

month in meetings trying to come to a place where we could reach agreement. Obviously, we're not there in terms of sufficient numbers to think that we can, or are ready to, introduce a new bill. That would be our preference, to introduce a bill that, after these long discussions, that would enjoy hopefully 60, 70, 80 Members, which is the number your leader used as possible to vote for such legislation and move that through the Senate and send it to the President. That would be our hope.

Mr. BLUNT. I appreciate the gentleman's work on this. I do know that in terms of a bill that would continue this program, that a significant majority of our Members would vote for that; and the bill that would even expand the program, a number of our Members might vote for that. But it has to be the right bill, structured in the right way.

I know you've spent a lot of time on that. I hope you can negotiate even further from where you've been. But I also know that my staff and your staff hopefully are even working together on this to determine that exact right number that would continue the existing program to be sure that shortfalls are met, and that the existing program and the impact of that potential guideline on the existing program, and I think I can assure my friend that there will be enough votes in the House, including votes on our side, to easily extend the existing program and cover those shortfalls while we work for a better program.

The last question I have is the gentleman's certainty about Friday. I know a few weeks ago we had scheduled that these 2 weeks would be 3-day weeks and the Members would be able to schedule things in their districts on Mondays and Fridays. I think your sense is today that we might very well be here on Friday, and I would appreciate some clarification on that.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentleman for that question. As the gentleman knows, and I've been involved in this business for a long time, four decades about, and whether it was in the State Senate, which had a constitutional ending date, or in the House of Representatives, it's very difficult to predict the last days of a session.

Now, I will tell you that the Speaker and I are working around the clock, almost literally, to ensure that we can adjourn this first session of the Congress of the United States on the 14th. We had hoped the 13th, but we're letting Members know that the 14th, that's only 4 days from now. We've just gone through some pretty heavy lifting in terms of the appropriation bills, in terms of the AMT, in terms of SCHIP, in terms of Iraq and in terms of other matters that we need to address before we leave here. But we think we can do it, and it is our intention to do it.

But, obviously, there are things that are pending that we cannot leave without doing, so that if we cannot get that done in that time frame, we will have to see where we go from there.

But I want to make it very, very clear to everybody that the Speaker, Senator REID, and I have talked; and we are all very focused on the 14th being the day that we adjourn. The following week is the week before Christmas. We believe that individuals need to be home. I need to do shopping and decorating because all my family's coming to my house from some parts of the country, so I need to be home. And I'm sure every other Member shares that view.

So all I can tell my friend, and he knows this as well as I do, that the unpredictability of the next 4 legislative days is such that I can't make any guarantees, other than we are doing everything we can to get the business that we've just discussed done. We may have some very late nights on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday; but we are hopeful that we will get this done and not have to ask Members to come back the week before Christmas.

Mr. BLUNT. Well, I'm hopeful that my friend has mentioned that date again. Even after the experience of this week, we're still looking at that date. It may be the triumph of hope over experience, but we may all be motivated enough to get that done.

Mr. HOYER. Well, we've had some success this week. As you know, we think we've passed a historic energy bill. Not only that, as my friend knows, because he's from the State of our distinguished chairman of the Armed Services Committee, we were able to go to conference today, which has been somewhat contentious for a few days. We expect that conference to be on the floor early next week. So we are moving ahead.

But as we've discussed, there are some issues of difficulty that we haven't resolved that we need to resolve, and so we'll have to see whether or not we will be successful.

Mr. BLUNT. Hopefully next Friday we won't even have to have a discussion about the week's work coming up because we will be done. And I appreciate the information of the gentleman.

I yield back.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I have been unavoidably detained and away on official business on a number of rollcalls which I would like to place in the RECORD at this time.

In particular, I'd like to take note of December 5, 2007. Due to the tragic death of Reserve Deputy Constable Odum in my district, I was attending his funeral. On rollcall vote No. 1127, if I was present, I would have voted "no."

