

Mr. MIKE ROGERS, Michigan  
 Mr. RENZI, Arizona  
 Mr. ISSA, California.

### 30-SOMETHING WORKING GROUP

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to come before the House once again.

As you know, the 30-Something Working Group, we come to the floor to share not only with the Members but also the American people the great things that are happening here under the Capitol dome and some things that Members should be informed of that could happen under the Capitol dome if we were able to work in a bipartisan way.

But I am so happy, Mr. Speaker, today because we are on the floor today, and we have a number of issues that we want to share with not only Members but also the American people. I am excited about all these bipartisan votes that have been taking place over the last 90-something-odd hours that have taken place.

I am glad to have good friends from all over the country. We are going to have the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. ALTMIRE) that is going to join us, and also the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY) is going to join us tonight.

I think it is important for us to really reflect on some of the things that have been happening.

Mr. Speaker, if I may make an inquiry, how much time do we have, sir?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. RYAN of Ohio). The gentleman from Florida has 58 minutes remaining.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just wanted to verify that time check there.

In the 58 minutes we have left, I just want to talk about a few of the bipartisan votes, and then we will talk about this whole 100-hours agenda.

I was having a conversation before I came to the floor, and I was stopped by one of the outstanding staffers that are here. They said, Congressman, it is just interesting to see Democrats and Republicans voting together on major issues for a change.

Today, Mr. Speaker, we had a vote on the College Student Relief Act, and I am proud to say that not only did we have every Democratic Member that was in attendance today voting for it, but we also had 124 Republicans that voted for it. This was to take the interest rates down from 6.8 to now 3.4, and it is going to help 5.5 million students be able to afford college.

But I definitely love for my colleagues to chime in, because this is a good day of accomplishment whenever you can come to the floor and vote and be successful on something that you talk about when you are running for office; and now to see this legislative accomplishment in such a very short

time is something that you should be excited about. I know that all our constituents are, too.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. MEEK of Florida. I yield to the gentleman from Connecticut.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, to Mr. MEEK and to Mr. RYAN, I am very pleased to be standing in the normal place of Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ.

I know that because as a candidate for office and as a student of American politics I have had the honor of watching you stand here and really speak for the American people, for the last 4 years in your case, Mr. MEEK, and for the three of you, for the last 2 years. I have been able to serve in the State legislature and now obviously have just a unique opportunity to be here and advocate on behalf of those people with all of you.

If I could start by saying a tremendous and unconditional thank-you to what you have been able to do. Those of us in the political world and non-political world sometimes do not get to turn on the TV until late at night. I will tell you, and speaking especially for a lot of the younger people in the State that I am from, Connecticut, who are interested in this process either as their profession or simply as an interested American, the work that you have done in talking about the agenda that was so badly needed, that was reaffirmed by the American people this November, made a difference, made a difference for me. I think I stole a lot of your lines over the course of my work this last fall.

So let me just say, by means of introduction, that it is a privilege to be able to stand here with you as a new member of the 30 Something Caucus. There are a few of us that came down here, and I think that speaks to the agenda that you have put forth that said the American people need change. We need change.

We especially heard it in our generation those of us who are looking at not just the next 10 years, but the next 20, 30, 40 years and want to make sure that things are happening here in Washington, D.C., whether they be on the 100-hours agenda or whatever we do for the next 2 years is looking to the future of our children and grandchildren, and that's what the 30 Somethings have been all about.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. While we were down here, you were probably running through bingo halls and bowling alleys; and Mr. ALTMIRE, who is just across the border from me in western Pennsylvania, I think the impact that you have already had on Congress, you have all spoken on the floor. You all did and have done numerous press events representing our party, and I think you have done a tremendous job. So it is good to have you here with certain expertise, whether it is health care or labor, whatever the issue may be. We have got a very talented freshman class.

The reason we are still down here and we just did not quit when the elections were over is that this is about more than just the 100 hours, and we are going to hammer this 100 hours home and get it through and do what the American people asked us to do. But kind of the new energy and spirit that you guys bring is going to move us well past that 100 hours into something that is going to be very special.

So I would be happy to yield over to my friend from Pennsylvania right across the border, the same media market.

Mr. ALTMIRE. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to talk about what we did today. We have had a fantastic couple of weeks with the 100 hours, and we are going to talk a lot about that, but today specifically we did something that is going to impact just about every American with children in this country. We cut the interest rate on student loans in half. And currently interest rates are 6.8 percent; we are going to cut them down to 3.4 percent, and that is going to have an impact on people all across the country.

I wanted to take a few moments today and talk about what this is going to do for students in my district and for the impact per college in my district.

I have a college called LaRoche College where I served on the board of trustees for two terms. It is in my district. It is a private liberal arts college, and for students who are entering this year, over the lifetime of their loan, they are going to see savings of \$2,120 over the time of this loan. And because this is phased in over 5 years, for students in 2011, for those parents who may have children that are going to enter college in 2011, over the lifetime of their college, if they go to LaRoche College, they are going to save over \$4,000. On average across the country, it is over \$4,500, and I think that is something we can be proud of in this House of Representatives.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I just want to make a point, and we try to distinguish our party from what the previous party has done in that we are getting some feedback from the other side, that we are phasing this thing in and it is not immediate, and we are not doing everything that we could possibly be doing. We are doing a heck of a lot more than they have done. We have done more in the last 3 hours today on the House floor than they have done in the previous 14 years in running this place for average students.

