

wealth from the middle class to the rich, as real wages decline while the salaries of CEOs, movie stars, and athletes skyrocket, along with the profits of the military industrial complex, the oil industry, and other special interests.

A sharply rising gold price is a vote of no confidence in the Congress' ability to control the budget, the Fed's ability to control the money supply, and the administration's ability to bring stability to the Middle East.

Ultimately, the gold price is a measurement of trust in the currency and the politicians who run the country. It has been that way for a long time, and it is not about to change.

If we care about the financial system, the tax system, and the monumental debt we are accumulating, we must start talking about the benefits and discipline that come only with a commodity standard of money: money the government and central banks absolutely cannot create out of thin air.

Economic law dictates reform at some point, but should we wait until the dollar is $\frac{1}{1000}$ of an ounce of gold or $\frac{1}{2000}$ of an ounce of gold? The longer we wait, the more people will suffer and the more difficult reforms become. Runaway inflation inevitably leads to political chaos, something numerous countries have suffered throughout the 20th century. The worst example, of course, was the German inflation of the 1920s that led to the rise of Hitler.

□ 2310

Even the Communist takeover of China was associated with runaway inflation brought on by the Chinese nationalists.

The time for action is now, and it is up to the American people and the U.S. Congress to demand it.

30-SOMETHING WORKING GROUP

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. FOXX). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK) is recognized for the remaining time until midnight.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Madam Speaker, it is an honor to address the House once again. The 30-something Working Group, we come to the floor to share with the American people some of the issues that are going on here in the Capitol dome, and hopefully bring about solutions that they can all feel good about, and hopefully we can work in a bipartisan way.

We want to thank the Democratic leadership for allowing us to have this hour on the floor: The Democratic Leader, Ms. Nancy Pelosi; and Mr. HOYER, our Democratic whip; and also our Democratic caucus chair Mr. CLYBURN; and also the vice chairman of the Democratic Caucus Mr. LARSON.

We have been on break for about 2 weeks. It seems like the American people have taken a deep breath to really take a step back and look at the way

this government is being operated. It is almost self-explanatory.

I am so glad Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ from the State of Florida is here. We served together as public policymakers for more than a decade, and I think it is important that we look at this time in the history of our country, at how our government is functioning at this particular time, and we point out how it can be different. I think it is important that we continue to hammer on that.

With that, I would like to welcome my good friend here tonight as we are going to hold down this 30-something special hour. We know that Mr. RYAN is not going to be with us tonight, and I do not believe Mr. DELAHUNT is going to be with us tonight.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Madam Speaker, I, too, want to express my thanks to the Democratic leader and the Democratic whip.

Wow, the 2 weeks we had at home, I am sure that you experienced just like I did, I went home and heard an earful from folks in my district who just really are at the end of their rope. They are fed up. They are sick and tired of being sick and tired. I think one woman said it best. She has just reached the end of her last nerve, whether it is the culture of corruption and the daily revelation that comes out of this capital with either an indictment or an accusation or an ethical cloud or an example of cronyism, or just one more example of the incompetence that has really permeated government as led by the Republican leadership.

People are sick of it. They really are. They are sick of the gas prices. They are sick of the issues coming up again repeatedly and not being dealt with and not being addressed and their concerns not being addressed until it becomes such an immense political issue that the Republican leadership realizes it is unavoidable. They are over it, and I can understand why they are over it.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Madam Speaker, I just want to share with the gentleman that it is sad because we have had an opportunity to come to this floor and talk about the issues that are facing this country and that will face this country based on the legislation that the Republican majority has pushed through that the Bush White House wanted, that the majority in the Senate wanted that happened to be Republican. We talked about these things. We stood out as Democrats on the floor to try to come up with alternative fuels. We tried to get questions answered as it relates to the war in Iraq.

Now we have eight, nine, and if we continue to count, it will be in double digits, not just individuals within the military, but we are talking about generals, flag officers saying on behalf of their country we have to make a change.

Tonight, Madam Speaker, just like when we last year and the year before that talked about the K Street Project,

which was a project, and I am so glad we are joined by Mr. DELAHUNT. I take back my words. I did not think you were going to be with us tonight. As usual, you came through.

