

THE 30-SOMETHING WORKING GROUP

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to come before the House once again, the 30-something Working Group. I would like to thank the Democratic leader, NANCY PELOSI, and also Mr. STENY HOYER, who is our whip; Mr. JAMES CLYBURN, our chairman; and also Mr. LARSON, who is our vice chairman.

And I think that it is very appropriate at this particular time, Mr. Speaker, to talk about the great comeback by the Miami Heat in the series of the NBA finals. And I can say on behalf of Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ and those of us from the south Florida delegation and from the Florida delegation that we are very, very pleased of the outstanding play by the Heat. We want to continue to support them in every way possible. We know that they will be victorious. We have been wrestling with our friends in the back in the Speaker's lobby from Dallas and the surrounding area, letting them know that the final outcome will be a great parade in downtown Miami with the new NBA champions. As you know, as we look at it from a religious standpoint, you have to claim it. And we are excited.

There are some extraordinary things that are happening now. Dwyane Wade. If Shaquille O'Neal falls on a Chevy truck, he would hurt it. But Dwyane Wade has been able to overcome the injury, and also several of the Heat players and the Heat fans have persevered. So we look forward to Father's Day. I know that Shaquille O'Neal and Alonzo Mourning and Dwyane Wade are all fathers, and we know on Father's Day they will deliver a gift to themselves and to me and to other folks.

So I just want to say since we have the hour, Mr. Speaker, there are Members, I am pretty sure, from Texas, from Dallas who would love to come to the floor, whom we will not yield to at this time, to give their side of the story.

We are happy we have this hour. We honor the Heat and we are glad that there is a great series going on. And while we are at it, before I yield to Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ to make comments on this, I want to thank the NBA for all the work that they have done not only in Dallas but in Miami, in their charities, and giving to the Heat center. At Little River Middle School, they have actually put some computers in, and they have been there over the years, but they have made a new commitment to that center and they have named it after the late wife of the Heat trainer. So we want to encourage the NBA to keep doing what they are doing.

I yield to Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Thank you to my good friend from Florida, Mr. MEEK.

We are proud to wear the colors today, Mr. Speaker, and we have got the beads on. And because we could not be with the Heat in south Florida during their triumphant victory last night and the other night, we decided to stir up some spirit here and send some good karma home to them. And I can tell you that I have a little gastronomic wager with our good friend Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Dallas. I am looking forward to enjoying some lunch, courtesy of her and her staff after the Heat grabbed the championship. And hopefully, we will be able to be down there with them on Sunday and take home some of the spirit that we have been able to generate up here.

Thanks to your good leadership and firing up the Heat troops up here. I have worn these beads all over the place the last couple of days and yesterday in the mall, walking with my husband and my kids, got stopped by a tourist up here saying, "Go Heat." So we can feel it all the way up here.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, just as a point of information, as we start working in a bipartisan way towards the spirit of the Miami Heat, and it is bipartisan, we have Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART, LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART, also ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, also JEFF MILLER from the Panhandle of Florida that have joined in in this Heat spirit. On our side we have Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, myself, Congressman ALCEE HASTINGS, and also Mr. ROBERT WEXLER. So I mean it is kind of balanced off as it relates to who has the beads in support of the Miami Heat. We rallied them when they were down by 0-2, and we will continue to rally around them now that it is even.

With that, Mr. Speaker, we would like to go into what we usually do when we come to the floor as it relates to the 30-something Working Group, talking about the issues that we have been meeting on, wanting to bring to the floor and share with the American people and also share with the Members of the House.

We talk about the agenda that was released, "A New Direction for America" by the Democratic Caucus, and not talk about what we may do when we take the majority if the American people find it fit for us to take the majority, but what we will do, and I think it is important to say "will." And I always say we have the will and desire to lead. We have the will and desire to pass legislation. We also have the will and desire, Mr. Speaker, to take the rubber stamp out of the Republican majority's hands and put it in the garbage because that is not what this Congress should be all about. It should be oversight. It should be evaluation of policies that we would like to pass, need it be health care, need it be Iraq policy, need it be economic development. And in our plan, it is important to understand that we want to make

health care more affordable for Americans, make sure that we have a fair share as it relates to prescription drugs on behalf of the American people, making sure that we can move into the area of investing in stem cell research for medical research for some of the cure that we can do now. Also work toward alternative fuels, making this country independent of the Middle East and invest in the Midwest as it relates to E-85, alternative fuels, making sure that we pass legislation to bring about flex vehicles.

Also helping working families. It is not a question of if we will. It is we will raise the minimum wage. And that is what we are saying on this side of the aisle. There is no question about it. The minimum wage will be raised, and that is a promise. Cutting also and reversing many of the Republican majority increases on student tuition. This is a very important point and we are going to talk a little further about it because we have legislation that is filed now to reverse that, make sure that families have tax credits and make sure students don't have to pay through the nose and come out of college in debt more than they are today.

Also ensuring that seniors and individuals receive Social Security benefits, need it be survivor benefits or need it be the disabled or just simple retirement, not privatizing Social Security. The "security" part is to make sure that when all else fails that there is some level of income for those individuals who have worked their entire lives. And requiring fiscal responsibility. This is the most important, if not the point, of the Democratic agenda of making sure if we say we are going to spend it, we had better show how we are going to pay for it. Not like we are doing now, spending and borrowing from foreign nations, making this country more indebted to foreign countries than at any other time in the history of the republic.

So we will talk a little further about that and define this a little bit more as we go along.

I would like to yield to my colleague, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, and we will focus more on these issues as we go through the points again.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Thank you, Mr. MEEK. It is a pleasure again to be here with you and spend some time talking about the priorities of the Democratic Caucus.

