

that we bring the truth to our constituents. And the truth of the tax bill that has been proposed is on this chart right here, Mr. Speaker. This describes the time from 2007 through 2050 and the amount of money that would be raised, the amount of taxes that would be raised by the Democrats is this orange line right here, this top line, and it continues to go up and up and up.

And the reason it is important to appreciate it going up is this ordinate here, the Y axis, has the percent of GDP. That is the entire economy of the United States. And once you get above about 18, 19, 20 at the outside, the economy tends to plummet. You can't run the economy in an aggressive and appropriate way to provide jobs for people when you get above 20 percent.

And the majority's party plan, the plan proposed by the chairman of the Ways and Means Committee and supported by the Speaker of the House in her first comments, what that plan does is move us upwards of 24 percent of gross domestic product. Mr. Speaker, that is a frightening prospect. That is not the kind of leadership, I believe, that the American people bargained for last November. The kind of leadership that they wanted, that they desired, were individuals to work together for solutions.

And the yellow line down here, Mr. Speaker, is a solution. It is called the Taxpayer Choice Act. It is uplifting, optimistic, enthusiastic support of the American people. It says, Mr. and Mrs. American, you know what to do with your money more than we do; and we believe that so strongly, we are not going to increase taxes on you. If you work harder, you will be able to keep more money. You will be able to appreciate the fruits of your labor. Isn't that what America is all about, Mr. Speaker? To be able to reward hard work and reward success and reward entrepreneurship and reward vision? That is what America is all about. That is what my constituents tell me when I go home.

So my constituents are concerned, which is why the numbers for Congress are so very, very low. An 11 percent approval rate of the United States Congress by the American people. Again, that troubles me. This is a wonderful, fine institution. It works best when people work together positively for their constituents.

So I challenge my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, I challenge them to embrace them in the SCHIP arena, embrace a positive bill which provides reauthorization for the bill but ensures that moms and dads and families and kids can be able to make health care decisions with their doctor without the intervention of the Federal or State government.

As a physician, I know oh so well how the intervention of the State and Federal Government into the practice of medicine destroys the ability to take care of people. It makes it so you can't provide quality health care for children and moms and dads.

There are alternatives to that. H.R. 3888, the More Children More Choices Act. More kids being insured, the same number of kids proposed by the other side, but more choices. More personal ownership and more ability to control one's future.

In the area of taxes, Mr. Speaker, the alternative is clear. It is allowing Americans to keep more of their hard-earned money. It is what we have done for the last 6 years. It has resulted in the largest economic boom we have seen in a number of decades. In fact, it has resulted in the largest economic boom that we have seen since taxes were decreased before in the sixties and the eighties under President Kennedy and President Reagan. And what we saw under them was increasing revenues to the Federal Government.

Mr. Speaker, it is an incredible privilege to come to this floor and present ideas and speak on behalf on our constituents in a positive and optimistic and enthusiastic way. I encourage my colleagues to embrace the kind of optimism and enthusiasm we have for America. And if this majority party would do just that, I promise you that the ratings for this Congress would increase. I look forward to joining my colleagues in that positive and upbeat way.

VACATING 5-MINUTE SPECIAL ORDER

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ARCURI). Without objection, the 5-minute Special Order in favor of the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY) is vacated.

There was no objection.

30-SOMETHING WORKING GROUP

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. I thank the Speaker and I thank the Speaker of the House, NANCY PELOSI, for once again allowing the 30-Something Working Group to come to the floor tonight and share with the American people and share with you, Mr. Speaker, some of the most important and pressing issues that are before this Congress right now, and to do that in part from a perspective of some of the hardworking individuals across this country who are looking for help from this Congress, who are looking for a Congress for the first time in a long time to start standing up for average, hardworking, everyday men and women who have been getting the short shrift from this government for a very long time.

I am soon to be joined by some of my colleagues, potentially Mr. RYAN and Mr. MEEK and Mr. ALTMIRE to discuss some of the issues confronting us today.

We will try, on behalf of Mr. ALTMIRE and Mr. MEEK, and certainly Mr. RYAN,

to make as few Halloween analogies as potentially positive. We have exhausted that already this evening, and we are guilty on both sides of the aisle, so we won't talk about things being frightening or scary, at least until Mr. RYAN gets here. He may not be able to resist.

It always amuses me when we are down here for one of these 30-Something Working Group hours, and a lot of times we are preceded by The Truth Squad or some of our friends on the Republican side of the aisle. Often their mantra is to preach to the Democratic side of the aisle and preach to the American people the values of fiscal responsibility.

Tonight we heard a little bit about it from our friends from the other side of the aisle chastising Chairman RANGEL and his new very progressive tax cut which will bring tax relief to millions of working-class families. We heard them talk about how it is time this Congress got spending under control as well.

Mr. Speaker, there are short memories on the other side of the aisle, short memories which seems to only go back 10 months. They do not go back 3, or 6 or 12 years ago when Republicans took control of this Congress. If they did, they may have some recollection of the fact that they had 12 years of control. The Republicans had 12 years of responsibility over the Federal budget to get some fiscal sense and some fiscal discipline in the Federal budget.

I stand here as a representative from a pretty fiscally conservative district. I represent northwestern Connecticut which is filled with Democrats and Republicans and Independents alike who care about the management of their Federal budget. They care about what this government does with their Federal dollars.

They may be sort of a more socially liberal or moderate district, but when it comes to dollars and cents, people in my district care about fiscal responsibility. So I think one of the reasons I replaced a 24-year incumbent is because after a while, people in my little corner of Connecticut and from across this country woke up to the fact that while on the floor of the House of Representatives or back in their districts or on the talk shows or the cable news networks, the Republicans said over and over again that they valued fiscal responsibility, but when they had a chance to pass budgets to back up that talk, when they had a chance to get the deficit under control, not only did they not do it, they made it worse.

This President with a Republican-controlled Congress in the House and the Senate, with a Republican-controlled administration inherited a budget surplus and turned that in just a few years into a record budget deficit. A chart that Mr. MEEK and Mr. RYAN have shown on this House floor year after year after year says it pretty well. President Bush during the time he has been in office, all of that,

all of those budgets passed with Republican Houses and Republican Senates, in the time he has been in Congress, he has doubled the amount of foreign-held debt, doubled the amount of borrowing we have done which has been bought up by countries other than the United States.

