

you said that you are not moving ahead rapidly, but you will let us know, and you will not do so until the Democrats are in the room. Frankly, Mr. Leader, our concern is, and the concern of Democrats has been, that once the Democrats get back in the room it moves exceedingly rapidly, without really an opportunity for Democrats to make substantive contributions, whether they win or lose in the conference.

I yield to my friend.

Mr. BOEHNER. I thank my colleague for yielding.

Now, as the gentleman is well aware, I believe that all of us were elected by our constituents, regardless of what side of the aisle we are on, and we all have a constitutional right and duty to participate in this legislative process; and the gentleman is well aware that there were a lot of conferences that I and members of my party never saw before they were completed. And as the gentleman is well aware, there are times when having the right people in the room is important. And every bill is different.

So on the pension bill particularly, as I said, I have talked to Members on your side of the aisle, I have talked to Democrats in the Senate as well, and I would hope that sometime soon you will see Members, more Members, brought into the room to try to help move this process along.

Mr. HOYER. I appreciate the comments of the majority leader, and I have confidence that he will work towards that end, and we look forward to it. I thank the gentleman for both his information and for his concerns about doing it in that fashion.

ADJOURNMENT TO MONDAY,
APRIL 3, 2006, AND HOUR OF
MEETING ON TUESDAY, APRIL 4,
2006

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 2 p.m. on Monday next, and further, when the House adjourns on that day, it adjourn to meet at 12:30 p.m. on Tuesday, April 4, 2006 for morning hour debate.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FITZPATRICK of Pennsylvania). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Ohio?

There was no objection.

DISPENSING WITH CALENDAR
WEDNESDAY BUSINESS ON
WEDNESDAY NEXT.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the business in order under the Calendar Wednesday rule be dispensed with on Wednesday next.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Ohio?

There was no objection.

AMENDMENT PROCESS FOR CON- SIDERATION OF CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ON THE BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2007

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. Speaker, the Committee on Rules may meet the week of April 3 to grant a rule which could limit the amendment process for floor consideration of the concurrent resolution on the budget for the fiscal year 2007. The Committee on the Budget ordered the concurrent resolution reported late last night.

Any Member wishing to offer an amendment should submit 55 copies of the amendment and one copy of a brief explanation of the amendment to the Rules Committee in Room H-312 of the Capitol by 2 p.m. on Tuesday, April 4, 2006. Members are advised that the text of the concurrent resolution should be made available on the Budget and the Rules Committees Web sites no later than March 31, Friday. As in past years, the Rules Committee intends to give priority to amendments offered as complete substitutes.

Members should use the Office of Legislative Counsel to ensure that their amendments are drafted in the most appropriate format and should check with the Office of the Parliamentarian to be certain their amendments comply with the rules of the House.

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBER TO CONGRESSIONAL AWARD BOARD

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 803(a) of the Congressional Recognition for Excellence in Arts Education Act (2 U.S.C. 803(a)), and the order of the House of December 18, 2005, the Chair announces the Speaker's appointment of the following Member of the House to the Congressional Award Board:

Mr. CHOCOLA, Indiana

□ 1500

WELCOME HOME, RANDAL MCCLOY

(Mrs. CAPITO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to welcome Randal McCloy back to his home in Simpson, West Virginia. Randal was one of the 13 miners trapped in the Sago mine on January 2 and was the lone survivor. He suffered severe injuries to his heart, lungs, and kidneys and was in a coma for several weeks due to a lack of oxygen during the 40 hours he was trapped below the surface.

With all of the sadness West Virginians have experienced in the coal fields this year, today we can rejoice that Randal has recovered enough to leave the rehabilitative hospital and return home to his family and friends.

West Virginians have come together over the past 3 months to offer prayers and support for the families of those who have lost loved ones. The families of the Sago miners have made our

State proud, advocating for increased mine safety tools to help ensure other families do not experience the tragedy they have endured.

