

that is exactly what is happening. Foreign firms are already curtailing their investments in that country.

So in Venezuela we see that there is an attempt to change existing contracts, very similar to the way that we changed yesterday on the floor of this House of Representatives, and it has affected the desire of people to invest in Venezuela.

In Bolivia we have the same thing. The Bolivian government threatened to expel oil companies from that country in 2006 if they did not agree to new government terms on existing contracts. What has happened? I think you could forecast what has happened. What is done is that foreign investors are now beginning to reconsider whether or not they will actually be a part of the Bolivian economy or not. This is the thing that all shareholders, they will live with any certainty in life, but they will not live with uncertainty. And when we begin to change the contracts, they begin to pull their investments out and go to places where certainty is more of a potential.

In Russia we have seen the same thing. Companies such as Shell, Exxon, BP have had valid oil and gas leases in Russia for years. President Putin had a number of government agencies threaten to pull these leases for a number of suspect reasons. By threatening to pull these leases, Shell was forced to give up assets that were worth billions of dollars. So we see in Russia this attempt to maneuver contracts, to manipulate contracts much as what we did yesterday, and the effects are very bad. Long term, Russia will not have people who are willing to come and invest in that country.

In 2001, I had the opportunity to go as a company; my wife and I had a small company that dealt in oil and gas, repairs of oil wells. Russia was looking for such capability. So in 2001, I went with a team of people who did various different projects. We were the ones who did down hole repairs on oil wells. They took me, they showed me files of maybe 6,000 or 8,000 wells that were simple to correct, yet they in their technology in 2001 did not have access to even the basics that my father had seen here in the United States in the early 1950s when he was working in the same industry. My father retired from Exxon; his whole life was work.

So when I went back, I showed him the videos of the equipment that was in Russia in 2001. He said, "Son, in 1950 we were more advanced than what we are seeing here."

When countries are unwilling to allow people to have stable returns, it doesn't have to be high returns, low returns, but there must be stability and there must be predictability. When countries do not allow that, there will be no investments. And so here Russia was with over 6,000 wells asking me in 2001 to come and fix because they did not have anyone that was capable of fixing them.

I determined that the environment was very, very unsettling in Russia, so

we actually opted not to become a part of the team that went there. There was a company that was about 10 times our size located in Abilene, Texas. They did go. That was about maybe a \$50 million company, maybe a \$100 million company. Within 2 years, they were selling everything at bankruptcy because the Russians, as you can predict, said, "No. These assets are going to belong to us."

So this contracting problem that was attempted to be cured yesterday in legislation I think is going to be, instead of a fix, is going to cause prices to be higher at the pump, investments to be less, and at the end of the day we are going to wonder if maybe we did not empower a bunch of enthusiastic amateurs to go around and make commitments on behalf of the Federal Government. We shall see. I wish my friends well.

I would say that I am not the only one who wonder about the contracts. Just day before yesterday the Washington Post had an editorial which declared that these elements that are included in the bill, the ones that begin to undo the contracts that we voted on yesterday and pushed by the majority in this House, the Washington Post declared those solutions to be ones that Russia and Bolivia would be proud of.

Now, that is not exactly the new direction that the American people were promised as we came into this session. So I would encourage my colleagues to please open the process up. With debate in committee, these shortcomings in bills could have been brought out. The rough edges could have been knocked off the bills. Instead, we have been faced with bills that have no amendments allowed, no debate in committees, no consideration in committees. And so I worry that our friends are circumventing democracy.

□ 1315

Mr. KING of Iowa. I thank the gentleman from New Mexico for bringing his expertise to the floor. I listened with fascination to the Russian narrative. That is one I wasn't aware of. I look forward to looking into that in further detail in the future.

I see we have some freshmen who have come to the floor, apparently poised to proceed with a Special Order over the next 60 minutes. I trust this is in a great celebration of the first 100 hours and the accomplishment of the 100 hours now being in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, and you are here to celebrate you are finally going to have a voice in this process. Maybe next week one of you can offer an amendment and go to a subcommittee meeting and go to a hearing or do a markup, and you can get into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD some of the things you promised your voters you were going to do.

I have to believe you didn't think you would be muzzled for the first 100 hours, and you thought there would be a process for you to be allowed to offer

amendments, engage in debate, go to subcommittee and committee meetings, and maybe even go before the Rules Committee and make a request and have it granted that you could bring your pet issue to this floor of Congress and actually accomplish the things that you pledged you would do.