It took 42 Presidents 224 years to build up \$1 trillion of foreign debt. And it has taken this President 6 years to go to \$1.19 trillion. And this chart is a little old, too. It's even worse than that now. So it amuses me, Mr. Speaker, and a lot amuses me in Washington. As a freshman Member, I find a lot of things to sort of step back and laugh about. But to get lectured by a Republican, now in the minority, about fiscal responsibility, when it was their party in control of this House and in control of the Senate and running the administration that put us in the situation we are in today. So now it is our job to try to clean it up.

When I go back to my district, Mr. Speaker, I have a hard time explaining why some of the simple, commonsense measures that we have undertaken in this Congress weren't done years, decades ago. I use for an example what is called the pay-as-you-go rule. It is kind of the rule that most families and businesses use every day, which is we are only going to spend money that we have. We are going to put money out at the same rate money is coming in.

For some reason when the Republicans were running this House for the last 12 years, that wasn't the rule of the day. In fact, regularly they were spending American taxpayer dollars that they didn't have, that weren't in the bank. That is what rolled up these deficits that were rolling in at about \$300 billion a year. It's spending more money than we were taking in that is now responsible for a Federal deficit that balloons over \$1.2 trillion.

The majority, I am not sure the majority but a large amount of that deficit, that debt, those notes, those obligations being held by China and Japan and OPEC nations, all of these countries that we are sitting across the negotiating table from, being largely compromised by the fact that we owe a large amount of money that we are asking for policy considerations from.

So we decided, let's do something simple. When Speaker PELOSI came to the Speaker's chair, to the dais you sit on right now, Mr. Speaker, she decided in the first 100 hours we are here, let's say that every obligation that we decide to commit ourselves to, every new spending bill that may come before this House, let's within that bill explain exactly how we are going to pay for it. When I explain that back home, when I go to my Rotary groups or my Chamber of Commerce meetings and I explain that Congress now has decided to only spend what we have, and if we spend anything more in that bill we are going to tell you how we are going to spend it, people look at me with these blank stares saying on the inside and

on the outside: Why didn't you do this before?

This Republican Party that told us for years they were the party of fiscal responsibility in fact was running this budget into the ground; and could have, just by adopting a pretty simple pay-as-you-go rule, could have exerted some discipline on this House which was lacking almost completely for 12 years, now finally here.

I am pretty proud of Chairman RANGEL for his frankness as he was sort of mockingly given credit for earlier today, because the bill that he has put before us, the bill that fixes the alternative minimum tax, and I know we will spend some time talking about some really important topics as we head into the holidays regarding food safety and toy safety and drug safety, but first I want to talk about the alternative minimum tax because you didn't hear a word about it, you didn't hear anybody talking about it, at least when I was listening to the other side of the aisle, you didn't hear anybody talking about the very reason Chairman RANGEL and the Ways and Means Committee have dedicated themselves to tax relief because we are on the verge of the biggest tax increase on the middle class in perhaps the history of American tax policy courtesy of President Bush and the previous Republican majority here.

□ 2030

So guess what? Yet again, it's left to this Democratic Congress, the New Direction Congress, to clean up yet another mess that was created by this prior Congress.

We're already trying to do it when it comes to children's health care. We're trying to reorder our energy policy. We're trying to clean up the ethical malaise that has settled on this town. So now we are also going to do it when it comes to this issue as well, to the alternative minimum tax.

In 1969, when the alternative minimum tax was passed by Congress it was pretty simple. They said, listen, with of the different tax loopholes and deductions and credits and offsets that people can take, there's going to be some people who make a lot of money who may be able, through creative tax planning, to avoid paying taxes to the United States Government. That's not right. That's not right.

And so in 1969, they passed a complicated formula called the alternative minimum tax, and in 1970, about 20,000 of the richest Americans paid the alternative minimum tax. Makes sense. Makes sense. Make sure that everybody pays some minimum level of taxation, especially those folks up at the top of the income stratosphere who have creative ways to avoid that tax situation.

Okay. So 20,000 people pay it in 1970, but guess what? Because Congress, after Congress fails to index the alternative minimum tax, in 2006, 3.5 million people end up paying it, and all of

the sudden it's not just the tax paid by the really, really rich people. It's a tax that starts to get paid for by people that look and sound and make incomes like you and I, and as we look at what happens in the next couple of years, it gets even worse.

By 2010, if we don't fix the alternative minimum tax, the AMT as people call it around here. I figured out in my short time here that everything has got an acronym, everything; even things where the word itself is shorter than the acronym, that's got an acronym. So this has got an acronym. The alternative minimum tax is called the AMT.

By 2010, just 2½ short years away, if we don't fix this, if we don't clean up the mess that this last Congress created on the AMT, 80 percent of people that make \$100,000, in Connecticut that's a middle-income family, 80 percent of people that make \$100,000 are going to be paying the alternative minimum tax, and it just gets worse from there.

Mr. ALTMIRE. Mr. Speaker, would the gentleman yield on that?

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. I would.

Mr. ALTMIRE. And this is something that's critical to understanding the tax policies that we're going to be considering in the remaining time that we have in the 110th Congress.

The alternative minimum tax, as the gentleman is pointing out, is something that has to be addressed. We simply cannot afford to ignore this issue any longer. We've been in a position where we have been giving 1-year fixes year after year. For 1 year we hold harmless the folks that should qualify for the AMT as it's currently written with that flawed formula, and we push it off another year, and it gets more expensive to fix every time we do that.

And what the gentleman from Connecticut is talking about is it was a flaw. In 1969, they created the alternative minimum tax to prevent people from escaping their tax obligations. They couldn't use deductions and loopholes and whatnot, and they didn't index it for inflation. So now we're 38 years later, and the income of 1969 that was considered rich at that point, due to 38 years of inflation, we have a different outlook on that.

So we have a situation where the alternative minimum tax is spiraling out of control. And you gave numbers, 4 million people affected by it this year. If we do nothing, it is going to be 23 million next year. So we can't ignore the problem, and our friends on the other side of the aisle can pretend like that's not part of the equation and this is not something that we have to deal with or this isn't going to have a cost. And I know this is something you're going to address later in your remarks and we can discuss that, but to say, well, we should just do nothing about this or we should pretend like this isn't going to have a budget impact is just not consistent with the facts.