Mr. DELAHUNT. This was a test.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. We talked about the K Street Project and special influence here in this House of Representatives. We talked about how certain lobbyists could not go into certain offices of Members of the majority. This came out of the mouths of Members if they were not a part of this activity. And then later after a lobbyist admitted, and, hey, you do not even have to call a jury, we do not have to call a trial. He admits, I admit I am wrong, I was a part of this operation here in Washington, DC. It was encouraged by Members of Congress. Then all of a sudden the majority comes out and says, we denounce this. It is wrong. It will no longer be tolerated on Capitol Hill.

It sounds like what we are hearing now. We are hearing the President respond to, Mr. President, can you talk about the oil prices?

The President says, America is addicted to oil.

We have to chuckle about it because it is so in the face of the American people.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. It is insulting. In January, the three of us, along with our colleagues, sat in this Chamber and listened to the President deliver the State of the Union and the line he had in the State of the Union about America's addiction to oil and that we needed to end it. You know, it is insulting. It is insulting on so many levels.

Number one, it is insulting that just last year, and I have made this reference before. I have only been here 14 months now, and in the last 14 months just while I was here, we have voted on two different energy bills that gave away the store to the energy companies, to the oil companies.

So it was just so obnoxious when in the President's State of the Union he is talking about us, the United States, needing to end, Americans needing to end our addiction to oil. Where have his proposals been? Where has his agenda been? Suddenly today or yesterday he comes up with his five points that we need to move on to address the energy crisis that we are in? I mean, give me a break.

The American people understand when their leaders are genuine and when they are scrambling because politically they know there is no other choice.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Madam Speaker, I was listening to the President today, and I thought it was interesting that for the first time that I can remember, this President indicated that maybe it was time to take away those tax breaks for big oil. I mean, that is just a desperate response to falling polling numbers, because those tax breaks and

subsidies for big oil, Madam Speaker, were the product of his energy policy combined with the rubber-stamp Republican Congress that has run this country for the last 6 years.

□ 2320

Whose policy is it, Madam Speaker? It is not a Democratic policy that is responsible for a gallon of gas going from \$1.45 on January 20, 2001, to \$2.91 today.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. This is something that I think the Members who are hearing us should really be able to see while we are talking about it. And following, I mean, the comparison on the heels of what we have just been talking about with two pieces of Republican-led energy legislation giving away the store last year to the oil companies, forgiving taxes, allowing for drilling rights tax free, with taxes being forgiven. In the time that President Bush has been in office, when he took office January 20 of 2001, gas prices, Americans paid \$1.45 a gallon. Now, fast forward to today, and we now pay an average price of \$2.91 a gallon. Now, in 5 years, a little more than 5 years.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. I know, Mr. DELAHUNT and Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, that the American people see this and say wait a minute, they must have a typo on this. It is like \$3.06 last I saw. But this is on average. I just want to make sure because, Madam Speaker, I think it is important. I am glad you are spelling this out, and I am glad you have this chart because we want to make sure the Republican majority knows exactly what their policies have brought on the American people, Democrat and Republican. I'm sorry, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. That is okay. So people understand what we are talking about, those two bills last year cost taxpayers more than \$12 billion, with a B, billion dollars in giveaways to big oil companies. That was in the legislation where essentially taxes they were required to pay they did not have to pay because those pieces of legislation forgave those taxes.

Mr. DELAHUNT. If the gentlewoman would just yield for a minute.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. I would be glad to yield.

Mr. DELAHUNT. I think it is important to review that for every year that this House of Representatives has been controlled by the Republican majority, during the summer months, from April 1 to September 30, the price of gasoline has dramatically escalated.

Mr. MEEK, in 2002, if you went to your local gas station, you paid \$1.39. The majority, in 2002, in this House of Representatives, Madam Speaker, was Republican.

In 2003, Madam Speaker, the majority in this House was Republican. And if you examine that chart, there was about another 20 cent plus-up for a gallon of gas.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. DELAHUNT, can I ask you a question?

Mr. DELAHUNT. Of course.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. In the evolution of gas prices that you have on that chart, 2002, \$1.39; 2003, \$1.57; and \$1.90 in 2004; \$2.37 in 2005; and now an average of \$2.91 in 2006, in between that time, because I have not been in Congress all those years, and you have, have the Republicans who have controlled Congress all of this time, and President Bush who has been President all of this time, have they put forward any proposals to fund, significantly fund, alternative energy sources? Has there been anything that has been initiated by the Republican leadership here, by this White House maybe that I didn't see since I was still in the State legislature to fend this off, to make it less likely that the situation we are in now we wouldn't find ourselves in? Because the President did say in his remarks and commentary in the last several days about what control he did or didn't have over gas prices, that he really wasn't able to control market forces. I mean, I heard him say that.