Mr. Speaker, I know when you were in the Chamber this afternoon you talked about what you would like the American people and the Republican Caucus, our colleagues on the other side of the aisle, would like the American people to believe. And I know it sounds good to continue to say that the Democrats do not have an agenda. Well, sadly for you, Mr. Speaker and our Republican colleagues, that is not true. Fortunately, for the American people we do have an agenda. We have had one for quite a long time. It is right here.

Many times it is easier to graphically depict things as opposed to just using words, and we can take you through, as Mr. MEEK just did, our agenda so that, Mr. Speaker, when you are finding yourself standing in front of a chair behind the podium on this floor, you can keep this in mind when you would like to say that we don't have an agenda because that is absolutely inaccurate. The Democrats' New Direction for America, as Mr. MEEK said, pledges that we will make health care more affordable, unlike the rising health care costs that continue to skyrocket out of control in this country led by the Republicans for the last 14 years that they have controlled this Congress.

□ 1230

We will make a commitment to lowering gas prices and spend—yes, spend—the American taxpayers' dollars on exploring alternative energy sources instead of just having things like President Bush putting words in the State of the Union where he said out loud, America has an addiction to foreign oil and then proceeded to do nothing about it. No meaningful policy on the part of the Republicans in this body. No meaningful change in the energy policy. No reduction in gas prices.

I want to digress from this chart for a minute. First of all, let's just demonstrate the difference between what a new direction for America would be versus the same old Republican policies that have failed the American people and don't work.

Under Republicans for the last 14 years, Mr. Speaker, you have college tuition that has increased 40 percent. You have gas prices that have increased 47 percent. You have health care costs that have increased 55 percent. And median household income, Mr. Speaker, that has decreased by 4 percent. If that is the direction that Republicans would like the country to continue to go, then, you are right, the American voters in November should vote for the Republicans and continue more of the same. But if they want a new direction, if they want to make sure that we can have a leadership in this Congress and in this country that is committed to making sure that college and higher education is more affordable, not less, if they want to make sure that we can expand access to health care and instead of adding more people to the rolls that do not have health care and that go uninsured and that have to wait till their family members are so sick that they have to take them to the emergency room before they can get them some health care treatment, then they should continue to vote for more of the same and elect Republicans. If they want to make sure that they can move this country in the direction that most Americans would like to go in, then they will choose Democrats in the fall and we will make a commitment to expanding alternative energy sources, expanding our commitment to making

sure that we don't have a continued addiction to foreign oil.

Mr. Speaker, I find personally that sometimes graphic depictions, sometimes three-dimensional demonstrations are really incredibly helpful.

You see, Mr. Speaker, this is a gas pump. Apparently our colleagues on the other side of the aisle, many of them don't appear to have seen one of these since they looked like this. The gas pumps from what I understand looked like this, oh, in about the 1950s. It appears as though many of our Republican colleagues haven't put gas in their own car since they looked like this, because if they had then they would realize that in most places in this country, gas is now more than \$3 a gallon, that it costs a mom or a dad that drives their kids around in a minivan or in an SUV more than \$50 to fill up their tank, and I feel quite certain that if our Republican colleagues were actually pumping their own gas, were actually having to observe the counter on the gas pump that shows, Mr. Speaker, just so you know, those gas pumps actually show you how much you are spending per gallon while you are pumping the gas into your car, maybe we could just pass this around on the floor and our colleagues could see what a gas pump looks like so that they could remember the pain that Americans go through when they have to spend that much on a gallon of gas. Then maybe we would have our colleagues on the other side of the aisle not continue to vote like the rubber stamps that my colleague Mr. MEEK always talks about. Maybe they would get some courage. Maybe they would realize that they shouldn't be voting for an energy policy that actually gives money away to the oil industry, to an oil industry that has made record profits, Mr. MEEK, more money than any corporation in American history in the last quarter of last year. It is just unbelievable.

I am hopeful that by my three-dimensional depiction, by my bringing an actual model of a gas pump to the floor, Mr. Speaker, then maybe some of our colleagues will keep in mind the actual difficulty that most Americans are going through when they actually have to fill up their gas tank by using one of these. I just wanted to provide a public service to some of my colleagues.

I would be happy to yield to the gentleman from Florida.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Thank you so very much, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. I am glad that you brought a visual aid down because I think it is important, Mr. Speaker, that we break this down for the Members because we want to make sure that Members don't go back home in November and giving political speeches saying that, oh, well, I didn't know we were doing that. Or I didn't know that we were breaking a record in borrowing from foreign nations. We want to make sure that the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD reflects that those of us

on this side of the aisle actually brought it to the floor in a form that a middle school or a fifth grader can understand. And it is important that we break it down to this point so that no one can say that they misunderstood, they didn't quite know what they were voting for, I made a mistake or whatever the case may be because now, in this day, in this Congress, we are making history in all the wrong places and in all the wrong ways.

I think it is important that we point this out. I want to make sure that I get that Washington Post article that talked about a special meeting at the White House. The innovation agenda, I want to make sure that the Members go on housedemocrats.gov and get a copy of the innovation agenda so that hopefully folks can be enlightened on what we have been talking about and promoting, not just yesterday, not just last month, this has been around, and the only reason why it is not implemented now is that the Republican majority will not allow legislation to come to the floor outside of the original thoughts of President Bush or the Republican leaders.

I think it is important that we understand an innovation agenda. We talk about education and creating the workforce for the future, making sure that there is math and science education, that we work on that and we provide the necessary dollars for it.

Invest in research and also development that promotes public-private partnerships, where many CEOs you will see on housedemocrats.gov have already become a part of what we are talking about and encouraging that to happen.

Affordable, guaranteed broadband access throughout the country. Need it be if you are in the heartland of America, you are on the east coast, you are on the west coast, you are down south, you are up north, you should be able to have an opportunity at this broadband initiative that we have for all Americans.