So the alternative minimum tax is there. It's the reality. It's existed for 38 years. It's spiraling out of control, and we're very close to being in position where if we were to scrap the entire income tax system, that would cost less than to do away with the alternative minimum tax. We're only a few years away from meeting that threshold.

So what do we do? Well, Chairman RANGEL has put forward a plan that is not the only plan that's going to be discussed. It's not the only plan that's going to be offered, but it's the starting point for the discussion, and he has said that this needs to be a permanent fix. And I know in the other body they're having the same discussion, that it needs to be a permanent fix. We can't continue to do this year after year after year, and it just gets more expensive.

So this is the starting point. We have to think about that when we talk about tax policy, that this is unmistakable that we have to deal with the AMT.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. We've got to decide how we're going to fix it. Everybody on this side of the aisle and some of our friends in the Senate can sort of live in this.

Fantasyland where we're just going to do more of the same; let's fix this alternative minimum tax for middle-class taxpayers, and guess what, let's just do it by borrowing more money. That's the way I think a lot of people in the place would like to do, more of the same, borrow money in order to cut taxes.

You can't do that anymore. You can't do that for the next generation is going to end up paying all that money back. You can't do that because you can't exacerbate the existing trend, which has countries like Japan and China and OPEC nations, and Taiwan and Korea and Hong Kong and Germany owning all this American currency.

You've got to stop this. You've got to stop the madness of borrowing. So the way you do that is to be honest about how you pay for the alternative minimum tax, and we're going to have to deal with some choices here.

The Republican Congress for years made this choice. They could have fixed the alternative minimum tax. Instead, they gave away more and more and more tax breaks to their super, ultrarich friends and their oil companies and drug companies and everybody else who did well here. We're going to make some different choices.

We're going to actually balance the Federal budget in 5 years. We're going to give some tax relief, badly needed, to the middle class, and you know what? We're going to stop that policy of giving away tax breaks to folks that don't need it.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, if I can intervene here, I mean, you look at the money that we're borrowing and then we're giving tax cuts. So it's not that we have the money laying around

here and say, boy, we've got a lot of money laying around here, why don't we just give the wealthiest people in our country the money back. We're actually going out to China and OPEC countries and borrowing the money to give tax cuts, and then we borrow the money from OPEC countries to fund the war to get oil from the Middle East.

This is the most convoluted scenario that you almost think you've got to read a Tom Clancy novel to drum it up. And then when you look at the priorities that aren't getting funded here that we're now trying to fund, and on the House floor today we had the minority leader, we had the minority whip, we had all the leadership of the Republican Party tell us how somehow funding education, lowering tuition costs, reducing the amount of student debt that our students are going to have to incur, funding community health clinics is somehow not an important priority, that somehow if we put all these bills together with the defense bill and the veterans bill and education bill and health bill, that somehow those aren't all American priorities, that somehow when these vets get back, that because all these bills are somehow put together in a process that's going to speed this whole thing up, that somehow when those vets get back, they don't need health care, their kids don't need health care. Somehow when the vets get back that they don't need education, they don't need increased Pell Grants to send their kids to school.

Am I missing something here? Like these vets are out fighting for our freedom here, just for a defense bill, or just for a vets bill, that they're somehow not fighting for some of these basic, fundamental American values that we have. And look what's going on back at the ranch when our friends are playing around with the budget, not wanting to pass legislation, passing tax cuts for the top 1 percent, look at the hole we've gotten into.

Now, this is something that is very important to me, and I remember a few weeks ago I was at my brother's house who has two young kids, Dominic and Nicky. One's 1 and one's 2. And my sister-in-law said it's scary about these toys. I remember her saying that.

Here's from 2001, and it goes up as the years come, the amount of imported toys coming from China. Okay. Over here, the yellow line that drops off, that is the number of Consumer Product Safety Commission employees going down. So we only have 400. As the number of imports from China and toys come into our country goes up, the Bush administration has reduced the number of Consumer Product Safety employees to actually monitor these toys. Same thing's going on with food.

So when you look at these mixed priorities, you know, sometimes we think, well, the war's going on in a far-off place or it doesn't affect me. If you've got kids and you've got toys, this irre-

sponsible behavior that we saw in Katrina, we saw with the government contracts in Iraq, comes right into your household because of a lack of investment into the United States.

Mr. ALTMIRE. Just to clarify, as the gentleman from Ohio understands, this was not the reduction that you see there in that chart. This was not a governmentwide reduction in costs where we were tightening our belts and doing the right thing and being fiscally responsible and we happen to lower the costs in the consumer safety section by reducing some payroll over there. This was the biggest spending administration and the biggest spending Congress in the history of the country.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Right.

Mr. ALTMIRE. As the gentleman points out, it's a matter of setting priorities. It's not as though they were lowering the cost of government across the board. They picked and chose what they wanted to lower, and one of the issues they thought wasn't important and we didn't need to deal with was consumer safety.

Now, I think we would all agree that consumer safety is incredibly important and especially what's happening with the Chinese imported toys, and to have dramatically less people working in that department this year than we did last year, than we did 5 and 6 and 7 years ago is outrageous.

But I did want to put it in perspective that we are raising the debt incredibly, \$3 trillion and counting in the last 7 years of this administration.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. We haven't borrowed money to make sure that we can hire enough people in the Consumer Product Safety Commission to make sure our toys are safe coming in from China. We're borrowing money to give the top percent a tax break, people making millions and millions and millions of dollars a year, and hey, if you make millions, God bless you, but now we're in a position where we don't have enough employees to monitor the toys coming into the country and we're giving multimillionaires a tax break. We're borrowing the money from China, which is pretty interesting when you think about all these toys coming in from China, that we're borrowing the money to fund the war and the tax breaks from China. So China's now our bank. So now they, of course, want their products coming into the country.

So, now all of the sudden, things like the reduction in employees at the Consumer Product Safety Commission happens because the Republican House and Senate and the White House have got us so dependent.

You mind if I go through here? I don't even know what these toys are. I see them on my brother and sister-in-law's floor. You'll know soon. You're newly wed.

The football bobblehead cake decoration. Okay. These are toys that have been recalled due to lead. This has a Patriots bobblehead.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. That was not me. I'm a Giants fan. That's hard to explain.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. We've got a Rudy Guiliani situation here.

