

who have looked at it, who have basically concluded that in 25 years we can have 25 to 30 percent of our transportation fuels fueled by this, by this stream of domestically produced ethanol.

That is just a beginning. That is a second generation. A third generation could include algae. Algae has the capability of producing 50 times as much at least per acre as even the second generation of biofuels.

There is at least one company that has at least one commercial application of that technology now, basically to make diesel fuel out of algae. That is the kind of thing we need to invest in, and that is what we need to start doing.

Last, I want to mention something that is pivotal to driving these technologies, and that is the technologies that I have talked about tonight all operate under an enormous competitive disadvantage. They have to compete with other industries that have a huge subsidy that they don't get, and that's the subsidy that the fossil fuel industry has because they get to put their carbon dioxide, their pollution, in the atmosphere for free.

Now, you think about that. If a coal-fired utility right now can put its garbage, its pollution, its carbon dioxide, its pollutant that is damaging the Earth's atmosphere, that is damaging the atmosphere by the megaton and not pay a dime for it, in unlimited amounts, now, compared to what you do and what we do when we go to our county garbage dump with a pickup full of stuff out of our garden, goodness knows what we have got in the back of our basements, we have to pay money to dump our stuff in a limited space, because there is only a limited space in a garbage dump.

But utilities that put all this pollution in our atmosphere, which has limited carrying capacity for carbon dioxide, get to do it for free for as much as they want. That is a huge subsidy of those industries.

If you are a small company in California building solar cells or ocean-powered technology or wind turbines, or if you are a farmer in Ohio that is going to build cellulosic ethanol and sell it, you don't get that subsidy. It is an unfair subsidy, and it needs to stop.

The U.S. Congress needs to stand up on our hind legs and pass a cap and trade system to cap, to limit, to put a ceiling on the amount of carbon dioxide that can go in our atmosphere from these polluting industries. When we have that cap, when we limit the amount of carbon dioxide that can be put in, two things are going to happen.

We are going to protect our atmosphere for our grandchildren; and, second, we are going to give a boost to these new businesses that are really ready to start producing these products to become commercially available for the clean energy future of this country. That is a big two-fer, a clean, healthy environment and an energetic economy.

All of the things I have talked about tonight will help produce both things. This is a situation where we are going to have the cleanest policy in congressional history and the most robust economy in American history once we develop these new technologies, because we need to be the country that fulfills our destiny as being the inventors of the world.

You know, China is going to need this technology. They are building one dirty coal-fired plant a week, and they are going to need clean energy technology. We should be the one selling it to them.

Here is a great way to restore the imbalance of trade between us and China. One of these companies, the director of Ramgen, this company that may be able to do this clean coal technology, was going to China today, and here is a perfect example of how we can start to fix this terrible trade imbalance we have when we can be the sellers to the world to this clean energy technology.

So, in summary, there is some good news and bad news here tonight. The bad news is we have some fellow Americans whose talent is being destroyed by global warming in Shishmareff, Alaska.

We have a fellow citizen in the world, the Marshall Islands, whose country is being devoured by global warming. That is the bad news.

But the good news is we have a great combination of innovators, inventors, business people that are ready to tackle this problem and create these new technological solutions to this problem. One day we will be driving clean cars. We will have cleaner homes with better efficiency. We are going to lick this problem of global warming at the same time we are going to grow the U.S. economy.

That is a message that this Congress, I am proud to say, is now sending for the first time. We have broken the chains of the oil and gas industry. We have broken the chains of the 19th century, and we have entered a new century of clean energy technology.

I will look forward to more successes so we can help Americans continue to invent. It really is the American destiny to pass the new Apollo energy project and do just what John F. Kennedy did, take this country to a new vision.

30-SOMETHING WORKING GROUP

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

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to address the House once again. I just have come to the floor on behalf of the 30-something Working Group. As you know, and as the Members know, we work daily and weekly on issues that are facing the American people and also to not only inform Members of Congress but also allow the

American people to get a closer glimpse of what is happening here in the Capitol dome and what is not happening here under the dome.

I am proud to report that there were a couple of days, we only worked 3 days last week, or 4, to allow the minority party to have their retreat. During that time, Speaker PELOSI and a number of other chairmen traveled to Iraq and Afghanistan to visit our troops and also our commanders in the field.

I can share with you that the trip will be talked about a little further by the Speaker tomorrow, but it is very, very important because it is the number one thing that is facing the Nation right now, and that is war in Iraq and also in Afghanistan.

Last week we spoke or talked here on the floor about the importance of the President's State of the Union, what was said and what was not said. There was some level of focus on the fact that Katrina was not mentioned not one time during the President's State of the Union, with me being from a hurricane State and representing a district that is constantly hit by hurricanes and natural disasters, just being one season away. Katrina, noted as one of the worst natural disasters of our time and one of the worst responses by this Federal Government, did not receive even a mention from the President of the United States.

I can say that there are several Members here in Congress that continue to be concerned about Katrina and the area of housing and follow-through and preparedness on behalf of our first emergency responders, or that they have the tools to respond, but making sure that FEMA has the proper oversight to be able to carry out the tasks needed in the event of a natural disaster or terrorist attack.

One other thing I think is important to be able to identify is veterans were not pointed out in this State of the Union. Looking at Katrina and the State of the Union, we must come to grips with there are two hard realities. One, if we have a natural disaster or a planned terrorist attack that takes place in this country, is the Federal Government ready to respond, especially on behalf of the executive branch? That question is still left unanswered.

At the same time, when we start looking at issues of veterans, looking at our troops, our men and women coming home, what will be the state of affairs on behalf of those veterans?

I am saying all of this to line up the debate that is going to take place after this week when we pass the continuing resolution that will be on the floor on Wednesday of this week, of what is going to happen the following week after that when the President sends his budget to Congress.