Achieving energy independence. We talked about that, within 10 years. Not maybe one day, not counting on the oil companies to do it but the Congress setting the stage, this House setting the stage for that to happen.

Providing small businesses with the tools that they need to be able to create jobs.

Mr. Speaker, I am just going to take about 10 minutes here breaking this thing down, if not shorter, of talking about how we are making history in all the wrong ways. The Republican majority, I must say, has done an outstanding job on behalf of President Bush. You have got to hand it to them. If there was an Oscar, an Emmy or a Grammy to give out, the Republican majority would get it as it relates to rubber-stamping everything the administration hands down.

I hold here, Mr. Speaker, and this is no secret to many of the Members and it should not be a secret to the staff

that works here in the House of Representatives, this chart, this chart of the fact that in just 4 years, President Bush and the Republican majority has borrowed \$1.05 trillion from foreign nations. We have the Republican Congress right under the President's picture because he couldn't do it by himself.

Forty-two United States Presidents, 224 years, were only able to borrow \$1.01 trillion from foreign nations. How could that be? One may say, how can you do this in 4 years? \$1.05 trillion from foreign nations. In 224 years, 200 years shy of what the President has been able to do, \$1.01 trillion.

Let me tell you, that is staggering. That is not something that it happened in the forties or it happened in the thirties once upon a time. Calculate it. Forty-two Presidents, 224 years. Mr. Speaker, we are not just here as the 30 Something Working Group and dreaming up something. Those numbers are from the U.S. Department of Treasury.

Who do we owe? Who has their hands in the pockets of the American taxpayer? I don't care if you are a Republican, independent, you don't vote yet, or whatever the case may be, a Democrat, you have to have a problem with these nations owning a piece of the American apple pie.

Japan. Like it or not, I know it is painful for some of the Members to hear this, but this is the reality under a Republican majority. Japan, \$682.8 billion that they own of the American apple pie thanks to the Republican majority rubber-stamping the Bush policies.

China, \$249.8 billion of the American apple pie that they own right now, not because of the American people lack of making the right fiscal decisions but it is because the Republican majority has allowed it to happen with the American taxpayer dollar.

The U.K., \$223.2 billion

Caribbean nations, \$115.3 billion.

Taiwan, \$71.3 billion.

OPEC nations. Oh, my goodness, OPEC nations. We can't do enough for them, but they are buying our debt, \$67.8 billion.

Germany, \$65.7 billion.

Korea, \$66.5 billion.

And Canada, \$53.8 billion.

The reason why, Mr. Speaker, you see the American flag in silhouette as it relates to the United States of America, excluding Alaska and Hawaii and Puerto Rico and other U.S. territories, but just to show this silhouette of the mainland of the United States of America, the reason why we have that, if you want to do away with the debt, elect a Democratic majority because we have done it.

The Republican majority, they are saying, well, we're going to cut it in half. It is almost like if there is a cliff, Mr. Speaker, and you are in a vehicle and you have to stop the vehicle before it goes over the cliff. We are saying stop. You are saying go at half speed. You go at half speed, you are going

over the cliff regardless. We have stopped the deficit from continuing to continue on when we balanced it, without one Republican vote. And so it is important if the American people, if they are looking at the resume, they will elect Democrats to be able to lead.

What are we doing right now, Mr. Speaker? I think it is important for us to outline this. We are saying pay-as-you-go. If you are going to spend a hundred dollars, you better talk about how you are going to pay for it. What the Republican majority is doing now, they are spending a hundred dollars and they are saying put it on a foreign credit card so we would owe foreign countries money and leave it for future generations and this generation, which is unfair to our young people. Before they even get a chance at life, they are already going to owe folks that they don't even know because of the wrong decisions that have been made here in the Republican majority and that they have been rubber-stamping.

Substitute amendment to House Concurrent Resolution 95 in the 2006 budget resolution. Mr. SPRATT, who is our ranking member on the Budget Committee, put forth an amendment for pay-as-you-go like I just outlined. Not one Republican voted for it. To say that we are going to have fiscal discipline, not one Republican voted for it. 228 Republicans voted against it.

Again in 2005, a substitute amendment to the budget, saying pay-as-you-go. Not one Republican voted for it, Mr. Speaker. 224 Republicans voted against it.

I am coming in for a close. I just want to share this with you. I mentioned the issue about energy. Oh, well, the Republican answer, the Republican majority here in this House because I do know some Republicans who do feel that the Congress should not be rubber-stamping everything that the administration puts forth, and let me just read my article real quick to bring this into focus. I thank my colleague for bearing with me.

November 16, 2005 front page of the Washington Post: White House documents show that executives from big oil companies met with Vice President DICK CHENEY's energy task force in 2001, something long expected by environmentalists but denied as recently as November 2005, last week by industry officials testifying before Congress. The document obtained this week by the Washington Post shows that officials from ExxonMobil, also Shell Oil Company, BP of America met in the White House complex with Cheney aides who were developing a national energy policy, parts of which became law, parts of which are still being debated.

I wanted to just read that to show you that when we talk about alternative fuel and we talk about flex vehicles, I don't think the oil companies are with us on this.

This is actually a picture of an ExxonMobil pump where it shows reg-

ular, special, super. That is keeping us, like the President says, addicted to oil. And that is an interesting statement, too, by him.

E85 is an alternative fuel. ExxonMobil has said you cannot use your Mobil credit card to purchase this product. I can take a Mobil credit card when I go there to put gas in the tank, I can go in there and buy a bag of chips.

□ 1245

I am not a cigarette smoker, but somebody can go in and buy a carton of cigarettes with their Mobil card. Someone can go in there, probably end up in some States, buy a Lotto ticket with their Mobil card. But they can't buy an alternative fuel that is made here in America by American farmers and should be supported by the American people.