If any of you have had any of that voice up to this point, I think it would be interesting to hear that. I suspect, no, you are full of frustration, quietly, and now we are going to hear your voices, full throated, maybe in the next hour, hopefully next week. Pelosi time only says 42 hours. I am not sure if you are going to give that chance.

Please make that request so we can go to real-time. Congratulations, you got it all done in the first real 100 hours. You didn't need Pelosi time. I want to hear your voice in the amendment process. Welcome to Congress.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate this great honor to speak to you this afternoon. I also thank the gentleman from New Mexico.

FRESHMEN DEMOCRATS CELEBRATE COMPLETING 100-HOUR AGENDA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from New Hampshire (Mr. HODES) is recognized for 42 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. HODES. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to be here in the House of Representatives. It is an honor and privilege to rise to represent my State of New Hampshire, and also as a new Member of the Democratic majority to celebrate the 100-hours agenda that has recently been completed.

I note with interest that the gentleman from Iowa suggests that somehow the new Democratic Members have not had great input into the agenda for America that the 100 hours was meant to advance and did advance, and somehow the suggestion might be that we haven't participated fully with our leadership in the Congress in determining the new course and a new direction for this country.

I would correct that gentleman because the new Democratic majority and the new Members that are here have had great input with the leadership because the American people have sent us here with a mandate for change. As we campaigned this fall all across this country, nothing was clearer from the American people than they wanted change. They wanted change in the way government did its business. They wanted change in the direction of this country, and we are now privileged and honored to be part of history and be here on the floor of the people's House to help make that change happen. Today, in some sense, we come to celebrate the 100-hours agenda.

My colleagues across the aisle have made much over the past 2 weeks about

hours and minutes. The gentleman from Iowa produced a chart that counted hours and counted minutes and they have counted seconds.

But the American people, Mr. Speaker, have counted years. They have been waiting for years for a new direction for this country. They have said to us in clear and unequivocal terms that they wanted honest leadership and open government. We heard time and time again about a culture of corruption, concern from the American people that the House of Representatives and the Members in this House seemed more concerned about themselves than representing the people of this country.

And so in the American agenda that the Democrats advanced and has been advanced, we pledged honest leadership and open government. We pledged to restore government as good as the people of this country deserve starting with real ethics reform.

So, Mr. Speaker, one of the first things that happened here in the 110th Congress was through the rules process we advanced significant ethics reform to restore honest and transparent leadership in the House of Representatives.

The American people spoke clearly to us about their concerns about what was going on not only across the sea in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. They are concerned about real security for America. They are concerned that although the 2001 attacks had been the subject of a bipartisan commission, the 9/11 Commission, to determine what needed to be done to make our homeland safe, to keep the people of this country safe from attacks here, that this Congress somehow had stalled in making those promises, in keeping those promises and making the homeland safe.

So in H.R. 1 as part of the 100-hours agenda, we voted to implement the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission to protect Americans at home and lead the world by telling the truth to our troops, our citizens and our allies. We believe in a strong national defense. And we believe in being tough and smart. But we realized that homeland security must be a priority, and so we voted to implement homeland security.

We were concerned about economic prosperity and educational excellence. We wanted to create jobs that stay in America and restore opportunity for everyone, and that means all Americans, Americans earning all kinds of incomes. I can't tell you, Mr. Speaker, how many times as I walked my district door to door and met people in coffee shops and factories and schools and libraries, everywhere I went the subject of the minimum wage came up time and time again because the good people of this country recognized that the minimum wage was an important factor for millions of Americans. Single moms raising families were trying to do it on a minimum wage that hadn't been raised in 10 years.

I always find it interesting when my colleagues from across the aisle com-

plain about raising the minimum wage, and yet so many voted with us, they voted themselves increases in their salaries for 10 years before raising the minimum wage. We accomplished that in H.R. 2.

We were able to introduce important medical research with stem cell research, to expand stem cell research in a careful and appropriate way, in the way that the American people wanted.

We started to help reform Medicare part D in H.R. 4.

We helped our students go to college in this country by cutting the rate of student loans in half, and we started a move towards energy independence by rolling back tax breaks for big oil companies.

In the last Congress, that Congress voted to cut taxes, give tax breaks to huge oil and gas companies while they saw record prices at the pump, and at the same time cut \$12 billion in aid for our college students when we need to send people to college. So we passed H.R. 6, which started to pave the way for energy independence.

Having advanced that agenda, at this time I will yield to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. WILSON).

Mr. WILSON of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to comment on the good feeling of having the 100 hours' strong start and the issues that we touched upon. Many have talked about it today, but I believe it was very much an important part of fulfilling our promise to the voters throughout our campaigns in '06 to be able to come here in '07 and make a difference.