It is important within that budget to embrace some of the values of the American people and even legislation that we have filed in the 110th Congress and also that was filed in the 109th Congress.

□ 2145

I think it is important, also, to outline the fact that Americans continue to disapprove of the direction that the President is heading in dealing with the troop escalation in Iraq. I will be looking forward to hearing more about the Speaker's trip not only tomorrow in her press conference but also when she shares not only with the Democratic Caucus but with this House of Representatives.

And to see after the State of the Union, the President's polling numbers drop even to another low. What I understand from some reports, as low as 30, 28 percent. I know the President is not going to win a popularity contest, but I think it is important to be able to follow the will and desire of the American people and on behalf of the Congress.

Also, I took the opportunity today, Mr. Speaker, before coming to the floor, to take a look at what congressional leaders are saying, not just on the Democratic side of the aisle but even on the Republican side of the aisle, and there is a great debate that is going on. I pull here the Congressional Daily AM, which pretty much any staffer or Member of Congress involved in the process here in Washington, D.C., can pick it up and find out what is going on throughout the whole week; and on a number of the issues that are going to face the President, some of his strongest supporters here in Congress are disagreeing with him at this point. I think this could only boil down to Members of Congress using common sense and standing up on behalf of their constituents, either it be an entire State, if you are a Senator, or Member of Congress that represents a district. I think it is important that we exercise those values.

There will be an up-or-down vote on how the Senate feels about the troop escalation in Iraq; and I believe, reading here, that the Democratic leader, Mr. REID, has said that that vote will be taken and that there will be a number of Republicans that are going to have to take that vote because there are going to be 21 seats to defend in the Senate in the 2008 elections.

Now, saying that, Mr. Speaker and Members, this is not about politics. This is about standing up on behalf of the American people. I think Senator WEBB said it best, Mr. Speaker and Members, that if the President doesn't want to lead us in the right direction, then we need to show him the way, something along those lines. And I think it is important on behalf of the men and women that are in harm's way now and the fact that we have oversight as the legislative body in this three-branch government that we exercise our rights in this.

I want to read just a little bit here, continue from page 1 over to page 2: "Warner's opposition to sending more troops was a heavy blow to the White House and administrative officials that hoped that the former Senate Armed

Services chairman, one-time Navy Secretary would help convince colleagues to support the plan." I think it is important that the Senator and past chairman of that committee stand up on behalf of the American people in what is right, and I commend that on a bipartisan basis.

I think the American people and Members here in the House know exactly where Democrats stand on this issue of making sure that we bring about the kind of oversight but at the same time not just standing by and saying, well, the President is Commander in Chief; and he is making all the decisions.

I see my good friend, Congressman MURPHY, is here.

If this was left up to politics, then we would just stand back and allow the President to continue to do what he is doing, and then we could have Ground Hog Day all over again, as we had in November, Democrats continuing to gain power because of the lack of leadership on behalf of the Republican leadership to stand up to the President of the United States.

But this is not about politics. This is about protecting the American people. This is about making sure that their will and desires are represented here in the people's House, in the U.S. House of Representatives, and I am pretty sure in the Senate.

And I am hoping that Democrats and Republicans will come together. As you know, Mr. Speaker and Members, here in the 30-Something Working Group, we embrace bipartisanship. We encourage bipartisanship. And the good thing about serving in an elected body is when you are right and you are on the side of the people, then you will return back to this body. If you are wrong, I used to play football down at Florida A&M, and we used to say the blind leading the blind and the two shall fall in the ditch.

So I think it is important that we know that the American people are looking for a new direction versus the same direction that the President was taking in the 109th and 108th Congress, the wrong direction as it relates to Iraq, then that is a decision that every Member of Congress has to make.

Mr. MURPHY, I am so happy that you are able to join us right now. I was just talking a little bit about what we finished off on last week. I talked about the fact that the Speaker was in the theater, two theaters, in Iraq and also in Afghanistan. She just returned. She will be having a press conference tomorrow to talk about that a little more. The fact that on Wednesday we will be debating the continuing resolution and will be here on the floor. We will have a follow-up.

The President's budget will be handed down, I think, February 5, and some of the things which were not mentioned in the State of the Union, Hurricane Katrina and the victims of Hurricane Katrina and those Gulf States and also veterans that were left out of the

State of the Union speech, which is going to be the next major wave that this country is going to be facing. How we are going to deal with the influx of new veterans coming into the system? And you pretty much heard the rest when you joined us.

But, welcome, and I yield to you.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Thank you for yielding, Mr. MEEK.

You talked about our commitment, failed commitment, over the past several years of Republican rule in this House to our veterans, and I think of what message we send, Mr. Speaker and Members, to the young men and women who are coming back to this country who have fought for us in a war that they are beginning to understand, I think, has been so badly mismanaged and a war in which this Congress has so miserably overseen for the past 3, 4 years. But I also think about what message it sends to prospective young men and women who may want to join our Armed Forces, because we are so lucky in this country to have an all-volunteer military, and it is a blessing for each and every one of us who lives under this blanket of freedom that our volunteer military provides.

The message that we are sending them today, Mr. MEEK and Mr. Speaker, is that, one, when we send them into battle, we are not going to do it in a way that protects them with the armor and equipment that they need, that we are not prepared to send them into a conflict that we have planned for in advance for success.

But, even given all that, that when they come back to this country, unconscionably, we are not going to make sure that they have the health care that they need, that they won't wait in lines for procedures that they need, that they won't have to pay exorbitant amounts of money out of pocket for the drugs that they need to treat the injuries that they suffered on behalf of this Nation.