They are trying to make it even harder. They are putting the block in front of them, because they want to keep this thing going. Now I am not a Member of the House with a conspiracy theory; but, Mr. Speaker, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ talked about record profits.

Here are the facts. This is not fiction; this is fact. In 2001, a meeting took place in the White House. Then all of a sudden we started being handed down legislation, Republican majority by the Bush administration. Oil profits went up \$34 billion in 2001. I think that was a meeting worth scheduling.

In 2003, oil profits went up \$59 million, billion, goodness gracious. I am getting confused by saying a million, a billion dollars. In 2004, \$84 billion in profits; and 2005, \$113 billion.

What I can't help, Mr. Speaker, is to say that it will be over \$113 billion in oil profits in 2006 even before the year has ended, because when you have the Republican majority passing subsidies, and you don't have to spend your own money for quote, unquote, innovation, you can have those kinds of profits and have the American people paying through the nose.

Last point on the relationship, just one more chart here. I could care less about the former CEO of ExxonMobil as a person. You know, I am not going after him as a person. I am just saying that the Republican majority has allowed this to happen. He has \$398 million of a retirement package, and on top of the Republican majority's tax policy, he gets a \$2 million tax break.

You want to talk about the winners and losers in America, this is a perfect example; and this is allowed to happen here in this House and here in this democracy because the special interest has a special relationship. Here is the King and the President, talk about relationships.

We are on the side of the American people; it is just that simple. "Energizing America," HouseDemocrats.gov, you get a copy of it, and you will see whose side we are on. If you are a Republican, you got to have a problem

with the way this House has rubber-stamped what the President has handed down.

If you are an Independent, you have to have a problem with the K Street Project that was alive and well to allow the special interests to do a pay and you play as it relates to getting policy passed on to the House. If you are Independent and if you are a Democratic, you have to have a problem that there is no input as it relates to bipartisan approach to policymaking.

Because if there were, and we did have a bipartisan approach, I wouldn't be able to stand here with a straight face, Mr. Speaker, and share with the Members and American people what has happened here in this House with the facts backed by third-party validators by the U.S. Department of Treasury and the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

I just want to make sure that we break out many visual aids because some Members of the House seem to be a little confused about what is happening and what is not happening.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. You are absolutely right. No apology necessary. It is really important that we have this time on the floor, and that is why we appreciate Leader PELOSI giving us this opportunity to make some substantive arguments that actually demonstrate how we are going in the wrong direction and also to lay out the Democrats' plan for taking us in a new one.

What has really boggled my mind since I arrived in the Congress, at the beginning of last year, is that our friends on the other side of the aisle seem to have no qualms about just ceding their decisionmaking authority here to the executive branch. Why show up for work? Why run for Congress? This is not an easy job. This is a job that requires a lot of responsibility, it requires thoughtful decisionmaking, it requires time away from our family and all of which, at least each of us on our side, and I know many of our Republican colleagues feel this way, that this is an awesome responsibility that we are given when we are elected to the United States Congress.

The Founding Fathers did not separate the United States Government into three branches in order for the Congress to just be a rubber stamp of the executive. They feared tyranny. They feared an executive that was too strong, and they wanted to make sure that there was a system of checks and balances, so that when questions that come from the executive come before the Congress, that we aren't just a rubber stamp, that we aren't here just to say, yes, Mr. President, absolutely, can I get your hat, can I hold your coat, Mr. President.

Our role here is to ask questions, to exercise oversight, to put forth initiatives and to actually represent our constituents, like you said, in the people's House. That is why I was very surprised, but pleasantly, to see the

former leader of this Chamber under the Republican revolution, Mr. Gingrich, the former House Speaker, when he cited in the Knight Ridder newspapers, third-party validator that we like to bring out on this House floor, so that that way people understand it is not just what KENDRICK MEEK says or DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ or TIM RYAN or BILL DELAHUNT. Mr. Gingrich cited a series of blunders under the Republican rule from failures in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina to the mismanagement of the war in Iraq. He said the government has squandered billions of dollars in Iraq.

You know, we just had 10 hours of debate yesterday, which if you listen to our colleagues on the other side of the aisle, according to them, what President Bush is doing, everything is wonderful. Everything is coming up roses.

Now, I think we could all acknowledge in this entire Chamber that we are, although I certainly am never pleased about any one individual's demise, because, obviously, we value life, but there were not too many Americans shedding tears about Mr. al Zarqawi's demise and the American contribution to it. The world, such as when we removed Saddam Hussein, is a more peaceful place without him being in it.

But you cannot, based on one individual's demise, in the cesspool that has been created by this President's policies in Iraq, you cannot say, now, you know, everything is great, this is the beginning of the end, this is the turning point.

Listening to our colleagues on the other side of the aisle. In the last 10 hours, one would think that this bombing of the leader of al Qaeda in Iraq was the be-all and end-all, and that is the thing that Americans were looking for to end this. Nothing could be further from the truth. That is why 42 people were killed in Iraq today, 42.

I mean, it is not like much has changed on the ground in that country. Our real security agenda that would take this country in a new direction, if we were able to win the majority back in November, Americans would see the direction that Democrats would take this country.

We would make a commitment to our troops. We would make sure that we had a real commitment to our troops, that we changed the military into a 21st-century one of military strength, and we would honor them. We would rebuild a state-of-the-art military by making the needed investments in equipment and manpower so that we can make sure we can handle the diverse needs and the diverse activity that we have going on across the globe.

What happened to Afghanistan, Mr. MEEK? I mean, when we first were attacked after 9/11, and we went into Afghanistan, and the Americans were united in that effort, we actually removed the Taliban. We were able to bring that country into the 21st century, restoring quality for women, and

making sure that we had a democracy, democratic seedlings planted there.