So we are not going to take it. We are doing more than they have done, and you know what, if they did not have us at a \$400 billion deficit, we would be doing a heck of a lot more. The only constraints we have are the fiscal mess that they left us.

Mr. ALTMIRE. I would say to that criticism, and we all heard it today on the other side, that there is an immediate reduction. We are not cutting it in half immediately, but there is a reduction for students who are going to

go into college this fall. You are going to see a reduction in your interest rates for student loans, and if you are a parent of children who are deciding where to go to school, maybe entering high school right now and they are deciding to go to college in the year 2011, the interest rate is going to be half of what it is today, and that is because of the action we took in the House today. And I was proud to cast my vote.

In Pennsylvania, we have the fifth highest cost of tuition in the entire country as a State, and we have some great State universities like Penn State. Everybody knows about Penn State. There are 32,000 students on student loans at Penn State University who are going to benefit from what we did today, and the ones who are entering school this year have a \$2,250 lower payment over the course of their loans. Students who enter Penn State in the year 2011 are going to see a reduction in what they pay over the lifetime of their loans of \$4,360.

That is real savings, and there is nobody on the other side who can say that we have not taken strong action here today. So I am proud of what we did today, along with all the other action we have taken in the last 2 weeks.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I agree 100 percent with the gentleman, except for the fact that everybody knows Penn State. In Ohio, we do not barely recognize them.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. I am glad just to echo what everyone else is saying about this outstanding day on the floor of the House of Representatives.

The thing that I have been dwelling on in the last segment of the 30 Something Working Group is the fact that we have these bipartisan votes, but we still have the Republican leadership that is voting against, voting the opposite way of many of their colleagues in their caucus.

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I wouldn't say that the Republican Caucus are joining us, I would say that they are representing their constituents. And we talk about bipartisanship, my constituents talk about it. I know that all of our constituents would like to see it, because this vote, Mr. Speaker, today was for America, for America's future. It was for kids like these and others that were here on the opening day of the House. We are fighting on their behalf. And when we fight on their behalf, we fight on their parents' behalf, their grandparents' behalf. Because no matter what religion that one may practice, they want their children and grandchildren to have a better opportunity than what they have had. And with the whole devolution of taxation, Mr. Speaker, that was passing here with out-of-control spending here in Washington, D.C., sending a lack of funding to the States that they have to balance, many of us come from State legislatures, we know we have to balance. It is not like the Federal Government, they can put it on a credit card.

One of our first actions that we took here on this House floor was to pass the pay-as-you-go rules, of saying that if you are going to spend money, then you have to show how you are going to pay for it, not just saying that we are going to borrow from foreign nations and allow them to own a part of the American apple pie.

But today I want to talk about this vote again: 71 Republicans on that side voted against it. Amongst the Republican leadership, every last member of the Republican leadership voted against it.

Mr. Speaker and Members, what is important here is the fact that this bipartisanship is what America has been waiting on. They have been waiting on it. Let's not do it as some sort of slogan. Living proof is the vote that took place here today on this floor. 124 Republicans voted on behalf of their constituents, not just the Republican leadership saying, well, we want you to vote this way, you know, don't worry about it. It is some mighty tall ladder to climb to say that, well, go back home and say I voted against interest rate cuts for your kid to go to school. I don't know, I wouldn't be back if I was to go home and tell my constituents I voted against it because it didn't happen fast enough in my opinion.

Well, the Republican leadership and the Republican Congress on the other side last session took this money away from students and families, and raised the interest rate to give special interest tax breaks to the super, super, super plugged in here in Washington, D.C. the way it used to be. Now, today, we were like Robin Hood. Those Members that voted on behalf of their constituents and voted on behalf of America's future put their special interests love aside and said that we are going to vote on behalf of America's future.

So I am excited about it. This is a day that educators and parents and grandparents who want to see their children educated will see this day as a momentous day. And I am speaking from proof, Mr. Speaker. My wife couldn't have gone to law school. She came from a family that they just didn't have the money to do it. If it wasn't for her being able to get student loans, this bill isn't going to be able to help her but it will help kids like her, and she is a judge today. She wouldn't be a judge if she obviously didn't get a law degree. So I think it is important that we give face and voice to this day because this is about the future of our country.

Mr. RYAN, I will yield to you at this time.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I appreciate you being so gracious with your time. You mentioned the number 356-71. 71 people in this Chamber voted against cutting student loan interest rates in half. That is the extreme of the extreme in politics today, and that is why I guess you two gentlemen are here joining us, part of the reason anyway, is because that is the kind of extremism, Mr.

Speaker, that was running this Chamber for 14 years, and we brought just a wee little bit of sanity to this place.

And then a beautiful segue into what we are going to do tomorrow: Tomorrow we are going to start repealing the Big Oil subsidies that have been doled out by the same Congress, and I would guess that you are probably going to get another 70-some Members on the other side that are going to be against repealing these major subsidies tomorrow. Major leases that these folks were getting, one of them gave, Conoco-Phillips gave \$106 million back in 2005 as it enjoyed profits totaling \$13.5 billion.

So you are voting against cutting student loan interest rates in half. You are the ones who plugged in the super wealthy and the super plugged in into a Tax Code that is going to save you \$106 million when you are making \$13.5 billion.

So I am excited about what is happening here because this is a great time where the American people are starting to wrestle back the power that the American people have given us, and we are doing it on behalf of them.