In less than 100 hours, we were able to move some major legislation, things like prescription drug negotiations with the Health and Human Services Administration, being able to negotiate, which just makes sense. When it is done on everything else that we buy in America, it is actually part of the way business is done, and why there is this protection to keep that from happening, I have no idea. It has been a great opportunity I think to see, and I think it will be a great benefit for seniors. There are so many things that have happened in this 100 hours. And even though the other side says it is not perfect, it is not; but it is certainly a good start.

To do something as simple as enacting the 9/11 Commission, to have the recommendations for safety and scanning our containers that go onto our boats and containers that go into our airplanes so that we know that we are not allowing illegal things into our country and things that can hurt us, this is just a really positive move in the right direction; and I believe it is a good one.

And the minimum wage, to do that raise for the working families of our country that have been neglected for 10 years, it is the right thing to do. I am so proud to be a part of the minimum-wage increase.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, what we did on energy planning yesterday in stop-

ping the royalties that are being given to the large oil companies that are exhibiting exorbitant profits, and to be able to do something where we can say we are going to work towards energy independence in this country. We are going to look at options and how we can do ethanol.

I have an ethanol plant in my State of Ohio that we are trying to get up and running. We want to have alternative fuels. Coal-to-liquid is very exciting. In the Ohio Valley that I represent, we have an abundance of coal, coal that we will be able to use in a liquid plant to be able to produce fuel that could be used by the military. They are working on that contract as we speak.

One of the things that I like about the coal-to-liquid process is it is going to be a long-term investment. As leaders in government, we need to provide the leadership that needs to be done because we can't make the investment in coal-to-liquid plants and then have oil go down to \$36 a barrel. It has to be a long-term investment for people to invest in it. It has to be an opportunity where we can work toward our energy independence.

I believe it is a very significant thing, Mr. Speaker. And to know that, again, it is one of the important things that we have done in this 100 hours.

And to know that by reducing the interest on student loans we have provided more students with access to college and higher education, that is what it is about. This is the kind of thing that I believe helps us give people opportunities because so many times we have had bright people who just can't afford to go to higher education. By cutting the loans \$4,400 for the average student in their college expense, I think it is a great opportunity.

Last but not least, to finish up with the ethics part, to know that we have done something, to shine the light on the ethics that is in this very body, and that we are going to operate a Congress that is going to be above board and we are going to do things right.

In our first 100 hours, although it is not perfect, it is certainly a great first step in the right direction.

Mr. HODES. I thank the gentleman from Ohio. In terms of the energy independence, the program we are going to advance as leaders in this Congress is designed to unleash the entrepreneurial spirit of this country.

Mr. Speaker, last year the Federal Government only spend \$2 billion, one week in Iraq, on all of its research into alternative and renewable energy forms. By setting up the kind of reserve we have now, rolling back the subsidies for Big Oil and putting it into a reserve for Federal research and research into alternative energy, just think about how we are going to unleash the entrepreneurial spirit of this country for new jobs and economic prosperity on into the century.

It is now my pleasure to yield to the distinguished gentleman from Connecticut.

Mr. COURTNEY. I want to congratulate you on your election as the president of the Democratic '06 class. You are doing great so far.

Mr. HODES. I appreciate the congratulations. Some would say condolences.

Mr. COURTNEY. I want to follow-up on your opening comments on the heels of the prior group that was here that seemed to suggest that freshmen were being suppressed in the opening 100 hours of the 110th Congress. As we all know, nothing would be further from the truth.

Our level of participation in the floor debate and in the design of this agenda could not have been more robust and full from the beginning of the process to the end.

□ 1330

Where we, I think, learned our information about the content of that agenda was on the campaign trail talking to the people in our district. These are ideas that have been out there for a long time. If anything has been suppressed or held back, in fact, it was the 100 hours agenda, not the process or the new Members of Congress that are again beginning our time here in the House.

As an undergraduate in Boston, I used to walk by Powder House Square in Cambridge past the home of Tip O'Neill who at that time was Speaker of this body, the predecessor of the gentleman in the chair. He was a wonderful man. He is certainly not maybe the typical blow-dried politician of the 21st century but he had a street wisdom that I think still resonates to this day. Of course, he coined the most famous phrase, which is that all politics is local. I was asked by a local reporter about where does this 100 hours agenda fit into the district. When are you guys going to start dealing with the Second Congressional District where I come from, eastern Connecticut.