Purple Halloween pails with witch decorations. We've got the Sponge Bob Square Pants Address Book and Journal. We've got the Thomas and Friends Wooden Railway toys. We've got the Go Diego Go Animal Rescue Boats. Very Cute Expressions. Children's toys gardening tools and the Robbie Ducky Kids watering can.

Mr. ALTMIRE. I have two little girls, 8 and 6, Natalie and Grace, and I have in my home some of those toys. I can tell you as a parent these are not toys that are fringe. You talk about Sponge Bob Square Pants and Dora and Thomas the Tank Engine, those are mainstream toys. Those are in families and houses all across this country. And to think that the Consumer Product Safety Commission doesn't have the resources to adequately monitor these toys coming in with exaggerated levels of lead, dangerous levels of lead from the Chinese, as a parent it makes me very angry, but as an American it makes me angry because I know all across the country there's kids right now that are playing with those very toys.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. I really appreciate the analogy Mr. RYAN makes about the choices we're making. We don't want to borrow any money. We want to actually be honest about how you spend. I think it's a great point to make again that this administration and the Congress that used to control this body was making this choice.

□ 2045

You sort of put it to the average American living in Ohio or suburban Pennsylvania or Connecticut that if you had a choice to spend money and give an extra \$100,000 to that really rich guy who lives up on the hill or you could spend that money to make sure that the Sponge Bob toys that your kid is playing with don't have levels of lead 100 times over the Federal standard, I mean, that's kind of a laughable question, like the premise, you know, you would be laughed out of the room by most parents for that. Of course you should put more testers and more product safety employees in the Federal Government.

What we find out, when the head of this organization, when the director of the Consumer Product Safety Commission comes and testifies about what's going on, why do we have 20 million toys manufactured in China that were recalled this summer? Why do we have that long list that Mr. RYAN puts up? Why do we have just recently a press release dated today from the Consumer Product Safety Commission calling for a recall of these fake teeth that kids use, and a lot of them use on Halloween. Well, it turns out that about 43,000 of these fake teeth that kids are

using out there have levels of lead that might be as much as 100 times over the Federal standard.

I mean, this is dangerous stuff.

So Ms. Nord comes before the Congress to be held accountable, first time that's ever happened on this issue, I mean, finally we are bringing these bureaucrats in front of Congress to ask these questions, and she says that she doesn't have the resources to do her job and that there is one, quote, lonely toy tester in her office, one lonely toy tester who is responsible for the flood of millions, probably hundreds of millions of toys coming in from China.

When you think of the choices that have been made to give these massive tax breaks to the wealthy, to oil companies, to put our troops in harm's way in Iraq for a policy that's making this country less safe, not more safe, and what we got for all of that was one person who is charged with making sure that our kids don't get poisoned by toys over here, it boggles the mind.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. When you think about hundreds of millions of dollars worth of trailers sitting in the gulf coast that never got used for Katrina, when you think about all the wasted, unbid contracts through FEMA, to Halliburton, and in the war, I mean, hundreds, hundreds of millions of dollars, billions of dollars.

Then all of a sudden we find that we have these regulatory issues, this is security, this is economic security. This is family security, when you hear Democrats talking about securing the country, it doesn't mean we want to start a war, it means we want to protect the homeland, and border security, family security, food safety, toy safety, product safety, these are things that it is our responsibility, as Members of Congress, to take care of. You have people sitting in towns and cities and counties all over the United States that are very, very concerned with this issue.

To have a person who is in charge of these kinds of things say we only have one person who is in charge of toy inspection, and we don't need any more money to do it is a complete dereliction of duty, of our responsibility here. When you look at what we are trying to do at every single turn, from raising the minimum wage to reducing college costs, to ensuring product safety, to ensuring food safety, this is about economic security. This is about homeland security. You know, 50,000 new cops on the beat, first responder funding. I mean, these are all things that we have been pushing and our friends, many of them on the other side, are obstructing this from getting done.

Mr. ALTMIRE. I wanted to do a couple of things. I wanted to talk about that one lonely toy inspector.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Do it.

Mr. ALTMIRE. I know the gentleman didn't have the number in front of him when he was talking about it, the number of toys just from China that were recalled last year. This is this year, the

number of toys that we imported, this is the number of toys that were recalled, is 20 million, 20 million toys just from China that were recalled this year, and we have one employee at the Consumer Product Safety Commission that's reviewing those toys.

But we may have people out there that are watching us tonight that say, well, I don't have kids, I don't have toys. It doesn't affect me. Let me tell you, it does affect you. Let's talk about food safety and let's talk about what's happening right now with regard to that.

Just with China, recalls this past year ranged from bag spinach and peanut butter to contaminated wheat flour, all from China. That has brought fear to the Nation's kitchen tables. We have tainted food coming in from China as well.

I am not going to test my friends from Ohio and Connecticut, but I will tell you up front, less than 1 percent of our food imports are inspected. That is a shocking number. That surprised me.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. How about the President the other day? This drove me crazy. He says, Congress is wasting their time with all these hearings. It ceases to amaze me anymore that we try to pass children's health care, and the President says, well, they can go to the emergency room. We are trying to have oversight so that we can have real product safety, safeguards up for food, and you are having all these hearings. We are trying to oversee what's going on in Iraq so we can, A, fix the problems we are having, but, B, finding all of these billions of dollars that have been going to these nonbid contracts and the jobs are not actually getting done. Then he said, oh, you are having all these hearings.

Then he said today, about the SCHIP bill, I don't know if you heard this, but he said, Congress is trying to pass this health care bill for kids, but it's really a trick. He said it was a trick. This is not a trick. This is us trying to pass health care for kids. He thinks it is somehow cute to say that on Halloween that this is somehow a trick.

Mr. ALTMIRE. I appreciate that. I want to talk about one of those hearings that we are talking about, the oversight hearings the President says is a waste of time.

Well, I would ask the American people if they think that the House Homeland Security Subcommittee on Emerging Threats has a hearing to investigate the Federal Government's efforts to protect our food supply chain, and the issue that I talked about where 1 percent of our food imports are inspected, I don't think that's a waste of our time. I don't think the gentleman thinks that's a waste of our time.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Let me give you a quote that comes out in one of these oversight hearings.