I want to yield to the young new Irish Member of Congress.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I am coming off of my first weekend back in the district after having spent a glorious first 1½ weeks down here getting sworn in and starting to work the 100-hour agenda. And people back in Connecticut are just so enraptured by the idea they have their House back, they have their House back in their hands.

You talk about the bill we are going to vote on tomorrow. Last summer, as those oil prices and gas prices rose through the roof and people started to make those terrible decisions about whether they were going to afford to pay for their family's basic needs or they were going to fill up their tank, they looked at their government which was giving away more and more tax breaks to oil companies, allowing these excessive royalties to go on in the Gulf Coast, and they just wondered who was in charge down here. They wondered who was in charge.

And that went for student loans as well, as they were crying out, clamoring for more assistance to try to get their kids to school, as students were asking, "I need just a little more help to finish this degree." Congress said the opposite. In fact made it harder for them to get that degree by raising student loan interest rates.

There was just this sense out there, almost a sense of disbelief, and you all felt it I know as well that we had lost control of the people's House here. And what I felt when I was back in the district this week was just a sense of euphoria, that the people's agenda, just regular middle class families' agenda was finally being heard in this place.

And you are very right, Mr. RYAN, when you said that it certainly doesn't end with the 100 hours agenda. This is

just a preview of whose priorities are going to be heard here, and it is an exciting place to be.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I think the gentleman's constituents are probably glad to see him back in the district, too. And you would generate a state of euphoria for many folks back home, and yield to our friend from Pennsylvania.

Mr. ALTMIRE. Absolutely. And I was also back in the district this weekend and I heard the same things that we are talking about. There is a sense of excitement, that it really is a new day in America and this Congress has instilled a sense of confidence that has not been seen in this country in a very long time.

And if you look at what we have done here over the past 2½ weeks, as the gentleman from Ohio said, some would argue that is more than the previous Congress did in the past 2 years or maybe longer, and we have done that in the first 100 hours of business here in this Congress, and we are going to keep going when this is over. And I am excited that tomorrow we are finally going to complete that first 100 hours agenda, and then we are looking forward from hearing from the President thereafter.

But what we have done, no one should overlook the fact that this is extraordinary. What we have done here in the beginning of a new Congress with a turn in the leadership and a new group leading, we have taken right from the beginning when we looked at the lobbyists and special interests and took away the meals and the travel and the golf outings and the gifts that have been prevalent here in Congress over the past several years, and then we moved right into the pay-as-you-go where we had a system where 6 years ago we had come off four consecutive budget surpluses.

That seems like an extraordinary thing now. We had surpluses as far as the eye can see in the year 2000, and now you look back, the President is going to give us in a couple of weeks his seventh consecutive budget that is out of balance, running a deficit, and that is unacceptable. And the reason that has happened is because they allowed pay-as-you-go budget scoring, which is what we all do in our home checkbooks. You have to have money on one side of the ledger to pay for it out of the other. That is what all the families do at home, that is what I do, that is what we all do. But that is not what Congress has done. Congress has just been able to spend freely without having a revenue source on the other side.

So we are going to make the necessary cuts to balance the budget, which is something that fiscal responsibility has not been a part of the congressional landscape over the past several years. We did that on the very first day.

We followed that up with implementing the 9/11 Commission rec-

ommendations. Who can argue that we need to implement the recommendations to make this country more secure? Well, they had languished in the previous Congress. We took care of that the first Monday when we got back after the weekend.

Then we moved on to minimum wage. We raised the minimum wage for the first time in 10 years. Is there any other group of citizens that didn't even get a cost of living adjustment let alone a pay raise over the last 10 years? We did that with a bipartisanship vote. As the gentleman from Florida pointed out, these are not things that the Democrats are supporting on their own and ramming it down the Republicans' throat. These are issues that get bipartisan support.

We moved on to embryonic stem cell research; then we did Medicare prescription drugs; today we did student loans. These are issues that affect every American and working families across this country.

So I would yield back to the gentleman from Florida for him to continue this, but I just want to reemphasize how proud I am to have been a part of this historic beginning of a new session of Congress.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. I just want to let you know how much I appreciate you yielding to me. And you and Mr. MURPHY, this must be an outstanding moment for you, because it is better than what Mr. RYAN and I experienced when we came in the 108th Congress. We didn't have the opportunity to do even a quarter of the things that we told our constituents we would do if they gave us an opportunity to serve them in this great body.

And what you just talked about is exactly—you can run for five elections on what you just mentioned that we did in the last 2 weeks. Unfortunately, it has been so backed up to the fact that now it is like excitement, it is electric here in Washington, D.C. And these bipartisan votes, anyone who wants to say anything about partisanship, they have to look at what has happened over the last 2 weeks and say, this is what we are talking about. They want it.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. They want it.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. They need it.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. They need it.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. They asked for it.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. They asked for it.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. And I just, again, as we go along, because, Mr. Speaker, I am just going to keep saying the same thing because the last 109th Congress, the gentleman from Connecticut and the gentleman from Pennsylvania and Ohio, we pulled this chart out. I know the Clerk's office here has seen it, they probably could close their eyes and tell you what is on it because they have seen it so many times, and I know that the Members on the Republican side and the Democratic side. But this is what has been happening, \$1.05 trillion. We are going to have another chart because I am

pretty sure that number has gone up of out-of-control borrowing from foreign nations, higher than 42 Presidents, 224 years prior to, \$1.01 trillion. That is a real fact. And we kept saying and kept saying it.