Now, you fast forward to 2006, because we virtually pulled out of Afghanistan, save for about 17,000 troops that are still left on the ground. Now you have the rise of the Taliban again. You have Afghani women who are saying that they have been subjected to the same inequality and the same requirements of wearing the burqa and not being able to get an education.

We have abandoned Afghanistan; and, instead, we have added our resources in our effort to making Iraq more of a cesspool than it already was. If we are able to implement our real security agenda, we will make sure that our troops are well equipped, that we are funding the appropriate activity and making sure that we actually go after Osama bin Laden. We will make sure that the war on terror is waged both here in the United States and across the globe and that we strike a balance, so that Americans don't have to worry about being attacked in the United States.

We will make sure that we make a commitment to moving the country in a new direction militarily instead of continuing to fund an endless war in Iraq, that no matter what has been said in a 10-hour debate that occurred on this floor, still has no end in sight, still has more than 2,500 troops dead, and we know more to come every day.

Mr. MEEK, you are a member of the Homeland Security Committee and Armed Services Committee, so you are certainly more expert in this area than I am. But I literally heard in the last day and a half a policy of denial on the part of our Republican colleagues. It would be nice if they put both hands on the ground and yanked their heads out of it so that we could all come together and have a real debate, a real debate.

Yes, bring out that rubber stamp, because that is exactly what happened on this vote this morning. If we were allowed to have a real debate, if we were allowed to put forward our alternative, if we were allowed to file amendments, I would have been willing to consider to be able to vote for something and would have been appreciative for the opportunity to vote for something other than what the majority tried to cram down.

They certainly did cram it down their colleagues' throats. We refused to allow it to be crammed down ours. You know what, I don't check my brain at the door of the Chamber when I walk in the door. I represent my constituents.

You know, not everyone will agree with me back home in the 20th district of Florida. That is okay, because I wasn't elected to be a rubber stamp. I was elected to be a Representative, a United States Representative, someone who stands up for what I believe in and stands up for what my constituents believe in. I was not elected to rubber-stamp anyone's policy, not NANCY PELOSI's, not Mr. BOEHNER's, not the President. I was elected as an individual.

Unfortunately, our colleagues on the other side of the aisle, they do check their brains at the door. They bring in that big old rubber stamp, and they just pound it on whatever is put in front of them by the Republican leadership and say, yes, Mr. Leader, yes, Mr. President, I am glad to do your bidding and the heck with the checks and balances of the Constitution and our role here as a Member of the United States Congress.

At the end of the day, why be here, why run, why make the sacrifice, why leave your family behind? We only need one of their Members. We only need Mr. BOEHNER or Mr. HASTERT here. They are the only ones that bother showing up to work because these other guys on the other side of the aisle, they just do what they are told to do anyway. Really, they could go spend quite a bit of other time doing something useful and certainly could make sure that the country could begin to see what is really going on in this Chamber.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. I am glad you pointed out the fact that a lot of rubber-stamping is going on. The reason I voted against the Iraq resolution today, Mr. Speaker, is I will not dishonor the memory of those individuals that have died and those individuals who have been forever maimed or lost a leg or limb or that mother or that father that will never see their son or daughter, or that child that will never see their father, aunt, uncle or niece again.

The reason why I did that is that many men and women in uniform are fighting on behalf of, what, a democracy or something like it. You have a resolution that says, Democrats, we are not even going to allow you to put anything on the floor, we are not going to allow you to amend the resolution.

The rules are set on the third floor up here, Mr. Speaker, in the Rules Committee that says we won't even allow an alternative resolution. They say we won't even allow. Yes, welcome to the floor, and you will talk. But you know something? Talk is cheap. Action means everything.

So as a member of the Armed Services Committee along with my ranking member and along with a lot of other members of the Armed Services Committee, we voted against the resolution today, not because we believe in something else; we do believe this democracy. But we do believe in a fair debate in oversight and policy.

That is why it is important, Mr. Speaker, that we move in a way that will have our Constitution honored at the same time, and we move in a way as it relates to fairness for every Member of this House.

One thing that Leader PELOSI, if the Democrats take control will be the Speaker, had said we will work in a bipartisan way. Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ talked about the whole rubber-stamping issue. This rubber stamp has been used far too many times for the Repub-

lican majority. How did we get in the deficits, the deficits as far as the eye can see? Because of the rubber stamp?

□ 1300

Defense contractors and contractors in Hurricane Katrina were able to steal money from the American taxpayer through a lack of oversight because of the rubber stamp.

States are suing the Federal Government under Leave No Child Behind because we are only funding it to the low 30 percent and allowing States and local governments to be able to have what they need to have to carry out the mission of educating our children.

The trouble is because the Republican majority has rubber stamped everything that the Bush White House has handed down, and when we look at tax policies, how does a billionaire here, Mr. Speaker, have a \$398 million retirement package with a cherry on top, \$2 million tax break, of the policies of the Republican majority? Still we have individuals going to work for \$5 and some change on minimum wage.

So I think it is important that we look at this whole issue rubber stamping, and we look at this issue of following Article 1, section 1 of the U.S. Constitution and making sure that we do what we are supposed to do here at the House.

I yield to Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate your leadership so much and really the opportunity to be here with you almost every night. I am going to have to catch back up to the two of you guys, and I have some family in town this week. I look forward to continuing to talk about the new direction that the Democratic Caucus will take this country when we are given the opportunity in November.

I look forward to continuing this debate and this discussion on our commitment to making sure that we do not privatize Social Security and that we enact responsible legislation that truly shores it and does not use scare tactics against our seniors, implying that there is some sort of crisis that does not exist when Social Security will remain solvent for at least the next 47 years; that we make sure we enact a truly effective energy policy, invest in alternative energy resources and make sure that we actually generate the ability to become insulated from foreign oil, instead of giving away the store to the big oil company; that we make sure that we really expand access to health care, that we reduce the number of uninsured Americans and that when a child is sick, when an American is sick, that they can afford to go to the doctor and that cost is not the obstacle to basic health care.