Well, no, he probably can't control market forces, but there are certainly things that they could have put forward. But I haven't seen it. Did they?

Mr. DELAHUNT. Well, they did, but it didn't help. What they did is they put forth a welfare program for Big Oil. I mean, that is truly what they did.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. What do you mean by a welfare program for Big Oil?

Mr. DELAHUNT. Well, how about \$16 billion worth of subsidies for Big Oil? And this, of course, this is not for poor folk, because the big oil companies, Madam Speaker, they are doing remarkably well in this country. They are showing profits that only can be described as embarrassing in a free enterprise system.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Should we illuminate that a little bit?

Mr. DELAHUNT. I yield to my friend.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Some people might be concerned about our commentary here and you referring to profits as being obscene, because, obviously, in a capitalistic society we understand and think profit is a good thing. So I think it is important that people understand what we mean. While giving away the store, while giving away \$12 billion in tax breaks.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Sixteen billion all together.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Sixteen billion all together. Forgive me.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Subsidies and tax breaks. Let's just call it welfare for Big Oil.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Right, the oil welfare that we have given away.

Mr. DELAHUNT. That is the oil welfare program.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. My experience with tax breaks as a State legislator and now a Member of Congress is that you generally give those kinds

of breaks to help a business get back on its feet, thrive, to maybe bridge them through a difficult time. In 2002, the oil companies made a combined profit of \$34 billion. In 2003 it was \$59 billion.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Could I interrupt for a minute?

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Yes.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Could I ask my friend from Florida just to repeat that. \$34 billion, and that was all of the major oil companies?

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Yes.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Would you, for the sake of our conversation here, would you identify them, if you can read them from the chart?

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Sure. As you can see, BP, Chevron, Shell, Conoco, and Exxon-Mobil.

Mr. DELAHUNT. So the five of them, Madam Speaker, in the year 2002?

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Yes, 2002.

Mr. DELAHUNT. In the year 2002 had a combined profit of \$34 billion. And then, of course, that was just the beginning.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. That was only the tip of the iceberg, because if you continue down the road, and remember, I just got here, and so we will get to 2005 in a minute. But it was 2005 that the \$16 billion was granted that we have been talking about. But you go to 2003: \$59 billion in profits. Also the same oil companies.

Mr. DELAHUNT. So, in one year, you are telling me that it almost doubled, or did it?

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Not quite, not quite doubled. No. About a third more in profits.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Okay.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Then you go to 2004, and we are at \$84 billion in profits.

Mr. DELAHUNT. \$84 billion.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. \$84 billion.

Mr. DELAHUNT. In 2 years. I guess that is productivity.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Not bad if you can do it. And then you go to 2005. In a year where we passed two major energy bills that gave away \$16 billion in tax breaks and subsidies to the oil companies, they made, last year, \$113 billion; and one of those companies made more money in one quarter than any company in U.S. history.

Mr. DELAHUNT. And that company is?

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. That was Exxon-Mobil.

Mr. DELAHUNT. And my memory is that Exxon-Mobil, for the year, had a profit of \$39 billion, that one company.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. More than all of the companies combined profited in 2002.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Three years ago. Now, that is why I use the word "obscene," because something is wrong with our free market system.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. And we don't begrudge profit.

Mr. DELAHUNT. I encourage profit. Clearly profit is important. And it is what made this country unique in terms of our ability to have a high standard of living. But this is not free market. This is not free market. This is something different. This is either price gouging or some sort of market.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. This is doing what the Republican leadership is allowing them to do.

□ 2330

Mr. DELAHUNT. This is oligopoly or a tendency towards monopoly, and this House has done nothing, Madam Speaker. There has not been any anti-trust hearing as far as the oil companies are concerned, Madam Speaker. We have not had any hearings at all in the committee of jurisdiction, which is the Judiciary Committee, that would shed some light on why in 3 years they went from \$34 billion to \$113 billion. And we wonder why, Madam Speaker, we wonder why the American people are losing confidence in the House of Representatives, the people's House.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Can I ask you a question, Mr. DELAHUNT, again because you have more direct experience with this than I do? My understanding is that the oil companies, they do not own the areas of the gulf and the other places that they drill for oil. The Federal Government sells them essentially, through payment of taxes, the rights to drill; that these are essentially public lands, whether they are in the Gulf of Mexico or wherever they are drilling, I mean whether it is Texas or any portion. I do not believe any of the area is private land, any of the significant area. So when we forgive the oil companies taxes, we are basically giving away the ownership rights to a private company that the government owns and just saying, here, take our oil stores for free. Is that right?

