and provide the leadership. That is why we come to this House to challenge the majority side to stand up and talk about the reason why we have this kind of atmosphere in Washington is because we have not called these individuals out on the carpet. Need it be executive branch, Federal agencies, those that are taking the American people’s tax dollars and doing what they may.

$14 billion yesterday in the Budget Committee and a hike in fees in students loans, in student assistance at a time when we are trying to provide jobs. So I am just going to say that we need to be alarmed by some of this. We need to be able to let folks know that we are about changing this kind of atmosphere here in Washington, D.C.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. The gentleman is absolutely right.

The gentleman talked about, he started his last couple of minutes talking about the precedent-setting activity in this administration. To take that one step further, let us talk about just how precedent setting this administration is.
They are certainly precedent setting in terms of ethical lapses, in terms of corruption and cronyism and the lack of confidence.

You have literally, with the indictment of Mr. Libby on Friday, the first White House official to be indicted in 130 years. Now, throughout our lifetime, throughout our lifetime and the lifetime of our generation here in the 30-Something Working Group, you go through probably our earliest memory of our administration would be Nixon. We were young kids during the Nixon administration, but obviously that was a pretty significant scandal.

Then you move forward. Nothing too terrible in the Ford administration. People obviously had some deep concerns or over Mr. Carter administration but nothing ethical to speak of. Obviously, with Iran Contra and the Reagan administration and the number of officials who were investigated and subpoenaed there were deep concerns, but no one indicted from the White House.

The same thing with President Clinton. No indictments of people in the White House. Definitely some questions, but now we reach the Bush administration.

Does the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN) have the chart with him from the other day where we can put it up and show people and the Speaker what the President said during his campaign? Is that where you are? As we are getting it, if you recall, the President when he was a candidate for President talked about how he was going to transform the standards of ethics of the White House and that anyone working in his administration was going to be held to the highest of standards. That it was not just going to be whether they have actually broke the law, but the standard, and here it is.

President Bush's promise that he made as a candidate that, "In my administration we will ask not only what is legal but what is right. Not just what the lawyers allow but what the public deserves."

Well, I do not know, I guess prevarication is just a common practice. It is just part of their culture, part of their culture of corruption and cronyism and incompetence.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. A double standard for people working in their administration.

Ms. WASSERMANN SCHULTZ. Right. I guess they believe they can say anything they want to. They do not have to follow it, and there would be no consequences. But, see, unfortunately for them, for me, for the American people, the American people get it now. They are on to them.

Let us talk about the Washington Post poll, and I know we will have an opportunity to put this up in poster form probably next week, but one of the questions that the Washington Post/ABC News poll asked was, Please tell me whether the following statement applies to Bush or not: He is honest and trustworthy. In May of 2004, 53 percent of the American people answered that question yes and 45 percent said no. Now 40 percent think he is honest and trustworthy, and 58 percent say he is not.

I think that is in part because you can tell a lot about a person by the people they surround themselves with. Right now, let us look at who is surrounding the President of the United States or who previously was surrounding the President of the United States.

You have Mr. Libby, who was indicted on Friday; and, of course, it is not confirmed unless and until he is convicted. He is not guilty of a crime yet. But he was indicted. The first official in the White House in 130 years. The President said if somebody committed a crime they will no longer work in his administration.

The gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN) I know will probably talk a few minutes about the shifting sands of the President's statements. But you have Mr. Rove who increasingly it has become clear, as clear as a bell, that he absolutely was directly involved in outing a covert CIA agent, directly involved in outing him, and you have Karl Rove, who has been a close advisor to Bush.

The question was, Given what you have heard or read, do you think Rove did anything wrong in connection with this case or not? If yes, do you think he did something unethical but not illegal? Do you think he did something illegal? Forty-nine percent of the American people answered that question that he did something wrong for sure. Of the 49 percent, 26 percent believe he did something illegal and 23 percent think he did something unethical. Forty-nine percent of people asked believe that Karl Rove did something either illegal or unethical, and 59 percent of the people believe that he should resign from the White House.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we are in the minority, and that means that the majority, which is the Republican majority, has the responsibility of governance, has the responsibility because they have the committee chairmanships. They have the Speaker. They have all of the leadership, and I will say at least I am not even going to talk about the Speaker or the leadership. I am going to talk about the committee chairpersons that have the responsibility to protect and have direct oversight over the Federal Government, making sure that we keep children, women, men, everyday Americans, safe.