Rollcall vote No. 1128, I would have voted "no."

Rollcall vote No. 1129, I would have voted "aye."

Rollcall vote No. 1130, I would have voted "aye."

Rollcall vote No. 1131, I would have voted "aye."

Rollcall vote No. 1132, I would have voted "aye."

And Rollcall No. 1133, I would have voted "aye." That is on December 5, 2007.

For September 20, 2007, on rollcall vote 890, I would have voted "aye"; No. 889, I would have voted "no."

On rollcall vote No. 888, I would have voted "aye."

Rollcall vote No. 887, I would have voted "aye."

And on rollcall No. 886, a motion to adjourn, I would have voted "no."

On July 16, 2007, rollcall vote No. 632, I would have voted "aye."

Rollcall vote No. 631, I would have voted "aye."

Rollcall vote No. 630, I would have voted "aye."

ADJOURNMENT TO MONDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2007

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet to 3 p.m. on Monday next, and further, when the House adjourns on that day, it adjourn to meet at 10:30 a.m. on Tuesday, December 11, for morning-hour debate.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CLAY). Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from California?

There was no objection.

DISPENSING WITH CALENDAR WEDNESDAY BUSINESS ON WEDNESDAY NEXT

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from California?

There was no objection.

COMMUNICATION FROM HON. JOHN A. BOEHNER, REPUBLICAN LEADER

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Honorable JOHN A. BOEHNER, Republican Leader:

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

November 29, 2007.

The Hon. NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker, U.S. Capitol,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SPEAKER PELOSI: Pursuant to section 1238(6)(3) of the Floyd D. Spence National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2001. (22 U.S.C. 7002) amended by Division P of the Consolidated Appropriations Resolution, 2003 (22 U.S.C. 6901). I am pleased to appoint the following individuals to the United States-China Economic and Security Review Commission.

Mr. Peter T.R. Brookes of Virginia (re-appointment).

Mr. Daniel M. Slane of Ohio.

These individuals have expressed interest in serving in this capacity and I am pleased to fulfill their requests.

Sincerely,

JOHN A. BOEHNER,
Republican Leader.

MAKING AMERICA ENERGY
INDEPENDENT

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, all of us are interested in moving this country forward on a defined energy policy. And we had, just an hour ago, an open debate on how we could move America forward. I'm delighted that part of the effort in the legislation just passed by this House emphasized new CAFE standards so that there can be greater mileage on vehicles that Americans may purchase, and, yes, a lowering of the cost of gasoline, but also a lowering of the utilization of gas by getting greater mileage; compromise between the energy industry and, of course, those who make automobiles in Detroit.

In addition are the emphasis on alternative fuels, the research to help us expand greening of America and the emphasis on creating new jobs and looking at alternative fuels. But I also believe that we must focus on the existence of fossil fuels, oil and gas, and be able to develop oil and gas domestically, particularly, in the gulf region. And so I hope that we will expand that debate as we go forward in making America independent as relates to energy.

AMT DISASTER

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

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, have you seen the news? Democrat inaction on the alternative minimum tax is leading to a delay of tax refunds for millions of hardworking Americans. The carelessness of this new majority is poised again to strike the American people, this time in their wallet.

This AMT problem's been known for months. Yet we still have no action in this Congress.

The average tax refund last year was more than \$2,000, \$2,000, Mr. Speaker. That's a mortgage payment. That's college tuition. That's a holiday credit card bill.

While the new majority has made clear that, in good faith, they support policies to raise taxes, this expensive predicament with the AMT is simply the result of congressional negligence. Now, the American people expect more than this from Congress. They want less partisanship and more leadership.

Mr. Speaker, let's act now to ensure the American people are not forced to pick up the tab for the carelessness of this majority. Let's put politics aside and put hardworking taxpayers first.