Those are the things that we remain committed to. That is an agenda that we have put forward and that we look forward to talking about as the months progress through to the November election. I look forward to sharing the podium with you and talking about that for the next several months.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. I want to thank Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ for coming down to the floor today, as you always do, and we continue to work on these issues that are facing Americans.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is important that since we are all kind of draped up in the flag this week and talking about who is a patriot and who is not, and I will not stand judgment even on my Republican colleagues, many of whom that have cast dye on some of the Members of the Democratic aisle of saying who is with the troops or who is not with the troops.

I just want to say that fact, not fiction, always prevails in history and also in the future.

We want to make sure, in the Republican budget, that we point out the fact that there will be a copayment for veterans. There will be a copayment of some \$250 for veterans because that is what is in the Republican budget package. That is a fact. Their prescription drug costs will go up. That is a fact. So, if we want to get all draped up and teary-eyed and saying I have a tattoo, saying I support the troops more than you do. My car that I got is painted that I support the troops. It is not what you say or hear on this floor. It is about how you vote and where your dollars are as it relates to respecting the men and women that laid down their life, many of whom and those individuals that have that will never walk again to allow us to salute one flag here today.

I think it is important, and I take issue with the fact because I will not let their memory be dishonored. I take issue with the fact that individuals are coming to the floor saying one thing and doing another with their vote as it relates to those individuals.

When our men and women come home, they are going to have issues. They are going to have issues because they are not going to be able to deal with the effects of the IEDs that are going off, their friends being maimed, and still there is no policy as it relates to how we are going to deal with the issue of Iraq, how we are going to take the training wheels off the Iraqi government.

The only resolutions that have been put forward to deal with those issues are on the Democratic side of the aisle, and because the President does not want to talk about it, the Republican majority does not want to talk about it.

What is so frustrating is the fact that we have plans on this side to have discourse and dialogue in a bipartisan way so that those individuals that are there now in some areas in the Western parts of Iraq, eating meals Ready to Eat, okay, MREs, for those individuals and those individuals that are talking to their children by long distance, saying I am coming home soon and they really cannot answer the question because I have a 9-year-old son and I have an 11-year-old daughter.

I have been to Iraq twice, but you know something, when a Member of

Congress goes to Iraq we are coming back in two or three days on a Federal plane, being served food and drink. We are coming home. We are going to land at Andrews Air Force Base, and the air force people, God bless them and I love them, they are going to give us a ride back here to the Capitol. We are going to get out and we are going to go home, not like those individuals who volunteered, not drafted, volunteered to serve this country.

If they agree or not, they deserve a policy on Iraq, not just a cheerleading resolution saying, well, we are going to do a lot of wordy stuff; then we are going to mail this over to the troops and say we are with you. They know that they are with us. There is not a Member of this House, there is not a person I have received a phone call from, that says I do not support the troops and I do not think you should support the troops.

That is not what this debate is about. The debate should be about how we are going to deal with the Iraqi government, how we are going to continue to pull coalition forces in.

Guess what, you would assume under the resolution that passed today and with the speeches that the President is giving, that we have coalition partners that are running in saying how can we help. There is something wrong, Mr. Speaker, when the coalition is getting smaller of nations that are involved in this effort with the United States of America.

I think if I start giving a speech, and I am home giving a political speech, a campaign speech and folks started leaving the room, that means I am saying something that they disagree with, that they do not believe in.

So I think it is important, Mr. Speaker, that we pay very close attention and tell my colleagues on the Republican side of the aisle that we pay very close attention. This is not a Republican executive committee. This is not a Democratic executive committee. This is not the Reform Party. This is not the Green Party. This is the U.S. House of Representatives, and I want the record to reflect in this time that we are making history in all the wrong places. We are allowing foreign countries to own a piece of the American apple pie who have never owned, at these numbers in the last 4 years, a piece of the American apple pie. The Republican majority is allowing it to happen, and it is unpatriotic for us to even think about being unpatriotic at a time such as this.

We should be coming together as Republicans and the one Independent in this House and Democrats, and figuring out how do we work our way out of this. It will take a generation fiscally for us to work ourselves out of the deficit that has been put forth here today and has been led on by the Republican majority because it has been handed down by the Bush White House.

Now, the President can invite as many Members of the House and the

Senate to the White House for tea and coffee and cookies, but guess what, that is not going to cut it. That is not going to cut it. What is going to cut it is a Republican majority saying, you know something, enough is enough, let us put politics aside; let us make sure that Democrats are a part of a conference committee in a real discussion on a strategy of dealing with Iraq, dealing with education, dealing with how we are going to treat our veterans when they come home.

They are going to be at the dining room table with their families, and we cannot be stuttering when they get back as it relates to our commitment to those individuals that has sand in their teeth and are away from their families 12 months, in some cases being extended beyond that another 6 months, to say that, oh, well, we had to up on your copayment because we promised that we will provide health care to you because we want to make sure we guarantee these tax cuts for these billionaires.

Now, I think it is important and I think that we should get passionate and we should get emotional about what we should be doing versus talking back and forth at one another. We have to see it in black and white in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD and legislation and resolutions that are passed here on this floor that are going to benefit those individuals in harm's way.

If that is going to be the topic of the day, then let it be the topic of the day. Let us see resolutions that come to the floor from the Democratic side of the aisle about how do we deal with Iraq, with Republican input. Let us see if there is some sort of resolution outside of a bunch of words saying, well, you know, we feel that the war on terror, and you know, the President and people are doing good work, and you know, the indicators show what the indicators show.