And what I am going to say again is the fact that we have the 9/11 Commission recommendations implementation making America safer, Mr. Speaker, bipartisan 9/11 Commission. Anyone can go on Yahoo and get a copy of this, the 9/11 Report: 299 yeas. Every Democrat on the floor that was in attendance that day voted for it and 68 Republicans voted in the affirmative. That is bipartisan.

Minimum wage, we talked about it. On that day, there were 315 yeas. Here is the record here with everyone that voted for it and against it. Every Democratic Member in attendance, 233, 82 Republicans voted for it. That is the bipartisan spirit.

Stem cell research, that was mentioned earlier. We have 253 yeas; we have 216 Democrats voted for it and we have 37 Republicans voting for it. That is a good number.

Also, you have the Medicare Prescription Drug Price Negotiation Act, which is 231 Democrats voted for it, 24 Republicans voted for it. And I think it is important that you take a look at that and pay well note to the fact that we were able to vote in a bipartisan way.

And I gave the vote out earlier and I want to direct the Members and all the Members to the vote counts. You can go to [www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov) to get those vote counts so that you can share them not only back home in your district with your constituents, but the American people, Mr. Speaker, can go on [www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov) and get this information and share it with the people that have been asking and polling and saying that they want bipartisanship in this House. We know there will be a point where there won't be bipartisanship on some votes, but we are going to try to encourage as much as possible. And I want to continue to say that. And I say that in Democratic circles and I say it in Republican circles with my Republican colleagues.

But we are so glad to be joined by another Member that has joined us in the 110th Congress, the distinguished lady from New York.

What we are doing here is kind of going around, and everyone is pretty much sharing what their experience has been over the last 100 or so hours or 90-something hours. We are going to hit 100 tomorrow. But talking about this governing in the way that we should be governing. And the American people are excited about it. So how is it for you?

Ms. CLARKE. Mr. Speaker, it has been extraordinary.

To the gentleman from Florida, I would like to thank you for welcoming me and all of my colleagues with open arms, and just to say to you that it is very clear that the winds of change are

blowing here in the House of Representatives. And I find it just sort of ironic that the rhetoric does not necessarily match the outcome. We do see bipartisan voting taking place right now, and I think the American people need to know that this 110th Congress in the first 100 legislative hours today alone by a margin of 356–71 voted for cutting interest rates in student loans.

Now, if my recollection is clear, in the 109th Congress I doubt that that would have ever occurred. And I think that we need to give credit where credit is due, and credit is due to the winds of change that the people of the United States have made clear through their votes in the November election. We have heeded that very significantly in the first 96-odd hours of the 100 hour agenda, and we have done the American people good. We have done them good.

So I am excited about it. I am just a freshman from Brooklyn, New York, but I am trying to make my way, and I see that we have heeded the call and that we are active in pursuit of the mandates that the American people have set forth for us.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Just if you would yield, please.

Ms. CLARKE. I would like to yield.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Let me just say the fact that in the 30-Something Working Group we are so glad that not only have the gentlewoman from New York, but also the gentleman from Connecticut and also from Pennsylvania joining us, and of course Mr. RYAN from Ohio.

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The fact is that we come to the floor to share with the Members what is actually happening here, because I think some Members may say they don't understand, but I think we were pretty clear last Congress about the facts.

Mr. Speaker, I want to make sure, I was actually corrected on the 90-something hours; it is 68 hours. Because we like to give out good information here. Even when we may sometimes by mistake give the wrong information out as it relates to the 100 hours, we correct ourselves here on the floor. So we give good information to the people so everybody knows exactly what is going on and how it is going on.

Congresswoman, you are going to add not only your experience, but also a good representation on behalf of your constituents and the people of America. By the fact of us being elected, our constituents have federalized us to deal with these issues that are facing the country right now.

Mr. RYAN, I yield to you.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I appreciate that, and I welcome Ms. CLARKE, the gentlelady from New York. We are going to have some fun. You, gentlemen and lady, have brought some energy and excitement to this Congress. The 100 hours is exciting. It is boom, boom, boom, we passed the ethics. And then we are coming back with the min-

imum wage, and now we are getting into student loans, real meat-and-potatoes stuff that you all campaigned on, and that we talked about on this floor for hours on end for the last 3½, 4 years. Now we are actually delivering.

Tomorrow is going to be another stellar performance on behalf of Speaker PELOSI and the leaders of the Democratic Congress. Tomorrow we are going to close tax loopholes for oil companies. We are going to close a loophole that gave ConocoPhillips \$106 million in 2005 when it got profits of \$13.5 billion.

Profits of \$13.5 billion. They didn't, you know, take it in and then have to dish it out. That is their profit.

We stepped up and had the guts to say, and I would like to take more because they are making so much money, but we are going to take \$106 million and pay for student loans and health care for young people. We are going to move forward on this agenda.

There are a lot of other things that we are going to be able to do. We will do the tax loophole thing. We will roll back the energy bill tax breaks for geological and geophysical expenditures. These are things that may get too technical, but the bottom line is this: The bottom line is that the American people are going to get the kind of representation they need.

If you know you are going to go and dig, if you know you are going to go and drill and you know you are going to make enough money, no tax incentive is going to make you want to do it, especially when you are drawing down profits of \$15.5 billion.

Mr. Speaker, \$100 million of public subsidy is not going to make that happen.

