

is late, it is really a big inconvenience, because the Democrats knew that they had to pass the AMT patch some months ago and they didn't do it. And so what does that mean? It means not just a few people in the car pool. What it means is 32 million Americans will not get their tax refund; \$87 billion will be late to 32 million Americans because the Democrats are late in dealing with the AMT tax patch. They tried to put it together with a \$3.5 trillion tax increase, the mother of all tax increases. Of course that didn't work, and now we're late.

ENERGY INDEPENDENCE AND SECURITY ACT WILL HELP US REDUCE OUR DEPENDENCE ON FOREIGN OIL

(Mr. BRALEY of Iowa asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BRALEY of Iowa. Madam Speaker, today we will consider legislation that invests in the future of our Nation and puts us on the path to energy independence. The Energy Independence and Security Act is a significant legislative package that will strengthen our national security by reducing our dependence on foreign oil. The bill addresses skyrocketing gas prices with increased fuel economy standards that will save American families 700 to \$1,000 a year at the pump. It also reduces oil consumption by 1.1 million gallons per day in 2020, one half of what we currently import from the Persian Gulf. And this legislation includes a historic commitment to American biofuels that will fuel our cars and trucks. This investment in hometown crops will create American jobs and protect the environment by reducing carbon emissions.

Madam Speaker, the Energy Independence and Security Act will help our Nation invest in resources in the Midwest to improve our environment, instead of relying on Mideastern countries for pollution-heavy fossil fuels.

I hope all my colleagues in the House and Senate will support this legislation and help reduce our dependence on foreign oil.

CONGRATULATING THE REDSKINS OF HAMILTON COUNTY, OHIO

(Mrs. SCHMIDT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. SCHMIDT. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Anderson Redskins of Hamilton County, Ohio for winning the Division II Ohio School Athletic Association Football Championship. The Redskins capped off their incredible run into history Friday night by beating the Louisville Leopards of Stark County 31-25 in front of 11,065 fans at Paul Brown Tiger Stadium in Massillon.

After 19 years as assistant coach at Anderson, first-year head coach Jeff

Giesting led his team to a final record of 13-2, including a win in the playoffs against township rival the Turpin Spartans.

On Sunday, the Anderson township community celebrated the Redskins' first-ever State championship in their history where all 15 seniors took to the podium to talk about their incredible victory. The resounding theme among those players was not the championship trophy itself, but the sense of community, togetherness and pride which has spread throughout the area.

Madam Speaker, I salute the school, the players, Head Coach Giesting, and the entire Anderson township community on their championship season. Well done, Redskins.

THE BUSH-CHENEY ENERGY PLAN

(Mr. DEFAZIO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. DEFAZIO. Madam Speaker, the so-called Bush-Cheney energy plan was developed in secret, and it was developed in secret because it was disastrous for America. It would have been bad policy for the 1950s based on subsidies for the oil, coal and gas industry, dig, drill and burn, but it was a total embarrassment and disaster for 21st century policies. Today we have a chance to reverse that, to put in place a modest renewable portfolio, but the Republicans object to renewable portfolios; to put in place a mandate on increased fuel economy, which the American people would dearly love to have more efficient vehicles, but the Republicans object to that; and investment in new technologies and new sustainable fuels to take us to energy independence, to free us from the thrall of being subject to Chavez and the Saudis and others, but the Republicans object to that too. And we would pay for it by stripping the wildly profitable oil and gas industry of some tax subsidies from the American people, and the Republicans object to that too. But despite their objections, we are going to establish a new energy direction sustainable for this country.

FUND OUR VETERANS

(Mrs. DRAKE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. DRAKE. Madam Speaker, this is day 66; that's 66 days so far that our veterans have not had the use of the increased funding for their benefits and health care. That's \$18.5 million a day not able to be used. This bill has been done for months and the President has already agreed to sign it. But instead of moving the bill forward, the Democratic leadership in Congress continues to postpone this bill. So far, only one of 12 appropriation bills have been passed and signed into law. Why? Our veterans are heroes. There are few things more important than ensuring

that this Congress provide all possible benefits and health care for our veterans.

I'm calling on the Speaker to move this bill forward. And I call on all Americans to contact their representatives and tell the Democratic leadership to send a clean veterans appropriation bill to the President now. Our veterans deserve it.

NO BLANK CHECK FOR THE WAR IN IRAQ WITHOUT INPUT FROM CONGRESS

(Mr. PAYNE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PAYNE. Madam Speaker, while our troops continue to perform heroically in Iraq, President Bush's troop surge has not lived up to its promise of producing essential political reconciliation.

As a member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, I helped lead the opposition to our involvement in Iraq in the first place because I felt that we should let the weapons inspectors do their jobs before rushing into a preemptive military strike.

After our Iraq policy failed, and the rationale for going to war was invalidated due to the absence of weapons of mass destruction, we're told that the so-called military surge would help bring about a political solution in Iraq. That has not happened. Senior military commanders have indicated that the inability of the Iraqi Government to achieve political reconciliation is a greater threat to our troops than the insurgency in Iraq.

Many of us here in Congress believe that the Iraqi Government will not begin to address the political reconciliation until it is clear that our troops are coming home.

Last month, House Democrats once again passed a bill that provided our troops with \$50 billion in funding and a strategic plan that brings them home. We must bring our troops home. We demand a change in the direction in Iraq.

□ 1015

NEW ENERGY POLICY

(Mr. CONAWAY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CONAWAY. Madam Speaker, the previous speaker mentioned that the current energy policy was crafted in the dark. I would have to agree that the current energy policy that's being proposed has certainly kept the Republicans in the dark because we have yet to see the language on the policy that we will be asked to vote on over the next couple of days. In all likelihood, it will require mandates. Mandates are good ideas that I've come up with that you have to pay for.