What are we doing as Democrats? What we have done, not only have we put light on what is wrong as it relates to outing CIA agents, but also, there was a letter written today by four of our ranking members. A ranking member, I want to make sure I explain, that is the highest democratic member on the said committees of jurisdiction or concern over a particular issue, in this case, security clearance.

This letter went to the associate director of division of security, and it is questioning Mr. Rove's security clearance. This did not come from the chairman of the committee, did not come from any person of power on the majority side. This came from the minority side, on the Democratic side, and it is done by very fine Members, the ranking member of the Committee on Energy and Commerce, Mr. JOHN DINGELL; the ranking member of the Appropriations Committee, Ranking Member, DAVID OBEY; also, Defense appropriations, veteran, marine, Mr. JOHN MURPHY from Pennsylvania; and also, the Armed Services ranking member that we serve with, Mr. IVE SKELETON of the Armed Services Committee. They questioned the security clearance of Mr. Rove.

What the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. WASSERMANN SCHULTZ) just finished saying is the fact that no one is that important when it is a question of outing a CIA agent and others for political gain. So that is what we are doing right now.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, that is exactly the point that I think that we have been trying to make here in the 30-something group. You cannot put your political party above the interests of the country, and if you out a CIA agent because it may benefit your political party, you are wrong. You are wrong. You cannot do that because it weakens the country; and you did not just out her. You outed every contact of the CIA that the CIA had. They had a front company. They talked about her being at the Belgium University. So any
American now at the University of Belgium is now suspect if they have any contacts.

This has ramifications well beyond what the average person could even understand, well beyond what we could even imagine. This man was working on behalf of the United States of America and the one quote that sticks with me is the one CIA operative that said, outing a CIA agent is the moral equivalent of outing a military unit in a forward area. So in Baghdad, you know, they are over there, it would be like Karl Rove or Scooter Libby saying to the insurgency in Iraq, the Marines are coming right over there in about a half an hour; that is where they are coming. That would be unacceptable.

But in the covert world, that is exactly what Karl Rove and Scooter Libby and all the minions over in the executive branch did. It was a coordinated effort to out this woman because they knew exactly what her husband was saying about the war, and that is wrong. That is wrong.

If you do not believe us, because we love our third-party validators, this is Melissa who was a 14-year covert CIA agent, she is talking about her lies and we are talking about capabilities. We do our work, we risk our lives, we risk lives of our agents in order to protect our country; and when something like this happens, it cuts to the very core of what we do. We are not being undermined by the North Koreans. We are not being undermined by the Russians. We are being undermined by officials in our own government.

That I find galling.

Could you imagine being a CIA operative somewhere in the world right now and you think, do they got my back in D.C.? Do they got my back? Or are you afraid that if I get caught up in the wrong political debate, somehow I may get out by my own government?

That is what this is all about, and to have the kind of deceit and lies take place out of the executive branch, let us just look at this.

Official A in the indictment, now we are not making this up. This is right out of the indictment for Scooter Libby. Official A, which the administration has admitted is Karl Rove, on July 10 of 2003, the middle of the summer, Official A, which is Karl Rove, advised Scooter Libby of a conversation that he had earlier that week with Bob Novak, the columnist, in which Wilson's wife was discussed as a CIA employee involved in Wilson's trip. Libby was advised by Official A, by Karl Rove, that Novak would be writing a story about Wilson's wife.

So Karl Rove told Scooter Libby in July of 2003 that Novak was going to be writing a story.