And then you get into the five royalty relief provisions, this is beautiful, from the 2005 energy bill. This measure will strike the energy bill provisions, suspending royalty fees from oil and gas companies operating in certain deep waters of the Gulf of Mexico.

The interesting thing about this is, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GRIJALVA), a great Member of this body, offered an amendment to strike this provision on April 21 of 2005, and it was defeated by 203–227. We have been trying to do this, and tomorrow is our day where we get to step up and actually deliver on behalf of the American people.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. I yield to Mr. ALTMIRE.

Mr. ALTMIRE. I would welcome the gentlewoman from New York as well, who has become a good friend.

This is an issue I hear about every day. It is an issue that we get calls about in our office every day. Mr. MURPHY and I were discussing earlier the fact that we had been back in our districts for the first time this past weekend. I have to tell you, everywhere I went, this issue resonates with people because they see it every day. When they drive past the gas station and they see the price, and of course it is

winter season now and we are having a little bit of a cold spell where I come from in western Pennsylvania, and I know New York and Ohio and Connecticut, as well, but probably not in Florida, Mr. MEEK's area. But this is an issue we hear about because home heating is a big part of this as well.

So it affects everyday Americans and it affects working families. I think it is appropriate on the last 100 hours as we hit the finish line that we are going to address an issue, like the others that we have discussed, that really has a day-to-day impact on working families all across this country.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. I think one of the things that makes a lot of what we are doing attractive, we are not just talking about pay-as-you-go, as Mr. MEEK stated, we are doing it in almost every piece of legislation that has been brought forward.

Today, for example, the reason we saw such support for the student loan interest rate is because that program was paid for with efficiencies within that program. That is at no cost to the American taxpayers.

Tomorrow, when we go forward on our new energy policy, that is not even going to be PAYGO, that is going to be pay-it-forward. We are actually going to take the savings from all of the programmatic changes that Mr. RYAN talked about and we are going to put it into a fund, a strategic investment fund, that we are going to be able to use down the line as we start to change our energy policy towards renewable and alternative energy.

We are exercising on a daily basis that kind of fiscal restraint that was lost for so long here, and I think that is why you see a real coming together of people in this Chamber, and why people were so excited back in our districts. Not only do they see things that are helping average families, on education, on energy policy, but they are seeing it done in a really fiscally sound way.

And tomorrow we will continue to do that by taking that money that we are going to save through repealing those tax breaks and repealing those very bad royalty policies and putting it into a fund that we can then use to promote clean energy and use to promote conservation, all of the things that have been so dearly lacking in this country for a very long time.

We are doing the right things, and we are doing them in a way that, as Mr. MEEK has talked about so often, are true to the fiscal restraint that really should be the hallmark of this Congress.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. It is nothing like, and I just keep breaking this down to what my cousin would understand, who has nothing to do with government. There is nothing like being a Member of Congress and telling people what you would do if you had the opportunity to get elected, and then coming and actually doing it.

Mr. Speaker, that is a paradigm shift. That is a paradigm shift here in

Washington, D.C. We said we would do what we are doing now, and it is actually happening. This is not something that somebody wrote in an article or an op-ed to your local newspaper, saying it would be wonderful if Congress could come together in a bipartisan way and raise the minimum wage.

It would be wonderful if we could start really diving into stem cell research in a way that would be responsible and along the lines of being able to cure many of the ailments that so many Americans have.

It would be wonderful for us to be able to take those super giveaways and loopholes and take \$13 billion of those dollars and put them into energy innovation, making sure that we look at an efficient way to conserving not only energy but investing in the Midwest versus the Middle East. It would be wonderful, Mr. Speaker.

These are all of the things that people have been talking about, and I am glad to be a Member of the 110th Congress.

I was so happy, this last King holiday I had an opportunity to give a couple of speeches. I shared with folks; I told them what I had done over the last week and a half. They were, Wow, Congressman, we weren't ready for all that. We have been reading about it and we are so excited about it. It passed the House; and yes, it is on its way to the Senate and hopefully the President of the United States will sign it.

Our work is not done here. The Members' work is not done. America's public work is not done at this time. The American public has to continue to voice their opinion on these issues that we are passing off this floor.

I want to also let Members know that I will be down here tomorrow as a member of the Committee on Ways and Means, talking about the importance of the passage of this legislation. Being able to pass this legislation and turn these loopholes and great giveaways to special interests and turn them into something that the American people can wrap their arms around; and we can be innovative here, in the American homeland, to be able to hopefully save America.

I look at this as a national security issue. I was on Armed Services for the last two Congresses. I can tell you, I am not a Member of Congress with a conspiracy theory, but I know that if we start to invest in what we have here, our natural resources here, our alternative fuels that we can look at, be it E-85 or what have you, we will be able to do better.

I can tell you what is going to stop, Mr. Speaker, and we are going to make sure that the gentleman from Connecticut and the gentlewoman from New York and also the gentleman from Philadelphia, you will get your set of charts as you move along, to be able to show these great illustrations that I usually do. Mr. RYAN and I have a plethora of these charts.

I just want to say that it is important—

Ms. CLARKE. The gentleman is from Pittsburgh.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. I am sorry, did I say Philadelphia?

I am sorry, Mr. ALTMIRE, from Pittsburgh. I got a little excited.

Mr. ALTMIRE. I accept the gentleman's apology.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Thank you so very much. You can say I am from Georgia at least once.