Mr. ALTMIRE. I yield to the gentleman from Connecticut, the New York Giants fan.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. I will explain this to you later. It's very complicated. I reject the notion that just because a team calls itself after a big geographical area that I have to reform. I live in Connecticut, just because they call themselves the New England Patriots, but that's for another time.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. We should have a hearing on that.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Let me give you a quote that comes from one of these hearings and you decide, we will let the public decide and our colleagues decide whether or not this is good information that maybe we should have out there.

David Kessler, who is the former FDA official and one of the acknowledged experts on food safety in this country, Kessler says, "We have no structure," in this country, "for preventing food-borne illness. The reality is that there is currently no mandate, no leadership, no resources, nor scientific research base for prevention of food safety problems."

I think that's probably information that we should know, that one of the leading officials, one of the leading experts on food safety and food regulation in this country believes that we have absolutely no ability to control the quality of food coming into this country.

He knows what we know, the amount of inspections has dropped precipitously. We did about 50,000 food inspections in 1972. We do 5,000 now in 2000. We have dropped by 90 percent over the last 30 years the amount of food inspections we do.

We have these experts out there who had these opinions that they couldn't share because Congress wasn't doing oversight. Congress wasn't bringing before it the people who knew what was going on out there, knew the risk that the American public was being put at, they weren't being asked to come here and express those opinions to Congress. We are getting them now.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. We are getting them now, and, of course, it's important to recognize that you probably can't monitor every piece of corn that's coming into the country or every product that's coming into the country. But what happens is if you do have a significant presence, one is in random inspections, there will be a general consensus among people shipping food into your country that there will be inspections, and they may get caught if they do not keep meeting the standards.

But at the same exact time, what this does here is if people are getting busted for sending food in from China, then all of a sudden you are going to see production increases here in the United States, whether it's toys being manufactured or maybe something else. So it's very important.

This is about safety. This is about protecting our kids. This is about making sure that our families have, when

they are having Thanksgiving dinner, have a lot of knowledge and confidence in how the government is administering these programs.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Now that we are starting to shed some light on what's going on out there, the charts that you put up about the amount of imports into this country for unsafe toys and the incredibly quick decline and the amount of people that are charged with inspecting those toys, I mean, that's out there now. You would think that now that we finally shed some sunlight on the issue of unsafe toys and unsafe food and the number of people that are at risk and the problems with our current regulatory processes, that we could all come together and work on this now.

But what happens? Yet more obstinacy from this administration, yet more closing of their eyes and their ears to this problem. The Senate and the House are both working on reform pieces of legislation that will give new powers, new duties and new resources to these commissions, in particular to the Consumer Product Safety Commission.

That same director that we are talking about, the person that runs the Consumer Product Safety Commission, came and testified before Congress that she doesn't want any more powers. She doesn't want any more protection that she can afford the consumers, that she would rather see the status quo, effectively, is what her testimony is. Even now that the American public has awoken to this problem, that this Congress finally is talking about it, we still have an administration that says, I don't want to do anything more. I don't want any more power. I don't want any more resources. I just want things to be as they are. I want to close my eyes and my ears and hope the problem goes away. That can't be how we do things going forward.

Mr. ALTMIRE. I want to put this in perspective. I would like to bring this down to the level of the average family and what they are consuming when we are talking about some of these recalls with regard to food safety, and so people can understand at home what we are talking about.

I have a list in front of me, and I won't read through it all, because it's an incredibly long list, unfortunately, the recalls that have taken place just this year. Just this year. We are at the end of October, the last day of October, today.

But a couple of the big ones that stand out, I am sure everybody remembers back in February the peanut butter recall due to salmonella contamination, huge issue, people were sickened all across the country. The level of that recall, 326 million pounds of peanut butter across the country, and that, primarily, would affect children, children eating their peanut butter.

We had a 55,000 cantaloupe recall. Now, that came from Costa Rica, be-

cause of salmonella, just to show you how across the board this is. We had 9.5 million bottles of Listerine that were recalled due to a microbial contamination, and that was in April.

Throughout this list, month after month, there are multiple recalls involving millions of pounds of ground beef for a variety of illnesses that it caused, so ground beef, and from a number of different countries that we are talking about importing.

We have food recalls involving apple juice, 113,000 units of apple juice were recalled in August.

Then, lastly, everything up through pot pies, we just had this month, they were recalling pot pies due to salmonella contamination. So when we talk about 1 percent of the food imports into this country are inspected, it affects our entire food supply. Yes, this is a health issue, but this is also a national security issue. That's why we are having some of these hearings that we are talking about.

□ 2100

And I'm very grateful that we have been joined by the distinguished colleague of ours from Florida, Miami, Mr. KENDRICK MEEK; and I would, at this time, yield to him.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Thank you so very much, Mr. ALTMIRE. I was very pleased to have had the first half of this hour to trick-or-treat with my kids. We had a great time. And my daughter was some very scary—I don't know what her, she couldn't quite explain to me what she was, but I asked what, I mean, What are you? She said, I'm your daughter. So that was like, okay, I won't ask any more questions. My son was a Secret Service Agent, so I was well protected.

Let me just say, gentlemen, and I think it's important for the Members to pay very close attention to what we've shared with them, and I'm so glad that we are heading towards safer toys, safer food, safer medicine. Too many times in the news we hear about how loose we are with other countries being able to not have standards and quality control in place, and it ends up affecting everyday Americans, and it disrupts business. We have rumors about things being unsafe, and it's making Americans feel more uneasy about it. And Mr. ALTMIRE, I'm not one to make a, you know, start fire alarms and carrying on and scaring people, but it is pretty scary, the fact that we do have, in some cases, as it relates to those that certify the toys that can come in and out the United States of America as relates to safety and setting requirements for children, it's just one person running that office. And we're the biggest democracy or one of the superpowers of the world, one of the biggest democracies. And I think it's important that we shed light on this. The people count on this Congress to govern. I think the reason why it hasn't happened to this point, of the cozy relationship that the previous

Congress has had with the business community, even when those that are in the business community will fare far better if we were to have the kind of standards and controls as it relates to the importation of toys and food and medicine. I look forward to the debate.