Mr. DELAHUNT. Well, there is such a thing as royalty payments, but in this administration there is a rule that has created a situation where even though the dollar value, as we can see from these various charts, has exploded in terms of revenue to the oil companies, the royalty payments that they make, Madam Speaker, have declined by \$7 billion. And this is the energy policy of the Bush administration and the Bush Republican Congress. And yet we hear on this floor complaints about the Democratic proposals.

You cannot run against Washington, Madam Speaker, when you are Washington. You just cannot do it. You cannot argue with yourself. This is your mess. This energy policy, you own it, Madam Speaker. The leadership in this House, the leadership in this Republican Senate, and the leadership of the Bush administration own this reality today, which is over the past 3 years big oil profits have more than tripled. And we here in this Congress, in collusion with that White House, have provided welfare to Big Oil on top of that.

That is truly, Mr. MEEK, obscene.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Well, Mr. DELAHUNT and Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, I just have been quiet for about maybe 8 or 10 minutes, which is not common when we are having this kind of discussion.

Madam Speaker, like I said before we went on break, it is not even fair. I mean, you would think that someone would wake up 1 day, especially the minority party would wake up, and say, wow, if we had a tool box that dealt with a war that is not being managed appropriately; an energy crisis within the country; containers as it relates to coming into this country going unchecked; families that are not able to provide health care, and neither are small businesses able to provide health care; States that are suing the Federal Government, Leave No Child Behind legislation, Democratic and Republican Governors are suing the Federal Government because of a lack of funding to the Federal Government's own initiative; that environmentally we have a number of issues going on on top of a natural disaster where the response and recovery were not managed well; CIA leaks at the White House; Members of this body in question of ethical violations and a culture of corruption and cronyism under the Capitol Dome. And better yet, Madam Speaker, the reason why we do not have a Democratic Member serving as Speaker or serving as the majority leader is the fact that we are in the minority. But the only good thing about that whole thing that I pointed out, because as an American it turns my stomach that that is even the environment in the United States of America as we speak, partisanship has nothing to do with my being an American and my responsibility as a Member of Congress.

So, Mr. DELAHUNT and Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, maybe for the next 4 minutes let us just talk about if Democrats were in control of this House and hopefully in control of the Senate to be able to say no to the administration when they want to put the country in this posture. Democrats, Independents, Republicans, what have you are all concerned about what is going on. The polling has indicated that.

Now, I just want to take out this document that we have held up several times, our innovation agenda. Wow, here is a plan. The Democrats' energy plan. Here is a plan. I want to say this to my Republican colleagues because they have the audacity to come down to the floor saying, They do not have any solutions; so how can they criticize our inability to carry out the energy policy?

Well, here is the solution right here. It has been on our Web site, and I encourage everyone to go to www.housedemocrats.gov and pull up the innovation agenda. We did not just put it on there before we came to the floor. It has been there for months. Months. They are talking about it. We want to do it.

Energy independence in 10 years. Energy independence in 10 years, to change the investment from counting on the Middle East and counting on the Midwest. Ethanol, making sure that we promote petroleum-based ideas of rapidly expanding the production of synthetic bio-based fuels. It is right there. It is just an investment.

But what is stopping the Republican majority from taking our plan, as I am going to point out here as we talk about price gouging, and running with it? Well, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ just had the chart up with all the oil companies. It has to be the relationship with the oil companies. The American people, Republicans, Democrats, Independents, are paying through the nose as we speak. Some folks are putting a quarter of gas in their tank because they cannot afford it. These are the constituents, unfortunately, of individuals of power and influence in Washington, D.C. I did not get a vote from any of these companies. Maybe the folks that work for the companies say maybe I want to vote on behalf of education and good representation in Washington, but they did not say, hey, you know, these are my constituents, and I am going to stand in the way and make sure that they have what they need.