So for me, Mr. Speaker and Members, the issue of veterans really ties it all together for us because it talks about the values that we have as a Nation to those who have served. It talks about the misguided policies of this administration and the peril that we have put these young men and women in.

As 30-Somethings that get to stand here and as a very new member of this group, we all have friends and cousins and brothers and sisters who are fighting there, and we hear the stories firsthand from our generation or those just a few years younger than us as they come back, and the stories only get worse. We give credit to those who served, and we should give them the benefit of their service when they return here.

And I think you are very right, Mr. MEEK, to point out that that was a very noticeable absence from the President's speech, to give credit to them not just in words, not just in Veterans Day and Memorial Day ceremonies, but in the acts and in the funding that this

body is charged to provide for those men and women both when they are abroad serving for this country and here at home. And having watched the 30-Somethings do work on this floor, I know what great advocates you have been for those men and women who have served for us, Mr. MEEK.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. MURPHY, I can tell you right now that a number of those issues that we have been talking about over the last couple of 30-Something hours that we have had here on the floor, and we thank the Democratic leadership for allowing us to have this, this is a very pivotal time. And I always share with the Members, even though we come to the capital, Mr. Speaker, from our districts on a weekly basis, work together here on this highly secured complex, the sun rises and sets every day in this beautiful capital city as we look over the capital Mall, and sometimes we take the very freedom that others have provided for granted and the opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to lead.

I think when historians start to look at this time when there are two wars going on, when you have millions of Americans without health care, when you have Gulf States that are there that feel that they have been forgotten, when you have veterans in the heartland of America and urban America still sharing some of the same wounds of a lack of leadership on behalf of the Congress, when you have veterans that are waiting 3 months to see the ophthalmologist, and when you have veterans clinics, VA hospitals and clinics, some clinics that are only open twice a month with a staff that rotates between that region that serves those veterans, people will look back and say, what happened in the 109th Congress or what happened in 110th Congress? Who stood up? Who stood up on behalf of the American people?

I have a great deal of respect for the President and the Commander in Chief, because he is the President and Commander in Chief, period. That is where it is. I am an American. I am not an enlisted man, but I am a Member of Congress, and I feel that the office deserves the respect.

I also believe that the American people deserve, Mr. MURPHY, the same level of respect or greater. And the great thing about our democracy, like I said, we celebrate the very freedom that others have provided us. Some of those paid the ultimate sacrifice for that to happen. Some are sitting in wheelchairs right now. Some are forever mentally wounded or injured by the whole experience in providing the kind of freedom that they provided for us. Some of us take for granted that we have veterans, some that are going into VA hospitals that are sitting there practically all day for mental health counseling. Some are not eligible. Some are still fighting for full benefits. And over the years, I know of some of my constituents all the way from the Korean War who are still fighting for

full benefits to be granted by the Veterans Administration, seeing these individuals in the state that they are in now, under years of a Congress that has not paid attention.

And just a little history lesson here, I will just share with you, the chairman, I believe, in the 109th, the 108th Congress, the Republican chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee went against the Republican leadership saying, I believe this is what we should do on behalf of the veterans. I believe that they deserve it. And he was removed as chairman of that committee.

Those days are gone now. We are in control. We are going to stand up on their behalf.

I am just saying I don't want to point out the fact that the President did not mention anything about veterans, just that it is a bad thing. It is a bad thing. I think he should have mentioned it, especially at a time of war. But I want to make sure those veterans know, Mr. Speaker, that we are not going to leave them behind, that we are not going to let their memory kind of fade off, their contributions fade off into the sunset because the President did not prioritize enough to even put two words together to thank our veterans, or just "veterans," period, just one word. Because he left that out of his speech doesn't necessarily mean that this House of Representatives is going to leave those veterans behind. So that is the reason why we mentioned it. That is the reason why we raise up the Katrina victims and those families that are still living through the nightmare.

And, Mr. MURPHY, we are not even focusing on the whole family experience. I mean, think of those families of veterans that are out there. And the reason why I am mentioning the whole mental piece is because, when I traveled to Iraq, I can tell you I used to be a State trooper. I have seen some things in my 5 years being with the Florida Highway Patrol. I am pretty sure in one tour in Iraq, a young man or young woman or a middle-aged gentleman or what have you, when you see that kind of activity, it is going to affect you. You are going to need the kind of the assistance that this country should provide because you volunteered, taking your words, to fight on behalf of this country. So it is very, very important.

And those families that are having to live with those family members that are trying to wrestle with those issues, some of those issues don't make the local news, but they live it. Children are subjected to it, and many of our veterans need counseling when they come back.

□ 2200

And that is one of the hidden issues that is in this whole issue as we start talking about not leaving our veterans behind. We have plans to do that. We started this discussion just talking about the President's budget, about making sure that this is reflected in the President's budget.

Before I yield back to you in like 30 seconds, the President is going to go to Illinois tomorrow, and he is going to be in New York after that, visiting, pushing his economic plan. I can tell you right now, I wish I had an envelope, but I remember Johnnie Carson used to hold an envelope to his head and say a word, and I would say make tax breaks permanent for the superwealthy.

You know, I am pretty sure that is somewhere in that envelope. Even though we are going to go around, we are going to go to Caterpillar in Illinois and talk about trade and how the economy works, and then he is going to go over to New York and talk a little bit about the economy and how strong, this, that and the other. But in the end game, it is going to be about protecting the very individuals that have been rewarded and protected at a time of war, to make it permanent, so that the middle class will not have the benefits that they need.

So we highlight these things as a forecast of saying that there is some room for the American people, everyday Joe and Sue, and those individuals that are punching in and punching out every day, for those individuals that are trying to make it to the next level that there is something there to assist them.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, Mr. MEEK was right on. The new class that was sent here to Washington was sent here to make sure that this place is returned to that hard-working family that you are talking about.