It's very unfortunate, and let me just say something, because I know Mr. MURPHY said something a little earlier about, you know, now we're moving in this direction, we're hearing some push back from the administration. I'm not a black man with a conspiracy theory, but I will say that there's, I think there's a push out of the administration to see the Democratic Congress not be as successful and not heading in a new direction as the American people voted for. I think some politics has something to do with this. It's very unfortunate, especially when we're looking at this kind of legislation, Mr. ALTMIRE and Mr. RYAN. I think it's important that everyone pay very close attention to the new direction agenda, that this card continues to get more and more on it as it relates to accomplishment. And, Mr. Speaker, it's a bipartisan accomplishment. That's the good thing about it. We have Republicans voting for Democratic bills. They would have voted for it all along if the Republican leadership allowed that legislation to come to the floor.

So I think it's important, Members, that we continue to push on, that we continue to encourage our colleagues on the other side of the aisle to join us in accomplishing what the American people wanted us to accomplish. Independent voters, Republican voters, Democratic voters, reform party, what have you, they're looking for results. They're not looking for back-and-forth on my idea is better than yours and nothing ever happens. So I'm just honored to be down on the floor with you Members here.

Mr. RYAN, I'm honored always to be here with you, sir. I mean, a very important member of the Appropriations Committee, he had a couple of bills pass off the floor today. It's great.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Well, you know, one of the things we talked about while you were out trick-or-treating was the connection between the money that has been borrowed by the past three Congresses and the administration from China, that's now our bank, and how their exports have been facilitated into this country, in this instance, the toys. So it's very difficult, I think, from a perspective of someone who's borrowing money from a country to say, hey, wait a minute; we've got some real issues with doing business with you. It becomes very difficult. And so I think our position with China, borrowing the money, the OPEC countries and many, many others, has put us at a significant position of weakness in dealing with a variety of foreign policy issues, but also dealing with issues like this.

Now, I showed this chart earlier, Mr. MEEK, and I know, I think this was

your idea to get it. But this is the chart of the number of toys being imported into the country and the number of employees that are assigned to protect the consumer. And so, much of this, much of these imports have been from China, and I don't think it's a coincidence that we want to somehow facilitate business with this country, which is fine. We know we have to do business in a global economy. But you don't do it at the expense of the health, safety and welfare of your own citizens.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. I'm sorry. Will the gentleman yield real quick?

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I would be happy to yield.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. You know, Mr. RYAN, again, I don't have a conspiracy theory, but, hold that chart. Don't do away with that chart. You can pass it over here. I just want to make a point here.

It's interesting that everything seems to have happened in 2000. Look where it was in 2000 and look what happened since then. I wonder who's been in charge of the country starting in 2000. I mean, we're not speaking, I'm not, you know, I'm not trying to say anything. I'm not talking about anybody. I'm just talking about what I'm talking about. And the real issue here is the fact that, I said that, it made as much sense as this chart is making sense right now, but the real issue is that it's been an ongoing issue. A lack of regulation, a lack of, I mean, more freedom as it relates to China doing what it wants, what it would like to do.

The TAA bill passed off the floor today to give U.S. workers an opportunity to be retrained, which was very, very important. It was important to the States, and it's important that we bring some sort of balance back to this. It's nothing wrong with a global economy. But it's everything wrong when we allow other countries to have the upper hand on U.S. companies and also U.S. workers, and we have to have the standards in place.

But thank you, sir. This wasn't my idea to do this chart. I will not take credit for it. But I just wanted to let you know.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Well, I know you have a lot of good ideas.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. I have a lot of great ideas.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Let me read, Mr. MEEK, to you from a, you guys all say third-party verifiers, right? Validators. Kind of means the same thing. Half a dozen, six. So this is from a report called Toxic Trade done by the Campaign for America's Future, and we'll go back to this problem that we have at the CPSC regarding toy testers. It says this: The agency's toy testing department, it's lab hasn't been modernized since 1975, and the department consists of one man who drops toys on the floor in his office to see if they'll break. I mean, that's it. There you go. I mean, that's the toy testing regimen of the United States Government is a guy, and I'm sure he's a won-

derfully nice guy. But he sits in his office at his desk and he takes toys and he drops them on the floor to see if they'll break. I mean, that's what we got now. That's what you got for these record deficits, for all the spending in Iraq, for breaks for oil companies and drugs companies. You've got one guy who drops toys from his desk and sees if they'll break.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. We just need to, I think, look back, and I say this with the utmost respect, Mr. Speaker, because the President basically, yesterday, in his press conference, I think it was yesterday or maybe today, in his press conference basically was making fun of Congress for holding hearings, making fun of us. But when you look at what we're holding hearings on, we're trying to fix problems that we have in the country. So we're having hearings on FEMA and the disaster that we all saw on TV at the gulf coast. We're having hearings on Iraq, the unbid contracts, the problems that we're having there, the wasteful spending, the billions of dollars that the Pentagon doesn't know where it is. We're trying to have hearings to find out what's going on. Hearings on toys. I mean, we're trying to figure out how do we fund this, how do we have enough consumer product safety workers here in the country to make sure that our people are safe when you're dealing with products or food. I mean, when the administration then continues to make light of these very serious concerns, it's troubling to us to somehow say that we're holding hearings, which is our constitutional duty. Article I, section 1 of the Constitution created this body.

So, again, we have Katrina, we have the war, we have toys, we have passports, FEMA, we have all of these issues that we're dealing with in this country. I'm sorry if we're trying to solve these problems.

I yield to my friend.

Mr. ALTMIRE. I thank the gentleman from Ohio. I have people all the time in my district, Mr. Speaker, that come up to me and talk about that passport issue that Mr. RYAN mentioned. We had hundreds and hundreds of travelers over the summer months that needed the help through our office, and I'm sure you had the same experience because of that 500,000-case backlog at the State Department. They were unable to deal with it. They put forward this regulation. They didn't have the resources to deal with it, very similar to what we're talking about with the Product Safety Commission. These are the types of things that we are holding hearings on. We're trying to get to the bottom of it. And when the President talks about, well, we're wasting our time by holding our hearings, I'm not sure what his inference is. I'm not sure what he would have us be doing, because it's not as though we haven't been doing our work here in this Chamber, because tomorrow, we begin the 11th month of the year, and

through the first 10 months, as the gentleman knows, this Congress, the 110th Congress, compared to any other Congress in the history of the country, the 109 that came before us, through this date and time, this Congress has met more often and taken more votes than any Congress in the history of the country, bar none. So for the President to insinuate that we're holding these hearings and doing nothing else, again, it's inconsistent with the facts.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. If the gentleman would yield, it's, I mean, we're obviously in a very complicated world. We're trying to solve some very complicated problems. And the frustrating part is when you have the President of the United States have a series of comments throughout his administration that have basically, you know, simplified all of these issues. You know, after 9/11 the big great challenge he gave us, Mr. Speaker, was to go shopping. You know, we try to pass children's health care and he says, well, you can get health care at the emergency room. And then, Mr. MEEK, at his press conference today, he said that our whole children, SCHIP, trying to cover 10 million people program was a trick on the American people. These are, you know, we're wasting time holding hearings.