Let me just talk fact, not fiction here, because I think it is important. Oil companies, record profits. RECORD profits. Folks want to talk about Wal-Mart? Goodness gracious, these oil companies make Wal-Mart look like a five and dime store.

Mr. DELAHUNT. In my day that was called penny candy.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Let me just say this, Mr. DELAHUNT. Folks want to go knocking companies and start talking about who is making what, and folks are upset about it. And there are some folks out there. But the bottom line is, like you said, "profits" is not a bad word, and we believe in profits. It is the American way, and capitalism rules. And I am the first one in line when it comes down to that, and I am not faulting those oil companies. I am not mad at Exxon Mobil or any of those oil companies that are out there. I am upset with the Members that are allowing them to get away with literally a crime of ripping dollars out of everyday working Americans' pockets and then the majority leadership in both Chambers having the audacity to send a letter over to the White House, saying, "We would like for you to investigate this issue of price gouging," when they set the playing field for it to happen.

□ 2340

They set the playing field for it to happen.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. If the gentleman would yield for 15 seconds.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. You can have 20, if you want it.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Thank you for your generosity. What we are

saying, I want to underscore what we are saying when we say we are not opposed to profit, because that profit we had up there a minute ago, if it happened and the oil companies were being asked to pay their fair share, if they were paying the royalties and the taxes that they are supposed to be under the law to the Federal Government for the rights to drill, you know what? You can't begrudge them the profits, because that is the free market system.

But they are not. They are being given these oil rights for free, for no remuneration or very little remuneration whatsoever. And they don't need it. They are not struggling. Far from it. The people who are struggling now are Americans who need to go to work, who need to get their kids to school.

Mr. DELAHUNT. But stop for a minute and just see what the values are. We hear a lot about values. Here we are providing a wealthy program for big oil, and at the same time we are not adequately funding the so-called LIHEAP program, which provides assistance to low-income families, working families, so that they can get through the winter, so that they are not forced to make a decision between having food on the table and staying warm.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. DELAHUNT, given that I am from Florida and have a particular sensitivity to not using much heat, can you explain what the LIHEAP program is?

Mr. DELAHUNT. The LIHEAP program has been around for some time now, and it has been a program that was introduced in a Democratic Congress, supported by Democratic presidents and adequately funded. Today, only 20 percent of those who are eligible based on income, who would qualify if the funding were available, only 20 percent of those receive that assistance.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. What does LIHEAP do for folks?

Mr. DELAHUNT. It gives them basically a discount on the purchase of their energy for heating their homes.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. It gives them a break on their bill.

Mr. DELAHUNT. You said it better than I did. It gives them a break on their bill, and it is administered through community action programs. And, we don't fund it adequately. I think that the total is a little over \$2 billion annually. Now, stop and think: \$2 billion for hundreds of thousands, millions, actually, of families that would qualify in this country for some help to stay warm so they didn't have to make that choice between eating or freezing. Yet, we are giving \$16 billion in subsidies to major oil.

This is Alice in Wonderland, Madam Speaker. Up is down and down is up. How does the majority justify this? How do you justify that in moral terms, Madam Speaker?

This is more than just public policy. I would suggest to you that doing that amounts to a violation of our moral

code and moral responsibility as leaders in this country. That is what it is.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. DELAHUNT, can I just describe the difference between the Alice in Wonderland-like policy that is made here, where down is up and down is up, and reality? At the end of Alice in Wonderland, Alice woke up and it was a dream and she could go back to what reality really was for her.

Mr. DELAHUNT. But this is a nightmare.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. That is right, that the Republican leadership won't let Americans wake up from.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Can I reclaim my time from the 20 seconds?

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. That was a long 20 seconds.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. But that was good information. Talking about the program a little further, we have a Stupak bill, which is a Democratic bill here in this House, that is going to give relief to consumers, small businesses and farmers and provide relief from skyrocketing heating home costs that they are taking on right now. It is the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, and basically it comes from the fines which I am going to go into now, Mr. DELAHUNT, of what the Republican majority blocked, Madam Speaker. And guess what? That is not what KENDRICK MEEK is saying, that is not what BILL DELAHUNT was saying or DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ has said in the past or even Mr. RYAN in his absence has said in the past. This is the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

Republicans voted against imposing tough criminal penalties on price gouging companies and also tough civil fines up to \$3 million in price gouging as it relates to protecting consumers. This is CQ vote number 500, H.R. 3402, taken September 28, 2005. The motion was rejected on a 195 to 226 vote. Republicans voted against this overwhelmingly, Democrats voted for it. 194 Democrats voted for it and I believe 226 Republicans voted against it.