You know, we know the statistics, the terrible statistics of the number of military families that are on food stamps, the number of military families, ex-military families that have to come to the government for some assistance just to get by every day. I mean, these are amongst the legions of families across this country that are scraping to get by every day.

We have a growing economy. You know the story, Mr. MEEK. We have a growing economy. Production is up. GDP is up. And wages are flat. Wages for regular, ordinary Americans are going nowhere while wages for CEOs and the folks at the very top of that economic scale are doing very well.

And none of us begrudge folks that have done well in business making a dollar. I mean, that is the genius of our American economy. But what it does is it leaves all of those people behind while a very few at the top are well off.

Here is where we come in, I think. I think we come in in that our job, not necessarily to completely level that playing field, but our job certainly is not to exacerbate the differences that already exist. And when President Bush goes to Illinois, if he spends a little time moving away from the motorcade and the Secret Service lines, he will find a society there in which there are deep divisions between those folks in the middle that are just trying to cling on to that middle class, and the folks that are doing very well.

Our job, you know frankly, is to not make that situation worse. And the tax breaks that this previous Congress gave away to a lot of those oil companies, to the deals that they cut with the drug companies to give them record profits off this health care system, have left a lot of people behind, have left millions of hardworking Americans struggling, producing more, working harder than ever, and not seeing a return for their dollar.

You know the costs of this war. I have heard you talk about it on this floor. But we are spending \$8 billion a month in Iraq right now. And we need to start having a conversation about how we spend that money here in the United States of America, and how we use that money to retrain workers that have been laid off due to the globalization of our economy.

We need to talk about how to spend that money to get kids an education that they deserve, to get them out of school in 4 years, rather than what is all too often happening, that it takes 6, 8, 10 years for some students to get degrees. That is where we need to be investing.

That is the right thing for our economy. That is the right thing for our kids. And ultimately it is the right thing for our men and women that are fighting overseas. So I appreciate the focus that we are going to hopefully be able to add to the President's visit, to make sure that when he goes out there into the world that he sees all of America, that he does not just see the folks that have been the beneficiaries of the largesse of government in this Congress for all too long, the oil companies, the drug companies, the Fortune 500s, that he sees the rest of the folks that are struggling.

Now, he is going to get an opportunity, as you know, Mr. Speaker and Members, to do right by those folks, because hopefully we are going to get to his desk an increase in the minimum wage, we are going to get to his desk a decrease in the student loan rate. We are going to put on his desk for his signature a repeal of those massive tax breaks to the oil companies.

He is going to have a choice then, and I hope he listens to what happened on election day. I hope he listens to the legions of folks who sent us here, some of us for the first time and others back for another tour of duty in this Chamber. I hope that he listens to the folks that are asking this government to start sticking up for people that have had very little voice, very little voice except for some people standing here late at night trying to shed light on what has been really happening in this country, Mr. MEEK.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. MURPHY, that is an outstanding segue to even talk about what has passed this floor already. You mentioned many of those measures. Eighty percent of the American people, overwhelmingly, Mr. Speaker, feel that the first 100 hours we are here in the U.S. House of Representa-

tives have been very fruitful and have put forth a great surge of support and hope on behalf of everyday working Americans.

Speaking of the minimum wage, I understand that it is up for consideration in the Senate next week, hopefully next Tuesday. I know there are some discussions an \$8 billion possible cost for tax breaks for businesses within that. I know that there will be some sort of discussion between the finance Chair in the Senate and Mr. RANGEL over here in the House, Mr. Speaker, from Ways and Means.

We are going to continue to have hearings on the economy. We are going to talk about globalization tomorrow in the committee, I believe at 10 a.m., over in the Longworth Building. We are going to the effects of it, how does it deal with the American worker, how do we benefit here. And that is going to be a great discussion for us to continue to have, especially with the President moving around and speaking to different groups about trade.

I think it is also important as we start to look at this issue of the minimum wage that we keep at the forefront. So I want to make sure that the Members stay engaged; I want to make sure that the American people stay engaged and informed on what is happening.

I think another issue that is coming up and I mentioned it a little earlier, on Wednesday, we are going to be dealing with the continuing resolution. I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, some of the things that were mentioned in the State of the Union, it is interesting what we have already incorporated into the House.

Democrats led the way in making sure that we adopt pay-as-we-go rules. Democrats led the way by saying that there will be no earmarks in this continuing resolution that will come to the floor on Wednesday. And we talk about earmarks. And we are bringing about earmark reform.

But earmarks in some areas, especially when you look at the bad situation that the country is in right now, this does not go away. I mean, we are continuing to hold this chart up. I just want to make sure that the American people and Members understand that we had very little to do with the situation of the \$1.05 trillion that has been borrowed from foreign nations, and more than has been borrowed over 224 years with 42 Presidents and a number of Congresses in between, of \$1.01 trillion.

We did not just get there. We got there by giving unaffordable tax breaks that we could not afford to the super-wealthy, giving away tax breaks to individuals who did not ask for it. So that just does not go away.

There is a lot of work between making sure that we are able to do what this Democratic Congress has done in balancing the budget and taking us into surpluses versus what the Republican Congress has done in taking us backwards.

Mr. Speaker and Mr. MURPHY, we are joined by my good friend from Ohio (Mr. RYAN). Mr. RYAN, we have been talking about a number of issues surrounding not only the Speaker's visit to Iraq and Afghanistan with some other Democratic leaders and also chairmen, but also talking about the issue of the veterans not being mentioned in the State of the Union, nor the Gulf States. But we said we are not going to leave them behind. So we gave an update on the minimum wage. We are happy to hear from you, sir.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I had an interesting weekend, and I am glad to be with you and our new friend from Connecticut. I had a very interesting weekend because everyone in Niles, Ohio, in the Mahoney Valley, was talking about the first 100 hours. So I found it very interesting that so many people were actually paying attention to what was going on here.