There are very serious issues that our families are dealing with, and to have the President of the United States, the most powerful man in the free world, someone who is able to stop children's health care from being administered in this country to 10 million kids, someone who's able to veto bills, and you need to rally, you know, a lot more Members of Congress in order to pass something, to try to simplify and make light, and I like to have as much fun as anybody else and we have our share of fun here, but we're dealing with some pretty serious issues. That the President's behavior and tone and temperament and comments on these issues becomes very frustrating.

I yield to my friend.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Thank you, Mr. RYAN. Personally, I'm just kind of glad that the President's criticizing the Congress for doing what we should do. The American people voted for a new direction. We have the fruits of the new direction here in these very new Members of Congress as it relates to the majority makers giving us, empowering those of us that have been here, and they're bringing ideas to the table as it relates to moving in a new direction. If I was the President, I would try to, you know, shut off the light bill over here at the Capitol so that we can stop working so that we can stop uncovering half of what's going on.

I mean, Mr. RYAN, you gave one, you have one of the best clips on YouTube saying this is the same administration, and he goes down the line because someone on the floor, I think, last year or the year before last criticized Democrats for questioning the President. And Mr. RYAN said, I'm sorry, but this

is the same administration that told us that we had to go to war, weapons of mass destruction. This is the same administration that ousted a CIA agent. I mean, this is proven stuff. This is not fiction. This is fact. And I always say, gentlemen and ladies, that when people look back on this period, they're going to see who was actually about the solution and who was actually validating what the administration has been doing. And I think that it's important for us to have this balance. And I think it's important for us because we, the four of us here on this floor right now, we're just like every other Joe and Sue out there. I mean, I was a skycap once upon a time and a State trooper. And you know, I carried luggage, "Yes, sir," "No, sir." I went out and patrolled the highways and byways in the State of Florida and offered myself to be a State Representative.

□ 2115

I had a district office right there and went to Tallahassee and did what I had to do. Many of you, the same track as it relates to the State legislature or local elected officials, and we heard this. So now we're the same old Joe that left our local districts. Now we are in Congress, and we are going to ask the questions that the people that we represent will ask us. When I go home and I go to the grocery store, people ask me, What is going on? What do you mean? The President doesn't want it to happen. I said, it's not about the President's standing against children's health care insurance; it's about enough Republicans on the other side of the aisle that are standing with him, and that's what it's about.

And so I think it's important, gentlemen, that we look at it from that standpoint. The President is not running for reelection, but there are Members of Congress that are running for reelection. And it should not be a secret that come next November on a Tuesday morning or before as it relates to early voting, absentee voting, people will be able to stand in judgment of the individuals that are validating what the President is saying.

So it's really like which side of the ball are you on? Are you on the side of fiction or are you on the side of fact? The fact is about accomplishing things with the Democratic majority and some Republicans joining us in that effort, which I enjoy because we talk about bipartisanship and we are actually doing it, or those that are saying we have to stand in the way because we can't allow the American people to see a Congress that's functioning and questioning the executive branch.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Can I make a point too? And I want to say this because we all have a lot of good friends who are on the other side who have voted for the Labor-Health-Education appropriations bill, voted for defense, voted for the vets; and the argument being made today was that somehow this was unique that we are putting

several appropriations bills together. If you ask people in our districts, the whole process is foreign to them anyway. It's just get the job done. And when we look back at our Republican friends, Mr. Speaker, when they were in charge, on 59 different occasions, had put bills together like we're trying to do. And so I think it's important. We are trying to get the job done. But this is not every Republican. This is, in my estimation, some very fringe, extreme members of the Republican Party who are basically backing the President on these things, and he has just enough Members on the Republican side to sustain a veto.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. In the House.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. In the House.

Mr. ALTMIRE. I know we're very short on time; so we'll turn it over to Mr. MURPHY shortly to close out.

But you talked about combining these appropriations bills and the criticism that we received from the other side. I wanted to remind my colleagues of the last time that this happened. It was very recently. We shouldn't need to remind them. It was just in February. And the reason we had to combine nine appropriations bills from last year in this session of Congress was because, after the outcome of the elections in 2006, the Republican Congress said, I'm done, I'm going home. I don't care about these nine appropriations bills. We'll leave it for the next group to fix. And that is what we had to deal with when we came in, nine appropriations bills that were not completed from the previous fiscal year. We were in the current fiscal year doing last year's work. So I couldn't believe what I was hearing today on the floor when we were being criticized for combining three appropriations bills in the current fiscal year when they left us with nine bills incomplete that we had to deal with.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. It's the same disjointed kind of argument that the President, Mr. Speaker, has given us on the SCHIP bill. This is 10 million kids, \$35 billion over 5 years. We could pay for these 10 million kids to get health care for a whole year for 40 days in Iraq. And the President, who has run up \$3 trillion in debt, borrowed it from China, raised the debt limit five times, is now going to draw the line in the sand on fiscal responsibility on 40 days in Iraq to provide health care for 10 million kids. I mean, there are so many disjointed arguments and floating pieces that are going around here that just don't make a whole lot of sense to many of us.

I hope that we can try to continue to push to get more Members on the other side of the aisle to join with us to do some pretty basic things that the American people want us to do.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Thank you, Mr. RYAN.

I have to say, Mr. Speaker, it has been an honor to stand in the shoes of Mr. MEEK and get to anchor this hour today. I feel like a better person, a better man for it.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. If the gentleman will yield, I wear a size 15. I don't think that you probably can stand in my shoes with your shoes on.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. It would be pretty tight.