Let me just say this: It is the same media market that you are in with Mr. RYAN. I was listening.

Like, for instance, here is an actual pump of ExxonMobil. Here is E-85 that is here, and these are the other fuels that are there, need it be unleaded, regular, what have you. You see here "cannot use your Mobil credit card" to buy this ethanol which is something that is produced here in the United States. This is a part of innovation. This is a part of trying to roll back the clock on global warming. All of these things that have taken place, they have been allowed to do it.

What we are doing tomorrow is taking away some of those super giveaways that they didn't even ask for and the Republican Congress was so happy to give to them. And I don't blame the oil companies. Don't get me wrong. They can only do what we allow them to do.

And while they are making record profits and still have the taxpayer dollars to do what they wish to do, we are going to turn that around and we are going to invest. That is just the beginning. That is what I am excited about.

I yield to the gentlewoman from New York.

Ms. CLARKE. I thank the gentleman from Florida.

I just wanted to pick up on all the excitement. I think the velocity and the momentum that has been built in the 110th Congress is something that is reverberating around the Nation.

As I went back to my district over the King holiday weekend, the enthusiasm and just the whole buoyancy of how people feel about the work we have been doing, it is uplifting, quite frankly. I think we need to capture that and make sure we use that as a motivation to continue along this path.

Just think about going home to New York City and people talking about real homeland security. We passed legislation that directly impacted on the town from which I am from. And certainly as someone whose father was in the World Trade Center in the 1993 attack, we recognize how very serious it is to reapportion the formula based on risk.

□ 2030

And just last week we were able to make that adjustment. We were able to organize things so that we can address port security and first responders in a meaningful, tangible way based on risk. And that says a lot about how we are going to operate as a body.

Everyone in New York saw the formulas before as just some of the most overt political pandering that you could possibly do. But now we have restored to them the faith that we can do what we have been sent to do, which is to create policy that protects and that uplifts our Nation.

And so my hat is off to the leadership, Speaker PELOSI, and everyone who has really tapped into the pulse of the American people. Because when you talk about a minimum wage raise in a city like New York, where the cost of living has been something that has created such a gap in people's lives, where raising the minimum wage just enables them to get by, is extraordinary for the rest of our Nation. It is extraordinary for all of us.

And we have an obligation to continue along this path, in making sure that everything that the American people have demanded of us, and I think the 6 in 2006 has really made it tangible, addresses that in a forthright way. I feel really great about where we are right now, and I look forward to working with all of these gentlemen in a movement to really move our civil society to where it needs to be, to make that paradigm shift and focus us as one of the greatest nations of humankind.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. I thank the gentlewoman. Again, being a new Member of Congress and to be able to go home and say that you actually have done what you said you would do should make your constituents feel good and should make even your family feel good and you feel good as a public policy maker.

Mr. RYAN, I yield to you at this time, the gentleman from Niles, Ohio.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Thank you. Yes, right over the border from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

As I was listening to you talk, and everyone kind of mentioned some different issues. But if you are the average person sitting home and you have all these politicians, Mr. Speaker, making all these political promises and then actually delivering, that in and of itself is a monumental occasion for many people to celebrate.

But as I was listening and just thinking, if you are home, it is not just that we have accomplished this, but what the actual effects are when these legislative acts get put into law and signed by the President, if the President, in fact, signs them. He said maybe he was going to veto the minimum wage and the Medicare, but just look at what we have done.

We have raised the minimum wage. That is maybe a couple thousand dollars raise for most people. We can talk about the student loan issue, whether it is \$2,000 over the course of the loan or \$4,000 or \$5,000 over the course of the loan, depending on when you get in school. You are talking about maybe \$5,000, \$6,000, or \$7,000 a year that the average family is now going to have at the table that they didn't have a couple years ago when they were trying to

do the math and trying to work out their checkbook.

Then there is the prescription drug bill. Once that gets implemented and we actually reduce the cost of prescription drugs, that is going to have another significant impact. So they may be working a minimum wage job, or someone in the family may be working a minimum wage job to contribute. You are going to have the student loan rate lowered, and then a reduction in the cost of prescription drugs. That is significant.

It is great that we actually did what we said we were going to do, Mr. MEEK, and I couldn't agree with your eloquence any more. But the act itself, right down to the kitchen table, Mr. Speaker, this is making a difference.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. It is making a difference.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. It is making a difference to average families.

And over the King holiday, the great thing is to go back and start reading some of the old speeches and the letter from the Birmingham jail where he talked about a sense of urgency. You know: Don't ask us to wait. What are we going to wait for? You go wait.

Well, I think that is the attitude Speaker PELOSI and our leadership took, and we didn't wait; we actually implemented this stuff. And when it is all said and done, I think no matter where any of our careers end, whether it is in the next term or retirement or some higher office, we are going to be able to see in our scrapbooks that my Aunt Rita keeps for me, I have a little Aunt Rita who cuts out my clippings and puts them in a little book, but we will be able to look back at all we have done throughout our careers and say, I was here when this all happened. I was in the United States Congress when this all happened. That is special, and that is why we are all so very excited.

So I will be happy to yield to my friend from Connecticut.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Mr. RYAN, thank you for yielding, and I think you are right, this is kitchen-table type of stuff we are doing now, and I think you are absolutely right, this is going to affect the lives of all the people in our districts.