I think a lot of it had to do with Speaker PELOSI and the first woman Speaker being here. But there was a genuine excitement that things had changed in Washington, D.C. and I am sure you felt it in Miami. I know you were there. I talked to you last night. You were there. And I am sure they felt it up in New England.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. You gave a couple of speeches over the weekend.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I did, yeah. I actually spoke at the Akron Press Club, which I felt was very important. And then I spoke at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel grade school, my old Catholic grade school. And we had a little alumni affair there.

It was interesting, because there were so many people talking about what had happened down here, the historic nature of the changes. And when you look and you think about all of the political promises that we have probably all heard in our careers at one point or another about, we are going to do this, we are going to do that, and you hear people say that.

But for Speaker PELOSI and the majority here to lead and run campaigns all over the country and make those assertions and make these promises and then to come within the first 100 legislative hours and actually deliver on these issues is impressive. And I think it tries to restore some of that credibility that has been lost, I think, over the past couple of years.

So we immediately stabilized a lot of families. I mean, it is not implemented yet, but our goal: minimum wage, cut student loan interest rates in half and help negotiate down the cost of prescription drugs. And then open up two new sectors of the economy by repealing the corporate welfare and investing that in alternative energy sources, which will lead to more research from the private sector, investment by the private sector, and try to open up this new alternative energy sector of our economy, and then the stem cell research bill, which will allow us in the health care industry to open up and do

further research to move the economy forward.

So we are trying to do some compassionate stuff, some progressive stuff, but at the same time stabilize. It has been interesting. It has been fun to go back home. Mr. MEEK, as you remember the last couple of years, you would have to go back home, and you are talking to your constituents, and there is not a whole lot to say.

You know, we were often talking about what we were trying to prevent from happening, or motions to recommit or amendments we offered for PAYGO in all of those committees and Charlie Stenholm and Dennis Moore who offered all of those provisions to try to balance the budget by implementing PAYGO. Well, we implemented PAYGO from the House side.

I think it is very important that we were able to actually go out and do that. So I am excited about what is happening here.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I would just say, it is funny because there was kind of a low bar set. And I at some levels am pleased that I was not in the same shoes that Mr. RYAN and Mr. MEEK were, that I did not have to go back to my constituency for the last several years and answer for what has happened here, because the answer is, not much.

You know, folks out there were struggling with these energy prices just going through the roof. Health care was becoming harder and harder to find, good health care at least. People were crying out for work on immigration. People were trying to get help bringing up their wages to a liveable wage, and they were not hearing anything. I mean, it was deafening silence from down here.

So I do not have as much comparative experience as you, Mr. RYAN and Mr. MEEK, do. But walking around the district in Connecticut for the past several weekends it has been euphoric. And I used that word the last time I was down here with you.

It is really this sort of sense that, oh, my gosh, our government is working again. Our government is back to work again; and it used to be that that is what happened. It used to be that there would be a problem, you would go to your legislator, they would come down here and they would do something about it.

And people have come to expect inertia. That is what sort of was just the run of the mill down here in Washington, that you have a problem and then you have to wait about 5, 10 years, in order to get something to happen.

I felt the same thing, Mr. RYAN, that people you know, it is too bad frankly that people have come to be surprised by the fact that there could be immediate action. Because that is what they should get from their government, and they are getting it now.

□ 2215

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. And it is exciting because it is just starting, Mr. MURPHY. It is just starting.

And when you meet with the Speaker and you see the intensity in her eyes and the focus about this was really just the beginning and we are not here to say, well, we did our first hundred hours and we are done. We are going to chalk it up and we are done. This is about continuing to move forward. We have got to reauthorize No Child Left Behind.

And when you talk to Chairman MILLER, who is the Chair of that committee, you see the look in his eyes about an opportunity to change the face of education in this country, to finally put some resources back behind No Child Left Behind to where it actually will work.

And when you look and you see, and I know, you know, Senator KENNEDY is talking about putting money in there to help school districts figure out how they can possibly extend the school day and extend the school year so that we can make sure that our kids are on par with kids from Korea and some of these other countries where they go an extra couple, 3 weeks a year more than us, which equals another year or two over the course of a 12-year education cycle. These are the kind of things that we want to implement here.

And if it wasn't for the, and we got into this, too, a lot back home. You know, a lot of people had an almost unrealistic expectation that we came in, we can come in now, Mr. MURPHY, and Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ and wave a magic wand and all of a sudden there is a lot of money here. Well, we have got a lot of making up to do because of the irresponsible fiscal inadequacies and inability of the Republicans to actually balance the budget. So we have got to go up and clean that mess up. We have got to figure out how to extract ourselves from this morass we are in in Iraq and then finally make the investments that we want to make.

So we have got a lot going on here, Mr. MEEK, and we are very excited about the proposition that we have in the future. When you look at the opportunities that we really have in this country, I think they are great. But it is about focusing on the human capital in the United States of America, Mr. MURPHY, and making sure that we make the kind of investments into the health care, education in the United States and the stem cells and the alternative energy are going to put us on a strong path to move forward.

And I would be happy to yield to my friend from Connecticut.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. I will just key off of an important word there and that is investments. You know, how you balance the budget into the future is to make sure that you are doing the right things now to make sure that our economy is humming 10 years and 20 years from now. So when you talk about this investing in renewable and alternative energy sources, I mean, that is going to be our export.

That is going to be what America can renew its economy around, is our ability

to be the producer of all these new energy technologies.