There will be a lot of talk on this floor, there will be a lot of good arguments made, but to cut to the chase, if

it were cheaper to produce electricity today by using solar and wind and other alternatives, we would be doing it. That's the American way. That's the commerce of the circumstances, but it is not. And so, as we look at these proposals that will require how we go about providing America with the electricity and energy we need over the next decades, let's don't forget that there is a cost associated with it. We ought to know that cost. We ought to know the cost to consumers and to the businesses that have to use that energy.

There's an old saying, "If you don't like the high cost of eggs, then why would you kill chickens?" Let's be careful that with this new energy policy that's being proposed, that we don't, in fact, kill the chickens that produce the eggs that generate the electricity and the energy that we need.

HOUSE DEMOCRATS FIGHTING FOR MIDDLE-CLASS FAMILIES IN AN UNCERTAIN ECONOMY

(Mr. CARDOZA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CARDOZA. Madam Speaker, with home values dropping and the cost of health care, home heating oil and college education continuing to rise, American families are justifiably uneasy about their ability to make ends meet in a declining economy.

The Democratic Congress has made protecting middle-class families its highest priority. Over the course of this year, we have passed billions in tax relief for American small businesses, increased the minimum wage for the first time in a decade, passed legislation that cuts taxes for middle-class families and given families the most financial assistance for college since the GI Bill.

The New Direction Congress is also working to reach bipartisan agreements to address the subprime loan crisis and predatory loan practices that are threatening to force thousands of American families from their homes. Today, we will bring a comprehensive energy bill to the floor that will provide some much-needed relief at the gas pump as well.

Madam Speaker, the needs and concerns of our Nation's working families remain one of this Congress' top priorities.

DEMOCRATS' ENERGY BILL

(Mr. RADANOVICH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. RADANOVICH. Madam Speaker, energy independence is one of the most critical issues facing our Nation. This Congress has a responsibility to the American family to ease the burden they're feeling at the gas pump and reduce the cost of heating America's

homes this winter. Unfortunately, this Democrat majority is either unwilling or unable to accept that responsibility.

The majority wants to place unrealistic Federal mandates on renewable electricity that will drive up the cost of utilities and mandates on renewable fuel that will increase the cost of food at the supermarket.

The American public wants results. That means increasing domestic oil and gas production, building petroleum refineries for the first time in 30 years, and expanding the use of nuclear energy. Instead, the static electricity created by my shoes rubbing across this carpet creates more energy than the Democrats' energy bill.

ENERGY INDEPENDENCE AND SECURITY ACT

(Mr. CARNAHAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CARNAHAN. Madam Speaker, as evidence mounts about the growing risk of climate change and dependence on foreign oil, this Congress has a duty to enact responsible legislation that reduces our impact on the environment. Today, we will do just that by considering the Energy Independence and Security Act, which includes critical provisions to not only reduce global warming, but create new American jobs by harnessing the best of American innovation and technology.

This energy bill creates a program to train a skilled green workforce in our Nation, and could lead to the creation of nearly 3 million green jobs over the next 10 years. It increases loan limits for small businesses to help them develop energy efficient technologies, and increases investment in small firms developing renewable energy. It also includes landmark fuel efficiency standards, renewable electricity standards, and energy efficiency programs that will save businesses and consumers money, while reducing carbon emissions. This new energy bill is a big step for the U.S. in the right environmental direction, and it deserves the support of every Member of this Congress.

PELOSI BILL WILL MAKE US MORE DEPENDENT ON FOREIGN ENERGY

(Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania. Does the energy bill help Americans who are struggling to heat their homes and drive their cars? For affordable energy, the answer is no.

Despite claims to the American public that they will put policies in place to achieve energy independence, the Democrats' energy bill will not produce a single BTU of energy.

To achieve energy independence, we must replace imported energy with our

domestic resources. Unfortunately, the Pelosi bill will make us more dependent on foreign energy, not less.

The Democrat bill relies on much-needed conservation through increased CAFE standards 13 years from now, which will change the fleet, and the production of 15 percent of our electricity from renewables, hardly enough to replace the 13 million barrels of oil we import every day.

If we want to achieve energy security and reduce our dependence on foreign energy, we must increase domestic production of oil and gas in America's energy-rich areas.

As American families and small businesses continue to tighten their belts to cope with soaring energy costs, Congress should be doing everything in their power to relieve this unnecessary burden. Yet today the House is taking a step in the opposite direction, increasing our dependence on energy from foreign, unstable countries.

DEMOCRATIC HOUSE WORKING ON BEHALF OF PROGRESS

(Mr. YARMUTH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. YARMUTH. Madam Speaker, how many times is President Bush going to hold the same press conference, hammering away at Congress just because we're meeting our responsibilities under article I and restoring Americans' faith in the future? Doesn't he understand that the American people chose to put Democrats in control of Congress for a reason?

All year long we have been working to take our Nation in a new direction and restore that faith in the future. In some instances, the President has joined our efforts. We worked together to fully implement the 9/11 Commission recommendations, increase the minimum wage, and make college more affordable for millions of college students. Unfortunately, in almost every other instance, President Bush has stood in the way of real progress. He refused to help us provide quality health coverage for 10 million children. He rejected our efforts consistently to change course in Iraq. And he has threatened to veto our appropriations bills that truly prioritize our domestic needs.

Madam Speaker, President Bush has every right to be frustrated by his lack of accomplishments, but he has nobody to blame but himself. He needs to stop standing in the way of progress.

LET'S DO AWAY WITH EARMARKS

(Mr. FLAKE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. FLAKE. Madam Speaker, I got a kick out of a recent warning made by the chairman of the House Appropriations Committee. He cautioned Members that if congressional negotiators were forced to make additional cuts in