The fact of the matter is if you go down this list of the 100 hours agenda, you can find exactly where in eastern Connecticut it matters, starting with homeland security. In my district, we have the Port of New London. We have more of Long Island Sound than any other congressional district in Connecticut. There are thousands of container cargo ships that every month pass up and down the Race in Long Island Sound. Today we have a situation where only a tiny fraction of those containers have been screened before they have reached that point. This is a large population center in our country. Yet despite the fact that the 9/11 Commission recommendations were out there telling us that we need to go a safer direction in terms of screening that cargo, it wasn't done by the prior Congress.

Secondly, the commission recommended that we would have funding based on need, not politics. It was one of the recommendations that the Chairs of the commission in their fifth

year anniversary of 9/11 pointed to as the biggest failing of the prior Congress. Yet in the State of the Connecticut where we received almost \$60 million funding in homeland security funding 3 years ago, it had dropped to \$15 million last year, leaving first responders high and dry in terms of the investment that they were trying to make in communications equipment and systems that would actually protect the people of our area. New York and the World Trade Center is not very far from my district. We lost people in the Second Congressional District on 9/11 and H.R. 1 right out of the box did everything in the world for my local community, my district, in terms of making us safer and stronger as a district and as a State.

In terms of student loans, my district is the home of the University of Connecticut, Eastern Connecticut State University, three community colleges, Mitchell College, Conn College. As Mr. WILSON indicated, this bill will literally make a difference between whether or not students go to college and stay in college or not. It is as simple as that. There was probably no other decision of the 109th Congress that was more out of touch than the decision to cut by \$12 billion aid for student loans. What we did a couple of days ago was take a big step in terms of reversing that damage to the system.

On the Education and Labor Committee on which I sit with Congresswoman HIRONO from Hawaii, we are going to follow up on that down payment to address Pell Grants, to revise the reauthorization of the Higher Ed Act to make sure that we build a system that will create a workforce for the 21st century.

Those are just two small examples where we kept faith with the voters. And with Speaker O'Neill's famous words about all politics is local, I think our class was a big part of that process over the last week. It has been terrific working with all of you and I think it is going to be a great time ahead of us in the 110th Congress.

Mr. HODES. I thank the gentleman from Connecticut. It is an honor to be a member of a class with such distinguished people in it of such skills and talents who are ready to move this agenda and move this country forward for the people, because we understand that it is the people's business that we are here to do and we are putting the people back in the People's House. I thank the distinguished gentleman from Connecticut.

I yield at this time to the gentleman from New Hampshire (Ms. SHEA-PORTER).

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I feel exhilarated at the end of this week. As I was campaigning through my district, the First District of New Hampshire, over and over again I kept hearing questions about what can Congress do to help the middle class and what can Congress do to help grow the mid-

dle class, to lift people into that robust middle class that we all want. And certainly this week we have shown what we are capable of doing. People are worried about Congress being able to get together and pass any legislation that would actually help the people. This week we have shown that we know how to get this job done. It certainly is an exhilarating feeling to be part of this.

We watched out for the taxpayer this week. We passed a PAYGO, pay-as-you-go. We said to the taxpayers of this country, we know your taxes are high, we know that you're worried about the highest deficits in American history, and we're going to do something about it. We're going to pass some programs that help you and we're also going to make sure that we don't drive up the deficit.

And then we looked at people who have children in college and we said, we know that you need help and we're going to help you. We cut the interest rates in half. Yet it didn't cost the taxpayer a dime. That is awesome. I feel wonderful and proud of the leadership, the Democratic leadership that brought this forward, and I am delighted that so many Republicans joined in that vote, because I think that it helps all of us.

Then we took a look at Medicare part D and we knew there was something wrong with Medicare part D. What was wrong with it was that the American taxpayer was not at the table when that was passed. It was the insurance companies, it was the pharmaceutical companies, but senior citizens were not there and neither were the American taxpayers. And so we said, we're changing this legislation so we will make sure that they have to negotiate the price of prescription drugs.

Now, we did hear a lot of hollering that this wouldn't help, but I will tell you something, you would never find the CEO of a company ordering their purchasing department not to negotiate the price of anything. We all know, children know when they are little, they take their lunches and they try to cut the best deal for themselves trading. We understand that you negotiate if you want the best deal for the American public and that is what we did.