But today is the McCloys' day. We continue to support Randal McCloy; his wife, Anna; and their children as their family's road to recovery continues, and we will always remember the sacrifice made by his 12 co-workers.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FITZPATRICK of Pennsylvania). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

IRAQ AND A COMMONSENSE BUDGET

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

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, with this Congress blindly passing each and every one of the President's requests for more money for the war in Iraq, which is soon to exceed \$300 billion in total costs, the time is long overdue for a little common sense about how we spend the American people's money.

Earlier this month I introduced new legislation, the Common Sense Budget Act of 2006, legislation that puts some sanity back into the Nation's fiscal policy. This bill already has the support of more than 35 cosponsors.

It is beyond dispute that this administration, in tandem with the Republican Congress, has been, to put it mildly, less than fiscally responsible. And are they spending on the neediest Americans, those who need a hand up quite often just to make it from one day to the next? No, of course not. Instead, they fattened up the Pentagon and lavished wealthy special interests with subsidies and tax breaks.

Last fall's budget debate actually exposed the staggering hypocrisy of it all because the very same congressional majority that is responsible for the fiscal decadence of the last several years suddenly started lecturing about thrift and responsibility. They were shocked, shocked, that spending had been going on around here.

Federal money for Katrina reconstruction, they decided, had to be offset by budget cuts. Deficit spending is okay, apparently, when it comes to upper-bracket tax cuts, but not for poor people whose homes are under water.

Well, guess what they chose to cut. The social safety net: Medicaid, food stamps, public housing, students loans, and on and on. Just the kinds of programs that saved my life and my children's lives when I was a single mom on welfare 35 years ago. To help people on the gulf coast who lost everything, they took from the people who have virtually nothing. That is your Republican fiscal policy in a nutshell.

Well, enough of that. It is time we invested more in our people and less in our defense contractors. My Common-Sense Budget Act would trim \$60 billion in waste from the Pentagon budget and put it to work on behalf of the people and the programs that truly strengthen America. The money would be distributed as follows: \$5 billion a year for homeland security to make up for funding shortfalls in emergency preparedness, infrastructure upgrades, and grants for first responders; \$10 billion each year for energy independence, to kick the imported oil habit that we have in this Nation by investing in efficient, renewable energy sources; \$5 billion devoted to putting a dent in the \$8.2 trillion national debt; and for children's health care, \$10 billion annually to provide health care coverage for the millions of uninsured American children; \$10 billion over 12 years to rebuild and modernize every public K-12 school in this country; \$5 billion a year to retrain 250,000 Americans who have lost their jobs because of foreign trade; medical research, \$2 billion a year to restore recent cuts to the National Institutes of Health budget; and \$13 billion a year in humanitarian assistance that allows poor nations to feed 6 million children who are at risk of dying from starvation every year, to end global hunger.

The money is there to make an extraordinary difference in people's lives. We just need to challenge the entrenched interests and take on the sacred cows.

General Larry Korb worked with the Progressive Caucus and me to draft this model alternative, and Ben Cohen from Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream and the organization Business Leaders for Sensible Priorities also helped make the introduction of this bill possible.

There are models of good corporate citizenship, you see, businesses that understand that the return on these investments will benefit the entire society: a skilled workforce, healthy children, modern schools, fewer fossil fuels, better fire departments, scientific progress, less debt. These socially responsible businesses understand what makes America strong and safe, and it is not a bloated Pentagon budget that continues to invest in Cold War.

GAS PRICES

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

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, gas prices are rising and someone is to blame.

The root cause of the rising gasoline prices, as an editorial in this week's Wall Street Journal rightly states, is the incredible shrinking of supply of a gasoline additive called MTBE. The production of MTBE has been for 15 years the direct result of a Federal mandate that such oxygenates be included in the Nation's gas supply. It was mandated by a Democrat Congress seeking to help clean the environment.

Now, that mandate is expiring in May, in large part owed to the discovery of MTBE in some water supplies, a discovery that has trial lawyers salivating as they count down the days. And the main culprit for its seeping into water supplies is faulty, unrepaired, leaking underground storage tanks.