Another vote, CQ vote, this is all stuff Members can look up, vote number 517, H.R. 3893, taken October 7, 2005. Again, Republicans voted overwhelmingly against this measure from being placed into legislation on price gouging, 199 to 222. The majority prevailed again.

I think it is important for us to understand, Madam Speaker, that time after time again, and I know we have another example, Republicans killed the amendment. Which one did I not share? Those are the two that were there. But they are continuing to kill these amendments.

So, Madam Speaker, it is kind of mind-boggling when we look up, open the local hometown paper, whatever it may be, it could be the one in Florida where I represent or it can be right here in the Beltway, to read that Republican leaders are thinking about going after folks as it relates to price gouging.

Now, I am just going to give the Republican majority a little. They will say okay, that is not true. We did do something.

What they did was nothing. I am not a black man with a conspiracy theory, but I am here to tell you that I am concerned, especially when I see headlines, the Washington Post, November 16, 2005, that says "Document says oil chief met with the Vice President of the United States on his task force." So how in the world can folks sit down with the very people that are making record profits? This was put in motion long ago, and now folks are acting like they don't know what is going on.

You know why they are acting like they don't know what is going on? Because the American people are pulling their car and saying you know something, Mr. Congressman, madam Congresswoman, you said you were there to protect me. You are not doing a good job, because I can't even put gas in my tank to take my children to school, I can't even make it to work. We are trying to car pool. Even that is becoming a little difficult. And you have folks, they don't have enough money. Some of these pumps in some communities won't even allow them to pump all of the gas they need to pump to fill their tank.

Hello? We have also gas stations here in Washington, D.C. that are out of gas, and South Florida. Maybe those small businesses, independent businesses within these oil companies, can't even afford the gas.

And we are going to find out. You know what is going to happen again? We are going to find in this time, and let me just say, Johnny Carson used to have the envelope he would put to his head.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Carnack the Magnificent.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. He would say something like "high prices, backroom deals." He would open the envelope and later we would see oh, wow, and they made record profits while this was going on.

□ 2350

I am going to go ahead and crystal-ball this thing, because that is what is going to happen, and folks are going to say, well, we really need to do something about it.

If I was in the Republican majority right now, that is very hypothetical, I must add, I would be concerned. If I am home in the bed right now, Madam Speaker, and I was a Member of the majority, I would sit up in my bed and say, you know, maybe, just maybe, we need to go see the wizard, get some courage, get some leadership, and say, you know something, enough is enough, because I am going to be in the minority, not because of the fact that folks did such a great job as it relates to raising money, because you know we cannot raise more money than the other side, not the fact that, you know, our ties are better or our dresses, you

know, the dresses that the female Members on this side wear are better.

But I think it is important, Madam Speaker, that we look at the facts. It is not fair. It is not fair to the American people, and it is not even fair if I was on the Republican majority side, we tell the Republican majority, come out and defend the selling of America. All of these countries here are owning a part of America. I do not care if you are a diehard Republican, and that you are the chair of the local Republican committee, you have to have a problem with this.

You tell your Members, explain this to me. Why are we selling America away? Why are we giving tax breaks we cannot afford? We are we allowing the oil companies to do this? Why? Why? Why? Do not tell me to vote Republican because we are Republicans and that we always did it, and that my mama did it, and that my grandmother did it, and that my great-great-grandmother did it. We cannot do it because of that. We have to do it because we salute one flag. People have died for us to have this opportunity.

I am so happy that we come to this floor, Madam Speaker, every day, because history will reflect that there were Members in this body in the minority fighting with what they had, with a nub, fighting night after night, day after day, filing amendments, failing on this floor, arm-twisting happening on the other side, and we prevailed because I am going to tell you, the American people are sick and tired of it, and change is going to happen, and it is going to happen for the better.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. I just want to ask you another question. As we went through last year and we debated those energy bills, and I remember when they went through the committees and then actually came, at least one of them did not even go to committee, it just came to the floor. And it came out on this Chamber. One of those bills was yet another example of the red lights changing to green lights, and the board being held open. I think the energy bill that I am referring to, I know the board was held open for at least 40 minutes, until the Republican leadership got the vote that they wanted.