Now, September of 2003, a couple of months later, Karl Rove says to ABC News that Andrea Owen asked, Did you ever have any knowledge of the CIA agent or did you leak the name of the CIA agent to the press? Any knowledge or did you leak it. Karl Rove said no. He lied to the American people. He did not lie to Andrea Owen. He lied to the American people. We know from the indictment he told Scooter Libby Novak was going to write about it, and 2 months later he says he does not know anything about it.

Then he does a CNN interview just July of this year; and he says, I will repeat what I said to ABC News when this whole White House coverup of months ago. I did not know her name, and I did not leak her name.

Well, if you go back to the indictment, Official A, who is Karl Rove, advised Libby of the conversation that Novak would be writing a story about Wilson's wife. He lied. Now, he is in the White House making decisions on behalf of the United States of America.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Highest security clearance.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. We cannot have it, unacceptable behavior, unbecoming of a White House official.

Then I am going to wrap this up. I am going to go right through this so we can get everybody involved here. Then not only did Karl Rove and Libby lie to the American people, they lied to Scott McClellan, because he came out 2 months after the indictment and said what everyone already knew, and McClellan says, Those individuals, Rove, Libby, Abrams, assured me they were not involved with this. Another lie.

Now we have to change our language a bit to respect the rules of the House and respect the office which we are about to discuss.

This is out of the indictment. On or about June 12, 2003, that same summer that we were just talking about, Libby spoke to Matthew Cooper of the New York Times about the story and reported it back to the president. All this is right out of the indictment and alleged activities that have been identified in this indictment and alleged activities that are in the stacks of these papers today, just today, this is not paper from the week of the month over the past year. That is just today, and I cannot even hold up the number of papers. We could not even bring them all down here to the floor. There are just too many. Mr. Speaker, I do not know how it would look if I rolled in a cart of the newspapers that are reporting what we are saying.

I can tell you this, it even comes back here to this Congress. The fact that we are not carrying out our oversight responsibilities and we are not calling this administration into check and balance as it relates to oversight, this is the reason why this activity is going on.

I just want to share some frustration here with trying to get information from the majority side of what happened in the Clinton administration as it relates to subpoenas and what has happened in the Bush administration as it relates to subpoenas because. Mr. Speaker, I do not just want to come to this Congress and say there was a plethora, a number of subpoenas that went to the Clinton administration for far less, for far less, and now we have the outing of CIA agents. We have the possibility of some hanky-panky with the intelligence that was given to the Congress of the United States. We have the possibility of other questionable activities out of this White House and from this administration, and there are not any committee chairmen that are running around saying we are going to subpoena this person, we are going to put them under oath, and they are going to come before this Congress and they are going to respond.
Mr. MEEK of Florida. So we do not know what is going on under this majority.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. The next one is: The committee is not sure they have those records. They could be archived in the National Archives. The committee does not have records for previous years, and previous records may be at the National Archives.

Now I am going to put the majoritity on notice right now. If those subpoenas were sent out and issued under the Clinton administration, are in this Capitol, and I do not know of any subpoenas, but if they are out there, and I am going to give them the benefit of the doubt, if they are in this building, somebody better get an intern and run them over to the National Archives because we are on our way over there.

This issue of covering up this whole thing, this thing of I got your back if you have mine, enough of it. People are saying, we want to know about that change, and we are being stymied. We are being locked out of information.

One Member said, this is the people’s House. I question that at this time. I think there are some people that are very, very worried about the facts we are bringing to light to the American people and to Members of Congress, letting them know that we know what is going on in the back halls of Congress.

Right now, like I said before, as it relates to governance, the country is going through some hard times; and there are some folks on the majority side that are not willing to govern on behalf of the very Americans that sent us here to represent them.

In this House, we have to be elected. Not one Member of this House has been appointed. In the Senate, you can be appointed to someone; but after you leave early in their term. But in the House there has to be a special election. So whether it is Democrat or Republican, you are elected. There is one Independent. By virtue of the fact we have been elected to come here, we have been federalized to make sure we stand up on behalf of everyday Americans.

So the hypocrisy that is going on in the House as relates to oversight, I am saying this on behalf of CIA agents right now worrying about whether their government is going to out them, and I am saying this on behalf of national security, which I serve on two committees which deal with this very issue.