When you talk about investing in education, making sure that kids are educated so that America, which right now grows as an economy because we have the best-trained, best-educated work force in the country, continues to be that beacon of economic development due to our work force. Those are the type of investments that have been long cast aside but now we are going to start making again so that we make sure that you know when we are long gone from here that we have left an economy and we have left a budget that makes sense.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Will the gentleman yield?

It was interesting, because one of our friends from the other side gave a 5-minute speech about the values of free trade. I think pretty much everything he said I agree with, and I voted against almost probably every trade agreement that has come before this Congress since I have been here. And I agreed with everything he said. We are trading. It creates value. It invests in our countries. We all understand all that.

The problem is that we are not making the investments into the United States that will help us grow new sectors of the economy that will replenish the jobs that we may be losing.

Now, people in Youngstown, Ohio, obviously, don't like to lose their jobs. But if there was a job there that they could get trained and go into and make the same kind of living and have the same stability for their family and provide for education and health care for their own family, they would be fine with it. So you can't have free trade and then not invest in the stem cell research. You can't have free trade and then not invest in the alternative energy research to help stimulate the economy and create new sectors that will ultimately yield employment for our folks in our communities.

Be happy to yield to Madam Chair of the Legislative Appropriations Subcommittee.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Thank you to my good friend from Youngstown, Ohio.

You know, your comments sort of bring to mind that our good friends on the other side of the aisle want to have their cake and eat it, too. They were the ones responsible for putting us in this situation where we have to adopt a continuing resolution that is essentially continuation funding that in order to put a finger in the dike and make sure that things don't get any worse and that we can begin the process for the 2008 budget and getting our fiscal house in order. It was them that only were able to pass two out of all of the spending bills that were in their hopper. It was them that left us this mess.

And now, you know, you will see over the next couple of days, Mr. MURPHY, our good friends on the other side of

the aisle actually stand up and criticize their own budget, which is what the CR is. They will try to put our colleagues on our side of the aisle who were just elected, who, you know, campaigned against fiscal irresponsibility in a box and make it seem like somehow this continuing resolution is what we crafted when we are in a situation where it is shut down the government or pass the simplest, most effective way of getting us across the finish line so that we can move on and really address the concerns that we talked about during our 30-Something hours in the 109th Congress, which was that we are in the worst financial shape that we have been in in decades, that we have a foreign debt that is more combined than any of the 42 previous presidents combined.

And yet they will try to have their cake and eat it, too, criticize us on their budget that we are going to have to continue but, at the same time, not claim responsibility for it. It is really going to be shocking.

So it is something that I think it is important that we talk about and that we lay out there. Because, you know, this process, the appropriations process is one of the most inside baseball, nitty-gritty, intricate things that we do, and there are Members that have been here for years, and I am just, as a new member of the Appropriations Committee, you know, even though I am chairing a subcommittee, I still have a significant learning curve. So explaining it to the people that we represent, while they are watching it all unfold on TV, is really somewhat difficult. So it is critical that people understand that.

I actually talked to some of our colleagues on the floor tonight when we were talking about the CR and, you know, all lamenting that we are not able to craft a bill that we would all love to support with the increases that the veterans deserve and the increases that are deserving in education, that are critical in terms of education and health care and health and human services and housing. I mean, those are all programs that Democrats have campaigned on and fought for. But because we have colleagues that spent like drunken sailors, that had no regard for the fiscal house that we are now charged with putting back in order, we find ourselves having to cinch the belt as tight as possible just so that we can get through and start making things right.

I think each of our colleagues, particularly the freshmen like you, Mr. MURPHY, are going to have an important task of going back to your constituents and explaining that we have got to be responsible here first. Give us an opportunity to get through the mess that we were left and then we can really show you what we can do.

Be happy to yield.

Mr. MURPHY. Just for brief comments, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, I think you are right. I think the Amer-

ican people, this process may be mystifying to them at some level, but they didn't send us here to just bring back the world. They understood that things needed to be put in order. They understood that there were going to have to be some difficult decisions made here; and, quite frankly, I think they realized that a lot of the decisions that were being made here over the past 12 years, in particular over the last few years, unfortunately, when this government decided to give, they were giving to the wrong people. And, in fact, they found the means to give out some favors, to give out some money. They just happened to be giving it to the people that didn't need anything more.

So we can start making those different decisions. But, before we do that, it is going to take a little while to sweep up the shop room floor. And that is what we are doing now.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Will the gentleman yield?

What I think is an important point here is that we could have come in and not passed the pay as you go. We could have done the irresponsible thing. And everyone says, well, the Democrats are controlled by all these interest groups. Well, we could have been irresponsible and said this interest group is going to get this and this one is going to get that, and we will borrow the money from China, as Mr. MEEK had the chart up, and we would pay everybody back.

I am telling you, Madam Speaker, she is great. We are doing the right thing. We could have done the easy thing, and we could have paid everybody back and made increases that were irresponsible because we would have continued down the charts where we are borrowing the money from China, paying the interest. They are taking that money, investing it back in their economy, buying submarines and everything else. But we did the right thing. So we have got to take the hit now, but the long-term economic interest of the country is going to be much better off.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. What we talked about night after night here and what our colleagues and our leadership have all talked about, we have all been singing off the same song sheet, that we have to make sure that we handle the Federal budget just like folks struggle in America to handle their household budget every single day, not to spend more than you take in.

There are families all across America, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. MEEK, Mr. RYAN, that have to make really difficult decisions. Would they like to go and buy a new wardrobe for their children? Would they like to get the car completely overhauled? Definitely important and certainly would improve their quality of life, but they can't make those decisions if the money is not coming in in order to cover those expenses.

So at a certain point, if you don't stop the bleeding, if you don't make those fiscally difficult decisions, then it just gets worse.