But the producers of those do not have the deep pockets of MTBE producers. Thus, when MTBE producers' liability protection expires in May, as the editorial states: "Producers and refiners will face far greater liability, which has set off a race to exit the market" because, as history has shown, the vultures in the lawsuit-happy trial bar will pounce on those with the deepest pockets.

In other words, the Federal Government mandated the production and addition of MTBE as a clean air additive to the Nation's fuel. But now the government says that mandate, while good for clean air, turns out actually to have been bad for groundwater. Now the government wants to let trial lawyers hold the industry accountable for environmental problems the government itself created with its original mandate. Meanwhile, the Nation's ethanol producers, who must now fill the additive void created by the widespread and predictable MTBE pullout, have already admitted they cannot meet the new market demand.

No MTBE and not enough ethanol will mean less gasoline on the market, less gasoline that can be prepared for the market, creating a shortage of supply and thus higher prices. In other words, come Memorial Day, gas prices, which are already higher than they have been since the early days after Hurricane Katrina, stand to spike even higher.

All of this economic analysis in the Journal's editorial, regrettably, is true. What is not true is the editorial's insinuation that congressional Republicans are to blame for it.

On the contrary, Mr. Speaker, House Republicans fought for years to include MTBE-liability protection in the energy bill. The bill was shelved in 2003 when a Democrat-led filibuster, joined by liberal Republicans, succeeded in killing it, an outcome brought about, the then-Democrat leader said, by "the House Republican leadership's insistence on inclusion of retroactive liability protections for MTBE."

So in 2004 the energy bill effectively died when the Senate Energy and Natural Resources chairman unilaterally pulled the MTBE provisions from the Senate version of the legislation. So, finally, in 2005 the MTBE-protection provision was described by the House minority leader as a "disgraceful . . . giveaway." Enough Senate Republicans agreed with this false assessment to ensure that the energy bill was finally passed, after 4 years of effort, without the desperately needed MTBE provisions that House Republicans advocated for so long.

The result: the ethanol-MTBE fiasco, as the Journal puts it, is not the fault of Republicans on Capitol Hill, broadly speaking, but only about seven of them, all Senators, Senators who joined obstructionist Democrats and eco-extremists to punish an innocent industry.

House Republicans warned all along about the MTBE pullout, the ethanol shortfall, and the resulting spike in gas prices just in time for the 2006 summer traveling season, and we were right.

MTBE liability protection is the only thing standing between the American people and \$3-a-gallon gas this summer. And the only thing standing between MTBE-liability and the President's signature is a collection of Senators, the long-term effects of whose shortsighted grandstanding are only now starting to be felt.

So, Americans, when it hits \$3 a gallon, call the Senate.

Hopefully, yesterday's editorial will give MTBE-protection new life in Congress. And if not, drivers, especially in those States of Senators from New Mexico, Arizona, Maine, Vermont, Iowa, Illinois, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, and New Hampshire, will know who to thank.

□ 1515

THE ECONOMY IS NOT AS ROSY AS REPUBLICANS CLAIM

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FITZPATRICK of Pennsylvania). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, if you look at the headline economic numbers and listen to the Bush Administration's talking points, you could get the impression that the economy is in pretty good shape.

But when we talk to our constituents, we get a very different picture. We hear anxiety about the economy, and a feeling that things are not going very well for the typical American family. The White House seems puzzled by this discrepancy, but it is very simple.

The benefits of the economic recovery from the 2001 recession have not been going to ordinary Americans. President Bush likes to cite statistics on how fast the economy is growing and how much productivity has increased.

But what he does not mention is that, on his watch, the economy went through the most protracted job slump in decades. There is still considerable evidence of hidden unemployment and that the benefits of productivity growth have been showing up in the profits of companies rather than in the paychecks of ordinary American workers.

Yes, workers have become more productive. They produce more and more in each hour that they work, but they have not been getting this reward in