So we can go back to our districts and we can look at everybody and say, we understand, because we come from you. We're the freshman class that have been out there listening to the issues and we have come to the floor of the House and with the help of the Democratic leadership and certainly some Republicans that joined forces with us, we have passed some pretty significant legislation. So when my child goes back to college next year and the American children go back to college next year, they know that when they leave college, we have reduced their debt \$4,000 over the terms of their loan. And when senior citizens go to their pharmacies for their prescriptions, they know that we did the best

that we could for them this week. It's a beginning. There will be more to be done, of course, but it is an impressive beginning. And when people go to the gas pump, which is the other way that we saved money for the American taxpayer, they know that we are not going to subsidize the oil companies anymore, that we are not going to take taxpayer money and give them a subsidy. This is what we have been asked to do and this is what we delivered this week.

I congratulate everybody who had a part in this and I urge the American people to stay tuned, because we are going to continue to deliver what the American public has asked us to do and what they need us to do. While we do that, we are also going to be paying attention to the international scene. We know that we have to have a strong national defense. We understand that we have enemies in this world and that we have to be careful. That is why we made sure that we will have containers that are inspected and that is why we looked very carefully with the 9/11 Commission and we said, yes, they're right and we need to do this now. On September 11, 2001, I was on the Beltway in Washington, D.C., and it was a terrifying place to be, no question about it. But I would go out to my district and say, we can't live in fear but what we have to do is be sensible and take action to keep us safer. We can't cower in fear but we can pass legislation that will protect all of us. We need to be on the world stage. We need to be bold. We need to take action to make sure that we are safe, but we also have to make sure that we don't terrify Americans.

So this week we said, here is some legislation that is going to protect you at the airports, it is going to protect you at the ports, it is going to protect our Nation and we are moving forward on every direction. I am delighted. It has been a wonderful couple of weeks and I know with all these good people working hard that America can continue to be reassured that we will lead the country in the right direction.

Mr. HODES. I thank the gentlewoman from New Hampshire. I just want to say how proud I am that now New Hampshire has two Democratic Congress Members serving our great State and we will be working hard on behalf of our constituents as I know all our members of the new Democratic majority-makers are going to be doing. I thank the gentlewoman for her remarks.

At this time I yield to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. PERLMUTTER).

Mr. PERLMUTTER. I thank the gentleman from New Hampshire.

Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to be here today. It is an honor for all of us to be here today, to be Members of Congress. We were all sent here, I think, to bring change to this Nation and bring a new direction to this Nation. I am proud that we have been a part of really a bipartisan effort. As

Democrats, we have been part of a bipartisan effort to change the way this country is being run. In this last 100 hours, with NANCY PELOSI really pushing us to the maximum, we have taken care of things that have been stymied, stalled and stopped in prior Congresses.

We have dealt with minimum wage that sat on the shelf for 10 years. We dealt with renewable energy which for my district is fantastic. We have the National Renewable Energy Lab. It is time for us to change our priorities and have a more diverse portfolio of energy sources so that we aren't relying on the Middle East all the time. It is good for national security, it is good for the climate, it is good for jobs.

We dealt with student loans. As I said a couple of days ago, I was at a dive meet this past weekend, one of my kids was in a dive meet, and a woman came up and thanked me because we were reducing the rate of interest on student loans because she had one daughter in college, another one coming up, a single mom, and this was going to help their family educate and really build for the future.

One of the things that I was most proud of, and I am talking to the gentleman from Tennessee because he participated in this, was on the stem cell bill. I felt so proud because that is what Congress, that is what the democratic system is all about. There was a bipartisan bill that passed legislation to allow for further stem cell research that holds out so much promise for so many people. One of my kids has epilepsy. We talked about that. DIANA DEGETTE and MIKE CASTLE, one a Democrat, one a Republican, worked very well together to bring about a bipartisan solution to something that will help so many people across this country.

There were other things. There was 9/11. I am a member of the Homeland Security Committee. And for us to finally pass the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission after years of it sitting there without any implementation by the Republican Congress was a great change. I am just happy to be here, Mr. Speaker.

I don't know exactly how you would like me to proceed, but I wanted to ask the gentleman from Tennessee if he feels that there has been the activity and the action and the change in direction of this country that the people in his district elected him to bring change.

Mr. HODES. I yield to the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. COHEN).

Mr. COHEN. Thank you. I appreciate the gentleman from Colorado posing the question and the gentleman from New Hampshire yielding time.

Mr. Speaker, indeed the people of the Ninth District in Tennessee have felt the differences in this Congress. It has been a great honor to be here as a representative of the Ninth District of Tennessee. Bob Dylan said, "Senators, Congressmen, please heed the call." I think this class has heeded the call.

The call is, people felt that Congress was not a place that the American people intended it to be and our Founding Fathers intended it to be. It had fallen to one of the lowest levels of appreciation or lack of appreciation of any body or group in this country. It had a 34 percent, 33 percent approval rate. That is going to go up. The reason is, I think, because this Congress is going to look to the future and the Democratic Party looks to the future.