Our integrity and how other countries see us and how individuals that want to go into the clandestine service, that want to serve in the CIA, I want them, I want the best and brightest to come, but I do not want them to think or anyone in the State Department to think if they get on the opposite side of an administration that they will go after their wife.

We have not even talked about that. Because Ambassador Wilson had something to say outside of what was on the script of the White House, and they could not get him because he is a person that doted his I’s and crossed his T’s, they decided to go after his wife. We were going to pay.

To women in this country, you need to be concerned about that. Someone cannot get to your husband, but they are going to come after you. We need to disabuse ourselves of that.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Well, you bet your sweet bippy they are worried. They are worried you are asking for those documents. Because there are those on the other side of the aisle that would try to lead people to believe that we are just a bunch of malcontent Democrats who are standing on the floor complaining about something inconsequential. It is just the same old, same old. Not true.

Look at the reasoning and the motivation that was behind the outing of a covert CIA agent and of the planning and machinations that were going on in the White House to conceal and deceive the American people about what their plans were. It was all about making sure that they could have the way in going to war in Iraq. That is what it all boiled down to. And the consequences of that motivation are that now we have more than 2,000 American soldiers, men and women, who are dead, who lost their lives because this administration was hell-bent on being right, facts be damned.

It made no difference to them that all the evidence mounting showed that they were wrong, that there were no weapons of mass destruction. It was obvious there was no other reason to go into Iraq other than the President and his people decided we should, long before September 11. With all the documentation that has come out now to the fact that to the fact that the President was elected in 2000, it had been decided that they were going to go to war in Iraq, and what they have been doing for the last few years leading up to our entering Iraq and since then is assembling the facts around their decision.

Then subsequent to our entry into Iraq and it being discovered there were no weapons of mass destruction, in part because Joe Wilson went there to Niger and demonstrated factually that there was not the case, subsequently they have had to prevaricate. They have had to lie, because, oops, it was shown that not only were they wrong but they were deceitful.

Can you think of any more heinous act than deceptions of the American people and the world on the ultimate sacrifice that Americans are asked to make for their country?

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. If the gentlewoman would yield, that is a tremendous point. They have deceived and misled the American people. Then, when the Democrats want to change things and try to take things in a new
Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. They have no respect for the American people. They have no respect for the American people. When you are willing to do anything or say anything to have your way, regardless of the consequences, that demonstrates that you have no respect for the people that you represent, for the people that sent you to Washington to do right by them.

As elected officials, the three of us represent, for the people that sent you to Washington to do right by them. So the problem here in this House is not about the majority leadership or the majority side looking the other way. Even though they know what is going on, they are not going to look because their friends are there and they do not want to do that.

In the Clinton administration, Democrats called the administration officials out on things that they were doing that was wrong.

That is our responsibility in the Constitution of these United States.

So when the gentleman from Ohio speaks of not putting party over country, I think that if we were to look at what we do now and what we have done in the past, we have always put country over party. The everyday Republican does not want his government operated by what the national GOP leadership says that it should be, that we need to do that and do this, but they are messing with the lives of everyday Americans. They do not endorse that.

That is our responsibility in the Constitution of these United States.

So when the gentleman from Ohio speaks of not putting party over country, I think that if we were to look at what we do now and what we have done in the past, we have always put country over party. The everyday Republican does not want his government operated by what the national GOP leadership says that it should be, that we need to do that and do this, but they are messing with the lives of everyday Americans. They do not endorse that.

That is our responsibility in the Constitution of these United States.
Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I yield to the gentleman from Florida.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, what it boils down to is that here in the House the rules hem us in, and we have to talk around a lot of what we might like to say more directly, but the American people elected us to speak truth to power. I mean, that is the bottom line. We could not have more power in the White House than there is right now, and they exercise every bit of it. They exercise every bit of it, regardless of the consequences, regardless of the plight of the people whose decisions they affect. There are so many examples of how what we are seeing on this floor allows us to reveal that truth.

The gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN) has a chart right there that will help us ferret out a little bit of that truth. Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming our friend from Florida was talking about what is going on and how personal this is.