Now, we have asked repeatedly, where is the outrage? Where was the outrage then when Republicans, rank-and-file Republicans, who not only needed some courage, but could have gotten some advice from the Scarecrow and the Tin Man then, too, for some heart and some brains, but where was the outrage? And what did that mean?

Essentially what did it mean when they had the opportunity, when they put their no vote up on the board, yet the leadership came to them on the floor, wrenched their arm behind their back, and what did they do? They were rubber-stamp Republicans yet again. Rubber-stamp Republicans.

And I just, time after time I have noticed that that is really the best way

to describe the vast majority of Members of the Republican Caucus, because they have the opportunity to have some courage, they do not have any. What do they have? They have the ability to just say, uh-huh, sure, I will do it exactly the way you want it, Mr. Republican Leader.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. The real issue here is the fact that, Madam Speaker, I am done with trying to beg the majority to lead. I am just done. I mean, there is nothing more that we can say. They have had their opportunity. They have their opportunity now. They are still not moving as a majority. We have said what we would do as Democrats.

The bottom line is Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ talked about the rubber stamp. It is now so big, Mr. President, whatever we can do, whatever you need us to do, we are with you. Just, that is it. Done. What else do you want us to do? And that is just where it is. And we are going to make this as obvious as possible.

Mr. DELAHUNT. I think it is really interesting to note for the record, Madam Speaker, that the relationship between this rubber-stamp Congress and this White House is so close that in the 6 years of this Presidency, he has never had to veto a single piece of legislation that came from the United States Congress. Not once, Madam Speaker, not once.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Say it is not so, Mr. DELAHUNT.

Mr. DELAHUNT. It is so. Tragically it is so.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. He has never been forced to veto any legislation or sent anything that they were afraid he would not like. And I want to know, where are our colleagues on the other side of the aisle, where is their line? Where is the line that we know we all have, that says, you know, this far and no farther? I just cannot do it. They do not have that line.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Well, I tell you what is happening. Because we are talking about oil, and we are talking about home heating oil, and we are talking about staying warm. We are talking about heat. And the heat is coming, because, you know, we are going to hear a lot of hot air, but the American people are putting the feet to fire of those who have not supported a public policy regarding energy that makes sense for all Americans, not just Exxon Mobil that last year made \$32 billion, and, by the way, whose CEO who is now retired, is earning a pension, Madam Speaker, of \$150,000.

I hope you heard that, Madam Speaker, \$150,000. Now, you might say that is not much money. Well, it is a lot of money when you get \$150,000 every single day of the year. It is a pension that is evaluated.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Wait. Wait. Did I hear you? Did I hear you correctly? Did you say a hundred and what a day?

Mr. DELAHUNT. One hundred fifty thousand dollars. Not every 10 years.

Not every 5 years. Not every year. Not every month. But every single day as long as he lives, \$150,000. The pension package, according to newspaper reports, Madam Speaker, was \$600 million. That is for one person. For one person.

This is a moral issue. This is a moral issue. There are people that are having difficulty, they are working hard, but they are having difficulty making it, and yet there is a CEO who runs a corporation that earns \$39 billion in a single year. And he has a pension of \$600 million that provides him with \$150,000 a day. Is that right, or is that wrong?

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. In our final minute or so, I can tell you that what I learned from my constituents when I went back home is that they know that together America can do better. It does not have to be this way. We do not have to keep going. And through our efforts and the efforts of our other Democratic colleagues, our 30-something Working Group will continue to take the floor each night.

I yield to my colleague from Florida to close us out. We do have a Website.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Well, thank you. With Mr. RYAN's absence here tonight, I keep saying that because I want him to read the Congressional RECORD and let him know that I did note that he was not here.

Housedemocrats.gov/30something. Members can go on there.

With that, Madam Speaker, we would like to thank the Democratic leadership for allowing us to have this hour.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today on account of personal business.

Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today on account of personal matters.

Mr. OSBORNE (at the request of Mr. BOEHNER) for today and until 3:30 p.m. on April 26 on account of official business.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN (at the request of Mr. BOEHNER) for today on account of a family emergency.

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 Ms. WOOLSEY) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. PALLONE, for 5 minutes, today.

Mrs. MCCARTHY, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. McDERMOTT, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. SCHIFF, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. EMANUEL, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. KAPTUR, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. WOOLSEY, for 5 minutes, today.

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