I would go one step further. Before I came down here, I had the chance to go to my friend Adam Garner's elementary class at Highland Elementary in Cheshire, Connecticut, in my home town. And I looked at those kids, and we had about 50 kids in that place, and I thought about what their impression is of Congress, what they think happens in this place. And all they see and all they have read about for the last 10 or 12 years is bickering between the two sides. All they have seen is special interests and lobbyists giving untold millions to campaigns and having their business be brought before the House of Representatives.

So I thought, what kind of world are they going to grow up in, in which they think their government is for sale,

where they think their leaders care more about arguing with each other than getting work done.

And you are exactly right, Mr. RYAN, this is going to mean money on the table for people who have very little to work with. This is going to mean a better quality of life for families.

I think of my little friend, Adam Garner, and his friends in Cheshire, Connecticut, and what this says to them about their faith in government. That is what, in the end, is our greatest legacy. Not just the fact we raised the minimum wage and not just the fact a few more kids get to go to college, but what we are doing here, and I think you are very right in this historic moment, is in some small way about restoring faith in the process of government.

The hundred hours is so brilliant because not only does it mean real, tangible results for people, but it means, I think, as Ms. CLARKE said, a paradigm shift, a paradigm shift that will be noticed by people who pay attention and watch C-SPAN late at night, but might also be noticed by those little kids who haven't thought much of their government over time.

I think the 30 Somethings being on this floor trying to expose what has become of this place, Mr. MEEK, has been part of that healing process.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Well, you are 110 percent right. I am so glad you mentioned this faith in government and the opinion prior to the election. We would watch the news, and they would talk about the American public and what they thought about the Congress, what they thought about elected officials.

I can tell you, and this is going into my 13th year of public service in the Florida House and the Florida Senate, now here in the Congress, I have never had a 2-week period like I have had.

And let us not take it lightly. This is something that should be well noted, and it is something that I am excited about as an individual. But I know the American people are excited about it as well, because my constituents are very excited about it. They have never seen this. So let us not take this lightly.

I know we have about 5 more minutes left, and we want to go around and make sure we all get an opportunity to make closing comments, but look at the vision of this Congress from this point forward. Just think about it. Think about the committee work that is going to take place. Think about the oversight that is going to finally take place. Think about the way we are going to look at the President's budget when it is presented later on, when the President comes here and gives his State of the Union speech. Think about the response to that and how we work with the President on some of those issues and move it forward, not jammed up here in Congress.

Because the American people want action. They want it right here, right now.

We are going to give it to them, Mr. Speaker. And I am glad we have the leadership in place, with Speaker PELOSI and our entire Democratic leadership that is here. We also have some leadership, I believe, on the Republican side of the aisle, the Republicans who want to vote on behalf of their constituents. We are going to give them that opportunity.

Folks talk about bipartisan. There have been Republicans on the other side of the aisle who have been wanting to vote for this stuff, for these things. I am going to say this stuff, using Mr. RYAN's analogy, which is good. Because we don't want to speak over the heads of anyone. We want to make sure that we communicate with everyone, and that is what it is all about. That is what it is all about, communicating. And that is what we want to continue to do. Whether it is good or bad, we are going to come to this floor and be committed to it, and I am glad you are all here tonight.

Those are my closing comments, so we will roll all around to the Member from Pennsylvania.

Mr. ALTMIRE. Well, one of the things that has struck me in our first few weeks here, and I'm sure my new colleagues would agree, is that these are issues that, as we discussed, should not be controversial. Somehow, 71 Members on the other side voted against cutting the interest rates on student loans in half. Somehow, Members on the other side voted against raising the minimum wage for the first time in 10 years.

As I said during the debate on the floor last week, how could anyone vote against or even argue against allowing Medicare the right to negotiate group discounts on behalf of their 40 million beneficiaries to lower the cost of prescription drugs for every Medicare beneficiary? How can anybody be on the other side of that?

So what has struck me is, yes, we are getting bipartisan support, and we should all be grateful for that, but there are still folks on the other side who are arguing against these things. And what is amazing to me is, how is it we are able to pass these with such bipartisan support now, 300-plus votes today on the student loan bill, when in the past they couldn't even come up for a vote. Wouldn't even bring them up on the floor for a vote. Now, in the first 100 hours, we have done all these things.

So I just can't say enough about the new leadership in Congress and how well the entire Congress, including the other side, has worked together to make these things happen, and I just look forward to continuing my service over the next 2 years and working on these issues.

It is such an exciting time, and I am grateful to the gentleman from Florida for allowing me to join him this evening, and now I would yield for closing remarks to Mr. RYAN.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. And I would yield to our good friend from Connecticut.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Thank you, Mr. RYAN, and let me just add my thanks not only for allowing us to come down and join you this evening, but for everything you have done over the past 4 years, in particular over the past 2 years, to help us get here and be part of this healing process, which I think this week and a half has been.

You will hear some acrimony from the other side, but when you look at the votes, as Mr. MEEK ran through, in the end, there is a lot of healing that happens here because we are working on things that benefit both sides.

I tell you, all of us new Members, and there are 50-some odd new Members, we all may have certain different issues that were accentuated to a greater or lesser degree in our races, but we have found in talking to each other these first few days that what binds us is the sense our constituents sent us here to get this place working again, get it working again for the right people.

I know from our side of the aisle we will do that with whoever it is. If you are liberal, conservative, Democrat, or Republican, we want to make this a place where we work together again. That is maybe why that sense of euphoria in my district that I talked about in the beginning is maybe due in part to the issues, to the substance that has happened here; but in part it is due to the sense they have that this place is back at work in a way that it hasn't been.