We could have been, you know, we could have played right into their hands, which is, I am sure, what they expected us to do, which was what they always accused us of being tax-and-spend liberals and that we were going to just give away the store and that we were going to satisfy every interest group that is in the column of supporters that we have.

But, instead, what we did is we stuck to our principles. We stuck to what we talked about was important to the American people, not spending more than you take in and particularly not caving to what would be politically expedient, which was the tax cuts, as you referred to, Mr. MURPHY, for people who don't need them.

Because what they like to conveniently leave out is that they only count, you know, there are only certain things that they count in the ledger. They only count the things in the ledger that are actually things you can put down as I spent this much money on this particular program. But they fail to actually account for the tax cuts that pull money out off the ledger, which makes it so that there is not that revenue available to fund the needs, and that adds to the deficit itself.

They also don't include Social Security and Medicare when it comes to the whole appropriation process. All of that is off budget. They don't like to count the supplemental bills that they pass. All of that is off budget.

So it is just, you know, we are going to get back to being up front and honest with the American people in our budgeting process, and we are going to get our fiscal house in order.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. And if we get an opportunity as we go through the oversight of the war, oversight of FEMA contracts, there are millions and millions and millions, if not billions, of dollars that have been wasted through the war, the contracting, the Halliburtons. You know, story after story we hear off the record, that is all going to come out through the hearings. You know, if Halliburton has a truck and the tire goes out, they just get rid of the truck and they buy a whole new one. Well, that is at the taxpayers' expense. And there are stories after stories after stories of these kinds of things happening.

So part of what we are doing is we are making the tough decisions today, the responsible decisions today, get into the oversight, find out where the waste is; and I really hope that we continue to push Mr. TANNER and Mr. CARDOZA's bill that says we audit the whole government, because this government is clearly incapable of functioning in the 21st century economy.

If we are going to have the resources that we need, Mr. MEEK, to invest in education, to invest in the health care, to invest into those things that are important, that are going to yield benefits, business incubators and research and development and stem cells like we

did with the corporate welfare to repeal some of that, that was easier to do than getting to the nuts and bolts execution of government, but it is going to be a lot of hard work over the next few years to figure out where we are wasting money, what programs aren't working.

Now we may have and be in agreement that the principle of a program is what we all agree on, end poverty, provide health care for kids, whatever the case may be. But the actual execution of that program may not be yielding the kind of results that we want or at the level we want.

There is still too much poverty. There are still too many kids out there that don't have health care. There are still too many kids that qualify for S-CHIP that aren't signed up for it. So, you know, over the course of the next year or two, as we go through the oversight hearings, we are going to be able to determine what programs work, which don't and which ones we need to fix. That is difficult to do.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. We are going to be the Congress.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. We are going to be the Congress. That is right. We are going to be the Congress.

□ 2230

And, you know, it is not government is the problem, government is wrong, government is your enemy; it is going to be, wait a minute. This is something that is supposed to work and we are going to make it work.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. I see Mr. MEEK is ready to jump in here. But we are going to be the Congress and exercise our role, our accountability, our oversight, and be the legislative branch instead of the administration lap dog. Because that is what this body was for the last 6 years certainly. When President Clinton was in office, it was the opposite. It was, let's see what we can do to torture the administration and make it impossible for them to get what they wanted done and wanted to accomplish.

Then, of course, President Bush comes into office and it is like they all lost their hands. They lost their hands, they checked their brains at the Chamber door, and it was whatever this administration wanted.

And there is a new leadership in this institution and 32 new Members, all of whom came here to step up to the plate and ask the difficult questions and exercise this body's constitutional role, constitutional authority granted to us by the Founding Fathers, which hopefully at some point our colleagues on the other side of the aisle will remember as well.

I would be happy to yield to the gentleman.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, I think it is important, and Mr. MURPHY and Mr. RYAN, that everybody understand the reason we are here. We are going to play the legislative role. We talked

about the lights being turned on in some of these committee rooms. And I was sitting here kind of looking through a few things, and I grabbed this February 5 edition of Time magazine, and it talked about, Madam Speaker, this upcoming Time I just received it in the mail, only 648 days until the election, why so many candidates are jumping in so early. And it talks about this being the most open Presidential race since 1928.

There is some interesting comments in here and obviously editorials, but I think that you see so many people getting involved because they see a vacuum here, a vacuum of the fact that things are not happening the way that it should happen. And Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ alluded to the fact that, being lap dogs, we sometimes say here on the 30-something Working Group rubber-stamp Congress, what have you, of the 109th Congress. We don't want to be that.

I ran into one of my Republican colleagues in the tunnel walking from the Cannon building over to the House today for a vote and I asked how is a certain piece of legislation. And she responded, well, you know, I have a post office bill. I am not going to belittle, I have done a post office bill before; it is good to identify outstanding Americans. But I just want to make sure that people understand, even here we have what we call suspension bills. Those are bills that we all agree on but it has to be passed by the Congress, Madam Speaker.

But what is happening now that has not been happening, I go back to, I alluded to this earlier, reading is fundamental. We know that some people here in Washington, D.C. don't bother to read newspapers, things of that nature; but we will leave that for another day. Congress Daily A.M., National Journal. And I just want to read what is going to happen tomorrow; today is Monday, what is going to happen on Tuesday. I can tell you, usually this would not be printed in this Congressional Daily Weekly because committees didn't meet. The Foreign Affairs Committee only had one hearing on Iraq in the 109th Congress; thus far, Mr. LANTOS has had five hearings, and we are not even past the first month of the new Congress. This is still January.