That is not policy. That is a speech for someone to go home and say you see, I voted for this because it said a lot of good things, but it did nothing. To say that we are passing this to send a message, well, guess what, that message is not penetrating the reality of this war, and it is important that we deal with it in a way that the American people and the troops know that we have their back 110 percent or reassure Americans that we have their back 110 percent by not shunting our policy responsibility. Right now we are punting. The Republican majority is punting because the White House does not want to do anything. Yet the White House, the White House says we listen to our military commanders.

Can we bring our military commanders out. We have eight generals that are retired that have said that they do not agree with how the way things are going now, eight of them, eight generals, eight generals that are saying they do not know what is happening. They have questions on what is happening, eight generals. So many

generals are saying I was there, these policies are not right, but no one wants to listen. I guess they are not patriots now. I guess these generals, they have a cowardly way about them because they disagree with the President and they disagree with the Republican majority.

The thing about it is, in America someone should be able to say what they want to say, and there should not be any repercussions. I think, too, it is fighting in Iraq to try to bring some sort of democracy to Iraq. We are so much in the front seat, the Iraqi government cannot even get in the front seat because we have a policy that no one can figure out on the Republican side.

So I guess we are not going to figure it out. Forget about what those Democrats are saying in the House and Senate, about how can we do it in a comprehensive way and pull it together.

Maybe, Mr. Speaker, other coalition forces and other countries may come in and say now how are you going to deal with Iraq and have the Iraqi government take over security operations in Iraq, maybe we want to be part of it because we do not want to continue to go on with the plan of just saying let us just go on.

I will use this analogy by saying this as I close, Mr. Speaker. To pass a resolution without true instruction on how we are going to deal with the issue in Iraq is almost like taking a carton of milk out of the refrigerator and opening it, saying, oh, it is sour, let me put it back in, it will be fresh tomorrow. It may be okay when the issue is a carton of milk, but it is not okay when we are dealing with the lives of the American troops that are in Iraq and in harm's way at this time.

It is not the right policy, and it is not the right thing to do when we have got kids coming home from school saying is Daddy or Mama home yet. It is not the right policy as it relates to those individuals that are our generals and our commanders in Iraq that are looking for some policy direction from the Congress on what we feel because we are the representatives of the American people. It is not the right way to do things.

So I am here to say, Mr. Speaker, we want to talk about what we are going to do. We know we have a new direction for America. We know we have a security policy on this side of the aisle. We know that we have a policy as it relates to innovation. We know that we have a policy as it relates to the fact that the minimum wage will be raised. It is not a question of we are not. It is going to be raised if we are in the majority.

We have a promise to the American people of sending in a new direction on this side of the aisle, that if we get the control of this House of Representatives, that we will institute pay-as-we-go policies to make sure that we work towards balancing the budget, and you have a commitment on this side of the

aisle, Mr. Speaker, from the Democratic side of the aisle that if we become the majority, that this country will be working towards energy independence within 10 years, using alternative fuels and passing policy that will have motor companies building flex vehicles so that we no longer have to be dependent on the Middle East and that we can fund and support the Midwest as it relates to corn, as it relates to sugar cane, as it relates to other energy-related issues to make E-85 here in the United States of America.

Maybe, just maybe, we will not be having the debate up here and resolutions of the House, spending a day and a half with speeches on a resolution that was written, handwritten by the Republican majority without not one word, not even an "and," "not," a "but," not a comma, not a dot, by the Democratic side of the aisle and expect for us to come to the floor in a democracy and just say, okay, I will vote for it?

□ 1315

You wrote it, so I will vote for it, even though there was no input. My only input is to come in here and press the red or green button. Because the way you wrote it is the way you want it. And I think the American people are going to stand up against that kind of policy.

With that, I say for the Members to go on, if they want to get a copy of anything we talked about here today, to housedemocrats.gov/30something, that is housedemocrats.gov/30something. You can get everything, every chart that I showed here, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to thank the Democratic leader for allowing us to have this hour, and I want to thank my colleagues in the 30-something Working Group for all of their assistance and time that they have spent, and I would like to thank the staff. It was an honor addressing the House.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. BISHOP of New York (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today.

Mr. CLEAVER (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today.

Mr. DINGELL (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today.

Ms. KILPATRICK of Michigan (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today on account of attending the funeral of a dear friend and constituent.

Mr. SENSENBRENNER (at the request of Mr. BOEHNER) for today on account of attending his son's graduation.

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 ex-

tend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. EMANUEL, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. DEFAZIO, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. WOOLSEY, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. CARDIN, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. PALLONE, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. SCHIFF, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. STUPAK, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. ROSS, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. CUMMINGS, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. BALDWIN, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico, for 5 minutes, today.

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

Mr. POE, for 5 minutes, today and June 23.

Mr. MCHENRY, for 5 minutes, June 19, 20, 21, and 22.

Mr. JONES of North Carolina, for 5 minutes, June 19, 20, 21, 22, and 23.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. DUNCAN, for 5 minutes, today.

BILL PRESENTED TO THE PRESIDENT

Karen L. Haas, Clerk of the House reports that on June 15, 2006, she presented to the President of the United States, for his approval, the following bill.

H.R. 4939. Making emergency supplemental appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2006, and for other purposes.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 1 o'clock and 16 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until Monday, June 19, 2006, at 12:30 p.m., for morning hour debate.