With that, Mr. Speaker, we thank Speaker PELOSI for allowing us this time. We can always be found at 30-Something Working Group on the Speaker's Web site, www.speaker.gov.

WHAT IS CONGRESS' PLAN FOR AFFORDABLE ENERGY?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ARCURI). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PETERSON) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to talk about a different subject than you've been hearing about, one that I think should be talked about in the halls of Congress here: What is Congress doing about available, affordable energy for America?

I know it's Halloween, but when we find out the price of oil today on the market, we are all going to think it's a Halloween joke.

First, I want to show the record of oil prices, of how they have been rising. Now, this doesn't show the spikes up and down all along. These are annual average prices.

Just last week I was here speaking and we were at \$90. But today I think we're off this chart because at the close of business on Wall Street today, oil was \$94.53 a barrel.

I don't know about you, but that puts fear in my heart. The winter season is coming. People are going to need to keep their homes heated. People are going to need fuel to drive their cars. The American economy is going to need affordable energy to compete in the global economy. On October 31, 2007, oil closed at \$94.53.

Now, 6 years ago, it doesn't show it on the chart, but 6 years ago, natural gas was \$2 a thousand; now it's \$8. Oil was \$16. This is a 600 percent increase in oil prices in just 6 years.

Is it an issue? It hasn't been mentioned here today. It wasn't mentioned here yesterday. It wasn't debated last week. We are going to have record high home heating oil prices for those heating their homes, record high diesel prices for those who are transporting our goods up and down the highways, and so I guess the fair question is, what is Congress's plan for affordable energy for America?

Months ago I was down here on the floor and debated the House bill. The House passed a bill. We'll talk about it later in content. And simultaneously a little later, and the Senate is usually a little behind, they passed a bill. Now, you would think with energy prices spiking to record levels, there would be some sense of urgency in Congress. There would be some sense of urgency to get the Senate bill and the House

bill together and get it on the floor to help Americans meet their energy needs.

Now, we have had some interesting things happen here. Speaker PELOSI forced the curator, those who run the Capitol here, to switch from coal to gas so we could lessen our carbon imprint. Now, that's going to cost the taxpayers \$3 or \$4 million because gas is the clean, green fuel and she thought it was better that we heat the Capitol with gas and not coal. Now, what is interesting is it would seem like we should be about conserving. I haven't seen a dollar appropriated to put double-pane windows in all of the Capitol complex. Most of them are single-pane glass. Now, most of us at home have done better than that. My office building, single-pane glass. On a cold winter day it frosts right up. It transmits lots of heat out, lots of heat in. Depending on where the heat is, it goes right through single-pane glass. But wouldn't it make more sense to conserve energy in the Capitol complex and do energy efficient windows and doors? No, we just switched fuels and spent an extra \$4 million so our carbon imprint was less.

Now, we have also mandated that all government agencies, including ourselves, use those little round fluorescent screw-in light bulbs. I have some at home. My wife doesn't like them. I don't like them if it's a reading light. At least they vary. They are not the same quality of the incandescent bulb we are used to. We're spoiled. But we have mandated those in every appropriations bill this year, and what's disappointing, though, is that they are all made in China. We are mandating that our light bulbs come from China.

Now, while we talk about energy, we can talk about why we have such high prices. I want to switch charts here. And here we have a chart of the percentage of imports for America. Now, this chart is a little behind. It actually is almost up to 70 now. Every year we increase dependence on foreign, unstable countries by 2 percent. That's in the last decade. Every year. I think that number is going to increase, and I will explain to you why later, that it may even go up faster.

Now, while we are becoming more and more dependent on foreign oil, we have countries like China and India, and this is one of the reasons for high energy prices today. We have always been the only big user. We have always been the big dog economically. Well, we're one of the pack now. There are a lot of big dogs out there. China and India's energy use is increasing between 15 and 20 percent a year. They are building a coal plant in China every 5 days. They are opening a new nuclear plant for electricity every month. They are building the largest hydrodams ever known in the world routinely. They are buying up oil and gas reserves and making deals with other countries all over the globe so that China has the energy it needs to run its country.

What is America doing? We will talk about that.

America does not have an adequate sense of urgency about providing energy for America, affordable energy for America. We passed a bill in 2005 that had a lot of positive incentives. But the problem is when you pass a bill, it's years before you have production of energy. And many of the incentives that were in that bill, many of the things that were helping us produce more energy are now being tried to be rolled back by the Democrat bills that are going to come before us, that have come before us, and will come back before us again in a conference report, and we will talk about that in more detail.

What does America want us to do? Well, the Americans I talk to, they want to be able to afford to heat their homes and drive a decent car. They'd like to be able to afford to buy food and other things after they pay their energy bills.

Now, these energy bills that have been passed some months ago have been languishing. I haven't heard much discussion. In fact, I haven't heard of a conference committee meeting.

□ 2130

It doesn't seem like 3 weeks ago when we had \$80 oil; that was enough sense of urgency. It doesn't seem like last week when we had \$90 oil; that was enough sense of urgency. And here we are at \$94.53 oil, and that doesn't seem like enough sense of urgency. Now, reading the Wall Street Journal today, the article was scary, it said, "We don't expect oil to stop at 100."

Now, I expected energy to get expensive this year. I've been predicting it. And I had someone say, How did you know that? And I said, You've just got to be watching what's going on. There's an oil shortage in the world. There is tremendous demand because all the developing countries are now driving cars and have factories and are using energy. And specifically the big ones, like China and India, their economies are growing at record paces, are consuming a lot of energy. And we're going to be competing with them down the road.

What scares me, and I'm going to put \$94.53 back up here, because that's correct. Here is what's scary about \$94.53 oil. We, for the first time in many years, have not had a storm in the gulf. Every time we have a major storm in the gulf, it reduces supply of oil and gas; about 40 percent of our energy comes from the gulf. So when a storm like Katrina or Rita hits the gulf, or even one not as severe as them, it shuts in a lot of oil for weeks and months, and any damage that's done to rigs or refineries or pipelines or processing stations for the gas, it just shuts down capacity. We get a lot less energy after a Katrina. Some of those were not repaired for 9 months to a year, and that energy is just lost. You just don't get it because you have to keep producing every day.