Most of y'all probably have heard the same stories I have heard. Politics is kind of like cars. If you want to go forward, you put your car in D like Democrat, in drive. And if you want to go in reverse, you put it in R like Republican, you go in reverse. We are in D and the Democrats are going forward and it is about the future. Most of this legislation has been about the future. It has been about the future of people never having to work for \$5.15 an hour.

People have come up in this well, Mr. Speaker, and they have talked about watch out for your pocketbook or watch out for your wallet. Folks making \$5.15 an hour can't hardly afford a wallet. So when they are talking about look out for your wallet, they are not thinking about the people that are performing the jobs that are necessary to keep this country moving forward that most of us don't want to participate in. Those people will be getting \$7.25 in a couple of years and they will have something to put in their pocketbook.

Regarding stem cell research, the gentleman from Colorado mentioned his child. My father had Alzheimer's. Lots of people have family members or friends who have had illnesses that might be cured. That is the future. There will be cures or there will be treatments for diseases because of the legislation that was taken and passed during this 100 hours by this House, and we hope the Senate will concur.

If you look at stem cell research, that is the future. The minimum wage, that is the future. Certainly on oil and fuels and new ideas on energy and getting us independent of Middle Eastern oil, that is defense. That is the future. So if you want to go forward, you put your car in D, you support Democrats and go forward. I am happy to be a part of this Democratic class. It has been an exciting experience. It has been a great 100 hours. We have got a great Speaker, historic, the first woman Speaker. Next week when the President delivers his State of the Union address, there will be a woman behind him. Behind every successful man, there is a woman, and even behind this President there is going to be a woman, and there is going to be a great woman, Speaker PELOSI.

Mr. HODES. I thank the gentleman from Tennessee for his remarks and for quoting a great American artist, Bob Dylan. It is important that we bring art and culture down to the floor of the Congress and make sure that the people of America know that we are connected not only to the past but to the

future. I also note that the 100 hours agenda as it turned out was subject to full debate here on the floor of the House.

□ 1345

Now our colleagues across the aisle, from time to time, raised complaints about procedures. They claimed they were cut out. But they were all here and had the opportunity to debate the 100 hours agenda. And, in fact, when it came to votes on the 100 hours agenda, Mr. Speaker, we averaged 67 Republican votes for what we passed in terms of the 100-hour agenda. We averaged 67 votes from our colleagues across the aisle. So while they may have raised their voices about the procedure, we were fulfilling promises to the American people. We knew it was important. They joined us. And so I think we all should be proud of the fact that the 100 hour agenda really was an American agenda. It is an American agenda. It is a down payment on what we are going to do to keep on moving this country forward. And I am proud and glad that our colleagues from across the aisle had the wisdom, the courage, and just the plain smarts to join us on what the American people know is right for America as we move forward in the 21st century.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to recognize and yield to the gentleman from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO).

Ms. HIRONO. I just wanted to make a comment about what you just said. You know, there is rhetoric, and then there is action. So while we had hours and hours of debate on all of these bills that we dealt with in the first 100 hours, when it came down to action, so many of the Republicans voted with us. So as the saying goes, "Where's the beef?" And frankly, I just want to share with my colleagues from the majority-making class, of which I am very proud, there was an article written in a local newspaper back home about me and how I am doing here, and they quoted a professor from University of Pennsylvania, a political science professor. I don't know why they asked somebody from the University of Pennsylvania. But he teaches a class on how Congress works. And he said, basically, freshmen are hardly ever seen and they are never heard from. Well, nothing could be further from the truth in our class. Not only were we seen, but we were heard from. We were encouraged to speak out. And I think every single one of us had an opportunity to speak on all of these bills, as I certainly did. And so I came here because I really wanted to be responsive to the American people. And as the New York Times only yesterday said, that the House has now approved legislation directly addressing public concerns. And I think that is why we feel really gratified to have been a part of this historic session and to be reminded that prior Congresses, the 104th, 105th, 106th, 107th, 108th, 109th Congresses in the month of January, were taking a break. And we didn't.

Mr. HODES. I thank the gentleman from Hawaii for the remarks, and pointing out how important what we are doing really is to the future of this country.

And at this time I would yield to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. SARBANES) with whom I am very proud to serve.

Mr. SARBANES. Thank you very much. I appreciate that. I thank the gentleman from New Hampshire for his amazing leadership of our class. And I am just so excited to be here and to be part of this debate. You will excuse me for looking at the clock every so often. The reason I am doing it is I am so amazed at what we were able to accomplish in 100 hours. I mean, it is almost unprecedented in terms of legislative activity to produce the results that we have.