OATH FOR ACCESS TO CLASSIFIED INFORMATION

Under clause 13 of rule XXIII, the following Members executed the oath for access to classified information:

Neil Abercrombie, Gary L. Ackerman, Robert B. Aderholt, W. Todd Akin, Rodney Alexander, Thomas H. Allen, Robert E. Andrews, Joe Baca, Spencer Bachus, Brian Baird, Richard H. Baker, Tammy Baldwin, J. Gresham Barrett, John Barrow, Roscoe G. Bartlett, Joe Barton, Charles F. Bass, Melissa L. Bean, Bob Beauprez, Xavier Becerra, Shelley Berkley, Howard L. Berman, Marion Berry, Judy Biggert, Brian P. Bilbray, Michael Bilirakis, Rob Bishop, Sanford D. Bishop, Jr., Timothy H. Bishop, Marsha Blackburn, Earl Blumenauer, Roy Blunt, Sherwood Boehlert, John A. Boehner, Henry

Bonilla, Jo Bonner, Mary Bono, John Boozman, Madeleine Z. Bordallo, Dan Boren, Leonard L. Boswell, Rick Boucher, Charles W. Boustany, Jr., Allen Boyd, Jeb Bradley, Kevin Brady, Robert A. Brady, Corrine Brown, Sherrod Brown, Henry E. Brown, Jr., Ginny Brown-Waite, Michael C. Burgess, Dan Burton, G. K. Butterfield, Steve Buyer, Ken Calvert, Dave Camp, John Campbell, Chris Cannon, Eric Cantor, Shelley Moore Capito, Lois Capps, Michael E. Capuano, Benjamin L. Cardin, Dennis A. Cardoza, Russ Carnahan, Julia Carson, John R. Carter, Ed Case, Michael N. Castle, Steve Chabot, Ben Chandler, Chris Chocola, Donna M. Christensen, Wm. Lacy Clay, Emanuel Cleaver, James E. Clyburn, Howard Coble, Tom Cole, K. Michael Conaway, John Conyers, Jr., Jim Cooper, Jim Costa, Jerry F. Costello, Christopher Cox, Robert E. (Bud) Cramer, Jr., Ander Crenshaw, Joseph Crowley, Barbara Cubin, Henry Cuellar, John Abney Culberson, Elijah E. Cummings, Randy "Duke" Cunningham, Artur Davis, Geoff Davis, Jim Davis, Jo Ann Davis, Lincoln Davis, Tom Davis, Susan A. Davis, Danny K. Davis, Nathan Deal, Peter A. DeFazio, Diana DeGette, William D. Delahunt, Rosa L. DeLauro, Tom DeLay, Charles W. Dent, Lincoln Diaz-Balart, Mario Diaz-Balart, Norman D. Dicks, John D. Dingell, Lloyd Doggett, John T. Doolittle, Michael F. Doyle, Thelma D. Drake, David Dreier, John J. Duncan, Jr., Chet Edwards, Vernon J. Ehlers, Rahm Emanuel, Jo Ann Emerson, Eliot L. Engel, Phil English, Anna G. Eshoo, Bob Etheridge, Lane Evans, Terry Everett, Eni F. H. Faleomavaega, Sam Farr, Chaka Fattah, Tom Feeney, Mike Ferguson, Bob Filner, Michael G. Fitzpatrick, Jeff Flake, Mark Foley, J. Randy Forbes, Harold E. Ford, Jr., Jeff Fortenberry, Luis G. Fortuño, Vito Fossella, Virginia Foxx, Barney Frank, Trent Franks, Rodney P. Frelinghuysen, Elton Gallegly, Scott Garrett, Jim Gerlach, Jim Gibbons, Wayne T. Gilchrest, Paul E. Gillmor, Phil Gingrey, Louie Gohmert, Charles A. Gonzalez, Virgil H. Goode, Jr., Bob Goodlatte, Bart Gordon, Kay Granger, Sam Graves, Al Green, Gene Green, Mark Green, Raul M. Grijalva, Luis V. Gutierrez, Gil Gutknecht, Ralph M. Hall, Jane Harman, Katherine Harris, Melissa A. Hart, J. Dennis Hastert, Doc Hastings, Alcee L. Hastings, Robin Hayes, J. D. Hayworth, Joel Hefley, Jeb Hensarling, Wally Herger, Stephanie Herseth, Brian Higgins, Maurice D. Hinchey, Ruben Hinojosa, David L. Hobson, Peter Hoekstra, Tim Holden, Rush D. Holt, Michael M. Honda, Darlene Hooley, John N. Hostettler, Steny H. Hoyer, Kenny C. Hulshof, Duncan Hunter, Henry J. Hyde, Bob Inglis, Jay Inslee, Steve Israel, Darrell E. Issa, Ernest J. Istook, Jr., Jesse L. Jackson, Jr., Sheila Jackson-Lee, William J. Jefferson, William L. Jenkins, Bobby Jindal, Sam Johnson, Eddie Bernice Johnson, Nancy L. Johnson, Timothy V. Johnson, Walter B. Jones, Stephanie Tubbs Jones, Paul E. Kanjorski, Marcy Kaptur, Ric Keller, Sue W. Kelly, Patrick J. Kennedy, Mark R. Kennedy, Dale E. Kildee, Carolyn C. Kilpatrick, Ron Kind, Steve King, Peter T. King, Jack Kingston, Mark Steven Kirk, John Kline, Joe Knollenberg, Jim Kolbe, John R. "Randy" Kuhl, Jr., Ray LaHood, James R. Langevin, Tom Lantos, Rick Larsen, John B. Larson, Tom Latham, Steven C. LaTourette, James A. Leach, Barbara Lee, Sander M. Levin, Jerry Lewis, John Lewis, Ron Lewis, John Linder, Daniel Lipinski, Frank A. LoBiondo, Zoe Lofgren, Nita M. Lowey, Frank D. Lucas, Daniel E. Lungren, Stephen F. Lynch, Connie Mack, Carolyn B. Maloney, Donald A. Manzullo, Kenny Marchant, Edward J. Markey, Jim Marshall, Jim Matheson, Doris O. Matsui, Carolyn McCarthy, Michael T. McCaul, Betty McCollum, Thaddeus