THE ENERGY BILL

(Mr. MICA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker, my colleagues, not only will the Americans receive a great surprise with a tax increase with the so-called energy bill that was just passed by the House of Representatives, and higher fuel costs; I want to announce, as the Republican leader on the Transportation Committee, you've also depleted the highway trust fund by some \$2.1 billion in this measure.

The Congressional Budget Office is already predicting a \$5 billion deficit in the highway trust fund by 2009.

Now, my friends in Congress, we can't keep this game up. Unfortunately, in the full year 2007 appropriations resolution that passed the House, we knocked another \$3.47 billion and rescinded that from the highway trust fund, and another \$3 billion recession from the highway program in the 2008 bill that passed the House recently.

Unfortunately, the game being played with our Nation's highway trust fund has consequences, and we will pay.

□ 1615

THE "ANTI-ENERGY" BILL

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

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, back on January 22, I got up here at this very spot because we had passed a bill that week that was going to force the price of gasoline to skyrocket upward. A year later it's up a dollar. Today we passed another anti-energy bill.

You know, there are a number of States in this country who just say we want to use all the energy but we don't want to produce any. So there are States like Texas, Louisiana, a number of States, we're cranking out all the energy we can to help the Nation. This bill we passed today not only says we have got lots of energy we're not going to let anybody produce, but we are going to penalize the States that have been more than team players and we are going to force the price of gasoline higher and higher.

So I hope my colleagues across the aisle, as gas goes up towards \$5, will also come to the floor and say, "That's right, it's \$5 a gallon, and we are proud of it. We did that for you; so you can thank us."

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CLAY). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

CELEBRATING PASTOR ALFRED
VAUGHN'S 50 YEARS IN THE MIN-
ISTRY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gen-

tleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with great admiration and respect to recognize a dear friend and one of the Nation's most distinguished citizens, Dr. Alfred C.D. Vaughn, for his 50 years of service to God as a preacher, teacher, leader, and friend.

For the last 21 years, Dr. Vaughn has been the cherished pastor of the Sharon Baptist Church, located in my hometown of Baltimore, Maryland. As grace would have it, this is the same church that his grandmother joined in 1894 and of which his mother became a member in 1911.

Dr. Vaughn, known as the dean of ministers in Baltimore, is one of thirteen children of Mildred and Robert Vaughn. He received Christ at the tender age of 11. Just 8 years later, he was licensed to preach and began a glorious journey of teaching and preaching God's Holy Word.

He first served as pastor of Promise Land Baptist Church in Moneta, Virginia. For 18 years he then led the congregation of Grace Memorial Baptist Church in Baltimore before accepting the calling in 1986 to return home as the visionary pastor of the Sharon Baptist Church.

Throughout his career as a minister, the pursuit of a quality education has always been his priority. Dr. Vaughn earned an AB-BD degree from Virginia Seminary and College, a master of divinity degree and a doctor of ministry degree from Southern University, and he has been awarded four honorary degrees.

It has been said that "you show people who you are by what you do." Throughout his entire life, Dr. Vaughn has demonstrated to the world, with sincere humility and steadfast determination, his commitment to helping others to be the very best that they can be.

Recognizing the need for accessible child care in his community, Dr. Vaughn converted a building near Sharon Baptist Church into a family support center that houses a child care facility and operates other community service programs. He also spearheaded efforts to raise thousands of dollars to send students to college, adopt a local elementary school, and provide after-school programs, local food pantry programs and foreign missions.

However, Dr. Vaughn's accomplishments and achievements reach far beyond the walls of his church. He served as commissioner for the Housing Authority of Baltimore City for 10 years. He was appointed as trustee and as treasurer of Provident Hospital and as trustee of the Community College of Baltimore. He served on the board of directors of the Afro-American Newspapers, and he currently serves as chairman of the board of trustees of Eastern Theological Seminary.

As a testament to his leadership, Dr. Vaughn was recently elected, for an unprecedented eighth time, to serve as