Congressman COURTNEY earlier cited Tip O'Neill and the notion that all politics is local. And I think that it is difficult for a lot of folks in this country to understand the connection between what we do here, the action we take, and what happens in their daily lives. But I believe that what we did over the last 10 days is directly connected to making life better for millions of Americans.

All over this country, every day, Americans get up and what do they do? They work hard and they play by the rules. They work hard and they play by the rules. And all they ask, all they expect, and it shouldn't be a tall order, is that we do the same thing; that the people they send here to represent them work hard and play by the rules. We took a step right from the onset by passing an ethics reform package that really is going to make a difference in terms of the way things operate here. And that was the right thing to do. And the message that came from the American people that we needed to do that was loud and clear.

We also decided that we ought to conduct business here in the same way that an average household is conducted, and that is, you make your checkbook balance. So we implemented rules related to fiscal accountability. That makes perfect sense. That makes perfect sense.

Let me talk a little bit more, though, about this connection to people's daily lives in terms of the things that we did. It starts at 6:00 in the morning. If you are a senior citizen in this country, the first thing you do, the first thing you do is you take your prescription medicine. Now, is that an experience that is causing you anxiety because you don't know what trick is coming around the corner next? Or do you feel like your interests are being looked after?

Last week we took the vital step of allowing the Medicare program, on behalf of its beneficiaries, to negotiate drug prices with the pharmaceutical industry. That is going to bring drug prices down and that is going to do right by our seniors. So it matters what we do here in terms of people's daily lives.

The working mother who gets up at 6:00 in the morning, gets her two children off to school, and then goes to a job that pays the minimum wage. What we did last week, in passing an increase in the minimum wage is going to make a difference for that person and millions of people around this country just like her.

Families all over America who wake up every day burdened with the worry and the anxiety about a loved one who is suffering from a debilitating disease or condition where the hope that science can provide for treatment is something that can lift them up. We took the step last week, with significant bipartisan support, of approving the Federal funding of embryonic stem cell research. That was the right thing to do for those families.

We have heard about the issue of security. We took steps last week, out of respect for the families of the victims of September 11, we took steps to implement, finally, the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission.

My blood pressure is going down now because when I go to a gas station to fill up my car I am not seething at the fact that I am paying all this money for gas, and, meanwhile, the oil industry is getting big tax breaks, because we took steps to repeal those because they weren't fair. They weren't fair.

And lastly, we took action on student loans. I have said it before in this Chamber, but I have got to say it again because it is imprinted on me. A woman came up to me whose children are trying to go to college, and she looked me straight in the eye, and this is what she said. She said, I did everything they told me I was supposed to do. My husband and I worked three jobs between us, we saved our money and we told our kids if you work hard and you study, you can make it in America. And now we can't pay for college. We have a problem in this country if people are looking at us and saying, we did everything they told us we were supposed to do and we can't make it. We have to restore the bargain with Americans.

And let me finish by noting this, and it is something we should take to heart as people who have been sent here to make policy. Policymakers can get up in the morning and they can head in one of two different directions. They can get up and they can think about what can I do today as, sadly, I think this administration does, what can I do today to help people who don't need any help? If do you that, you make bad public policy.

But if you get up in the morning and, as I think all of us here do, and you are thinking, what can we do today to help people who really need help, to help the working families of America? Then, you know what? We won't get it perfectly right every time, but most of the time we are going to make good public policy. And that is what we did last week and that is what we did this week. We made good public policy for

the American people. I am proud to have been part of that effort. And I am proud to serve with my colleagues who stepped up and made this 100 hours so meaningful for the American people.

Mr. HODES. We thank the gentleman from Maryland for speaking with such passion about the important connection between what we are doing here to make a positive difference in the lives of this country and what it means to every single American that we represent from around this country, what impact it will have on their daily lives, because, as the gentleman from Maryland rightly understands, we are dedicated to making a positive difference for all the people of this country, not just those at the very top, but all the people, those who need it the most, doing the most good for most of the people all the time.

And I would yield briefly now to the distinguished representative from Pennsylvania, Mr. CARNEY, a gentleman who, Mr. Speaker, has served his country in the military with great distinction, and, Mr. Speaker, a gentleman who has the distinction, as a new Member of Congress, of now leading a subcommittee on the Homeland Security Committee, a distinct honor worthy of his experience, skill and talent. I am very proud to serve with him and I yield to Mr. CARNEY.