So I am just so grateful for what Mr. RYAN and Mr. MEEK have been able to do for everyone, us and all of our constituents, over the past 4 years, and grateful to have a few moments.

I yield to my friend from New York. Ms. CLARKE. Thank you very much to the gentleman from Connecticut for sharing that, because I can only say "ditto."

We are, I believe, doing what needs to be done for the future of the Nation. While we see the immediate impact because we were campaigning and there were certain issues that had come before us, when I look at the fact that 8th graders, who will be entering college in 5 years, will be paying half the interest rate that current college students are paying, we are making a substantive difference in people's lives. That could encourage that one student who was saying there is no way my family can afford it to say, you know what, I can make it. And that is what this is about, future generations.

I want to thank the leadership, Mr. MEEK, Mr. RYAN, for giving us this forum in which we can reach out to the American people to come together in common cause with our colleagues, and even some of those folks on the other side of the aisle, to really do the work that is needed to be done for future generations. We have been doing it in the first 100 hours, and I look forward to doing it even more so as we move forward in the 110th session.

I yield to you, Mr. RYAN.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I thank the gentlewoman.

Again, raising the minimum wage, cutting student loan interest rates in half, and repealing the corporate subsidies to the oil companies so we can pay for some of this stuff. We are doing some great stuff for the American people, and I want to thank Leader Pelosi.

I will kick it to my friend from Pennsylvania to give us the Web site.

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Mr. ALTMIRE. I wanted to, Mr. Speaker, remind my colleagues that are here with us tonight if they wanted to share with their constituents, our website for this working group, it is [www.speaker.gov/30something](http://www.speaker.gov/30something). Or they could send an e-mail directly or have their constituents send an e-mail directly to [30somethingdems@mail.house.gov](mailto:30somethingdems@mail.house.gov). And at this point I would like to yield back to my friend, the gentleman from Florida.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Well, I can tell the gentleman from Pennsylvania, you just had a great honor, because that is usually, for the last 4 years, that has been Mr. RYAN's honor, and he has now passed that on to you, so that means when you are here on the floor, the 30-something Working Group, it is your responsibility to give the website out and the e-mail address out. So consider yourself a friend, I guess, because since you all share the same media market, he thought he would be nice to you.

Let me just say in closing, it is an honor being joined here by my colleagues here in the House. And I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, even when I first came here to this House of Representatives, the good thing about being a Member of this House, when we take our voting card out, that is one vote. We all equal the same one vote. And that is very significant here in this Chamber.

We are going to take some tough votes, Mr. Speaker, and we are going to need Members to step up to the bat and be Members and be leaders on behalf of their district and on behalf of America.

And with that, we would like to thank the Speaker for the time to be here on the floor. Also, our Democratic majority leader and our Democratic whip and chairman and vice chairman for everything that they have done.

And with that, Mr. Speaker, we would like to yield back the balance of our time. And it was an honor addressing the House.

#### PEAK OIL PRODUCTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HALL of New York). The gentleman from Maryland (Mr. BARTLETT) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow we vote here in the House on an energy bill. And I thought it might be appropriate to spend a bit of time this evening looking at where we and the world are relative to energy. I have here a chart with some numbers on it that inspired 30 of our prominent Americans, Jim Woolsey,

Boyden Gray, McFarland and 27 others, among them retired four star admirals and generals, to write to the President a letter which said, "Mr. President, we have only 2 percent of the world's oil reserves. We consume 25 percent of the world's oil, almost two-thirds of which we import. And that presents a totally unacceptable national security risk. We really have to do something about that to free ourselves from the necessity of buying foreign oil."

The President recognizes that this is a problem. In his recent State of the Union message he said that we are hooked on oil.

There are a couple of other interesting numbers here. We represent actually a bit less than 5 percent of the world's population. We represent about one person in 22 in the world. And with only 2 percent of the world's oil reserves, we are pumping 8 percent of the world's oil. What that means, of course, is that we are pumping our oil four times faster than the rest of the world. We have been pumping less oil each year now for several years, and with this high pumping rate that decline will accelerate.

How did we get here? To find how we got here, you have really got to go back about 6 decades. I didn't know last year on the 14th day of March, when I gave the first speech here on the floor about peak oil, that I was just 6 days beyond the 50th anniversary of what I think will come to be seen as the most important speech given in the last century. This was a speech given by M. King Hubbert, a Shell Oil company geologist, to a group of oil people in San Antonio, Texas. At that time, if you look back in your history books, you will see that we were the largest producer of oil in the world. We were the largest consumer of oil in the world, and we were the largest exporter of oil in the world.

And M. King Hubbert shocked his audience by telling them that in just about a decade and a half, roughly 1970, the United States would peak in oil production. And no matter what we did after that, our production of oil would decline.

I have here a curve which shows his prediction. His prediction is the small green symbols here, and the actual data points are the larger green symbols. And you see they reasonably followed his predicted curve. By 1980, when Ronald Reagan took office, we were already well down the other side of Hubbert's peak, and we knew very well that M. King Hubbert had been right about the United States.

Now, in 1969, M. King Hubbert predicted that the world would follow the United States in peaking in oil production about now. If he was right about the United States, why shouldn't he be right about the world?

It has now been 27 years since we knew, in 1980. We are already 10 years down the other side of what is called Hubbert's peak. And we knew that he