I mean, we have an obligation here. What is going on today is the Republican majority has created a welfare state in the United States; they have created a welfare state here in the United States, but the welfare state is for a very small group, corporations. Sixteen billion dollars in the last few months of corporate welfare went to the oil companies, the most profitable quarters they have had in decades; and public tax money was given to the tune of $16 billion to subsidize them. Pharmaceutical companies have gotten over $100 billion in average tax money, sent down here. The Republican majority gave it to the pharmaceutical companies. So we have a welfare state in the United States of America.

But we also are creating a welfare state in Iraq. While we are cutting free and reduced lunch and Medicaid and Medicare, health care programs for United States citizens, we have opened up 110 primary health care centers in Iraq. We have educated 2,000 health officials. These two million kids in Iraq have been vaccinated. We have rehabbed 2,717 schools and trained 36,000 teachers.

Now maybe we should be doing this because we invaded the country and bombed the heck out of it. So maybe we should be doing it. But when they are giving billions to the wealthiest corporations in the country and they are cutting free and reduced lunch for kids and they are doubling the cost of college tuition and raising the fees for students tune of $8,000 a year over the life of the loan, they are doing what is best for the Republican Party and they are doing the absolute worst thing they could possibly do for the United States of America.

And let me tell you my colleagues why, Mr. Speaker. The Chinese government in the country of China produced 600,000 engineers last year. We produce almost none of the engineers foreign born. How are we going to stimulate our economy, create new jobs, innovate the new technologies that are needed to be innovative so that we could keep on the cutting edge of a vital, global economy if we are not investing in people who are going to create that wealth? We cannot afford poor, unhealthy, uneducated kids to go into the workforce and create wealth for us. But yet we are making the investment in Iraq and we are giving away billions in tax dollars to the oil companies and to the pharmaceutical companies.

That system is corrupt. That is a corrupt system. Corrupt and the way it is being administered and the way government is at a complete level of incompetence that we have never really ever seen. With the war, the execution of the aftermath of the war, the rehab, the nation building, complete incompetence on behalf of the people who wear the suits and ties. Complete incompetence.

The response to Katrina, the highest level of incompetence possible because they put people in charge of FEMA who were political cronies, and the level of corruption is really higher than we have really ever seen. And they are cronies because they know the administration. They are cronies because they get the job and they are not competent.

We all know if one gets a political job and they get to hire people that they are going to hire people they know because this is a business about loyalty. But we also have to hire people who are competent. And Mr. Brown, the gentleman from California, just mentioned by my friend.

So the level of incompetency here is unreal. It is a corrupt system that takes care of corporations and ignores every other American. I just want to tell my colleagues it would be nice if someone on the other side, if someone in the Republican Party, would just stand up and take responsibility. We get lectured all the time about personal responsibility. Please someone stand up and take responsibility, because they are weakening the country. They are weakening the country. And we have a constitutional obligation to try to offer solutions.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?
is not a bipartisan equal commission like the 9/11 Commission. The 9/11 Commission was the most successful commission we have had in trying to address a major terrorist attack in the United States. Let us put a bipartisan commission together and look at Katrina.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I yield to the gentleman from California.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, let me just say to my friend that I believe that what we should do is we should take our constitutional responsibility, our constitutionally mandated responsibility according to Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution, for oversight of the executive branch. We should pursue that as vigorously as we possibly can.

And I will say to my friend, that if, in fact, after doing that, having Democrats and Republicans work in a bipartisan way on the commission that the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. DAVIS) is chairing, it is for the committee to decide who it wants to talk to, whether it wants FEMA, and he is still on the payroll. It is up to the committee to talk to the Democrats. It is the work of the committee, not the work of the Republicans or the Republicans...

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I yield to the gentleman from California.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend for yielding to me...

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I am happy to respond to that by saying very simply that it is not the work of the Republicans or the Republicans...

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I am happy to respond to that by saying very simply that it is not the work of the Republicans or the Republicans...

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, re-claiming my time, we are getting into the issue of bipartisan...