Mr. CARNEY. Thank you, Mr. HODES, and thank you for your leadership in this class. It is going to be a historic class. I think we have already proven that in the last 100 hours.

Mr. Speaker, in the last 2 weeks in the new Congress we have already taken remarkable action to pass this first 100 hours legislation.

Now, as I traveled across my 10th District of Pennsylvania, I heard from so many families who were struggling to make ends meet. Our working families needed an increase to the minimum wage, and we provided that. Our working families needed affordable education. We provided that relief. Our seniors need lower prescription drug prices. We took steps to make sure they can have them. Our children need to know that they are growing up in a country that is safe, and we provided to enhance the security of this Nation.

Two weeks into this new Congress and already I am proud of what this House of Representatives has achieved in a bipartisan and civil manner. We are listening to the concerns of our constituents and passing meaningful legislation on their behalf.

I encourage our colleagues in the Senate to pass our legislation and for the President to sign it into law. Two weeks into the new Congress, and already I have heard from so many of my constituents who are appreciative of our concerns and their concerns being addressed. But they also remind me that we have only just begun. Two weeks in and still so much left to accomplish.

Mr. HODES. Thank you very much, Mr. CARNEY.

Mr. Speaker, I note the hour. I thank the Speaker for your service today and in this august body, we thank the American people for giving us the privilege to serve the people of this country, to have served in this historic time, to move the 100 hours agenda from a promise into reality, to make good on our promises to the people of this country that we care about all the people, that we are going to make a positive difference as we move forward.

I thank my colleagues, new Members. We have been called majority makers, and I am proud that we are, and we are going to work in a bipartisan way to move this country forward.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota (at the request of Mr. HOYER) for today.

Mrs. NAPOLITANO (at the request of Mr. HOYER) for today.

Mr. SIMPSON (at the request of Mr. BOEHNER) for today on account of medical reasons.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

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

Mr. PALLONE, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. WOOLSEY, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. DEFAZIO, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. SCHIFF, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. TAYLOR, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. CUMMINGS, for 5 minutes, today.

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. NORTON, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. STUPAK, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. BLUMENAUER, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. ELLISON, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Member (at his own request) to revise and extend his remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. PENCE, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at their own request) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Ms. SUTTON, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. WELCH of Vermont, for 5 minutes, today.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. HODES. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 1 o'clock and 59 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until Monday, Janu-

ary 22, 2007, at 12:30 p.m., for morning hour debate.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 8 of rule XII, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

333. A communication from the President of the United States, transmitting notification stating that the emergency declared with respect to foreign terrorists who threaten to disrupt the Middle East peace process is to continue in effect beyond January 23, 2007, pursuant to 50 U.S.C. 1622(d); (H. Doc. No. 110-8); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs and ordered to be printed.

334. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting a copy of D.C. ACT 16-594, "Consumer Security Freeze Act of 2006," pursuant to D.C. Code section 1-233(c)(1); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

335. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting a copy of D.C. ACT 16-593, "Consumer Personal Information Security Breach Notification Act of 2006," pursuant to D.C. Code section 1-233(c)(1); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

336. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting a copy of D.C. ACT 16-598, "Expansion of Substance Abuse and Mental Illness Insurance Coverage Amendment Act of 2006," pursuant to D.C. Code section 1-233(c)(1); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

337. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting a copy of D.C. ACT 16-597, "Summary Enclosure of Nuisance Vacant Property Amendment Act of 2006," pursuant to D.C. Code section 1-233(c)(1); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

338. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting a copy of D.C. ACT 16-596, "Definition of Persons With Disabilities A.D.A. Conforming Amendment Act of 2006," pursuant to D.C. Code section 1-233(c)(1); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

339. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting a copy of D.C. ACT 16-595, "Disability Rights Protection Act of 2006," pursuant to D.C. Code section 1-233(c)(1); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

340. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting a copy of D.C. ACT 16-603, "Alcohol and Narcotics-Related Claims Liability Exclusion Repeal Amendment Act of 2006," pursuant to D.C. Code section 1-233(c)(1); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

341. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting a copy of D.C. ACT 16-602, "Mount Vernon Triangle BID Amendment Act of 2006," pursuant to D.C. Code section 1-233(c)(1); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

342. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting a copy of D.C. ACT 16-601, "NoMa Improvement Association Business Improvement District Amendment Act of 2006," pursuant to D.C. Code section 1-233(c)(1); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

343. A letter from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting a copy of D.C. ACT 16-600, "PILOT Authorization Increase and Arthur Capper/