Let's see what is happening tomorrow. Armed Services Committee is going to have a hearing on Afghanistan security and stability. Armed Services is going to also have a subcommittee hearing on military personnel. The Budget Committee will meet on the economic outlook of the country in full committee hearing. Education and Labor on generic discrimination of workers. That is happening. That is a subcommittee hearing that is taking place. Energy and Commerce will also have a hearing on the National Laboratory Security, Oversight and Investigation Subcommittee. Oversight Government Affairs and Reform Committee is going to have a climate change politics

hearing; that is a full committee hearing. Science and Technology, Fuels, Infrastructure, Research and Development. That is a subcommittee on Energy. Transportation and Infrastructure, Coast Guard deepwater system, going to have a subcommittee. That is the Coast Guard and Maritime Subcommittee hearing that will take place. Transportation Infrastructure, Railroads, Pipelines, Hazardous Materials, that is a subcommittee hearing that is going to take place. Ways and Means, trade and globalization at 10:00 tomorrow, full committee hearing. Ways and Means once again, subcommittee will be meeting.

I just wanted to point that out, Madam Speaker. If we were in the 109th Congress and the 108th Congress, we wouldn't even be here right now, Monday. We wouldn't even be here on a Monday. People are paying our salary to legislate and to bring about the kind of oversight.

I just want to point that out, because Mr. RYAN spoke a little earlier of the fact that we are actually doing, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, what we told the American people we would do, Mr. MURPHY, and that is lead. Six in 2006. Oh, it is a big dog and pony. It is not. We are giving the American people exactly what we told them we would do, which is accountability. And that is a paradigm shift for politicians here in Washington, D.C. I yield to Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Thank you, and it is. The other day I walked into the Chamber, Mr. MURPHY, from that end of the room, and I noticed that there is a really huge, huge dictionary on the Republican's side of the Chamber which, quite honestly, it doesn't appear has gotten that much use on their side of the aisle, because words like accountability and oversight and checks and balances, and the things that have been with us through American history, maybe they tore the pages out that had those definitions or maybe they just chose to ignore them or just skipped over those pages when they were using it because, obviously we have a dictionary on the floor for a reason, but now, Mr. MEEK, just in great detail went over the number of different hearings that we will be engaging in to exercise the oversight and the accountability that the American people badly are seeking that has just been nonexistent.

And, Mr. MEEK, I want to touch just quickly on one particular bit of oversight that we are going to be engaging in on Wednesday. I have the privilege of sitting on the House Judiciary Committee, and we will be holding our first hearing of the 110th Congress on Presidential signing statements. Now, that is something that we really haven't had a chance to talk about too much on the floor during 30-something, but I would like to explore it down the road a little bit, especially after we hold this hearing.

Most of the American people, I think, don't realize that what this President

has done, and other Presidents, many Presidents have exercised this option, the constitutionality of which I think is somewhat troubling. But this President has used Presidential signing statements more than any other Presidents combined. He has added more than 700 signing statements to legislation that we have adopted in both Houses of Congress. And what he does is he adds a note essentially to the bottom of the bill or to the margin of the bill next to a section that he doesn't agree with and he says: "I either reserve the right to not enforce this section or to interpret this section in this way." I mean, literally taking authority for the executive branch that I believe the Founding Fathers didn't envision. I mean, he did that with the PATRIOT Act, he did that with a number of significant pieces of legislation, Mr. MEEK, and it is really, really troubling.

The executive branch in the Constitution does not have the right to interpret legislation. That is not their job. It is the Judiciary's responsibility to interpret legislation; it is the administration's job to execute what is laid before them by the Congress. Now, he certainly has the right to veto legislation that he doesn't agree with, but he doesn't have a line item veto; he doesn't have a line item veto in the budget, and he can't X out a portion of a bill that he doesn't like. And we are going to be holding a hearing on Wednesday, and we will have the Department of Justice representatives there to question very carefully where they think they get this legislative authority, and reassert Congress's role in oversight in this one area and in many others, as you detailed.

I guess we are in the wrapping-it-up stage, because that is when the Web site chart comes out. I will be happy to yield to our good friend and freshman colleague, the gentleman from Connecticut.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Thank you, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. And the guilt is deep inside me that I am stealing Mr. RYAN's thunder for twice in a row here.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. If the gentleman would yield, life is about letting go.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Moving on.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. You have got to move on. And you are the guy.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. I am glad I can help you with that cathartic experience.

WWW.speaker.gov/30something is where you can find information on a lot of things we have talked about here. I am here to work, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ and I know there are about 40 other first termers who are here to do the same thing.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Actually, not to be the teacher exercising oversight over the freshman, but probably give out our e-mail address, too, so people know where they can contact us.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. The e-mail address is 30SomethingDems@

mail.house.gov. So I like nothing more than to be the student in this relationship, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. I am with you and the 40-something new Members of Congress.

Madam Speaker, it was an honor to come before the House once again. I want to thank the Democratic leadership for allowing us to have the hour, and we yield back the balance of our time.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. CAPPS). Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 41 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

□ 2302

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mrs. CAPPS) at 11 o'clock and 2 minutes p.m.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. EDWARDS (at the request of Mr. HOYER) for today on account of medical reasons.

Mr. GUTIERREZ (at the request of Mr. HOYER) for today on account of district business.

Mr. McDERMOTT (at the request of Mr. HOYER) for today and the balance of the week on account of a death in the family.

Mr. CULBERSON (at the request of Mr. BOEHNER) for today on account of official business.

Mr. BACHUS (at the request of Mr. BOEHNER) for today on account of illness in the family.

Mr. HASTERT (at the request of Mr. BOEHNER) for today and the balance of the week.

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 Ms. WOOLSEY) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Ms. WOOLSEY, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. PALLONE, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. CUMMINGS, for 5 minutes, today.

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

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

Mr. DEFAZIO, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. NORTON, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. WATERS, for 5 minutes, today.

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

Mr. DREIER, for 5 minutes, today, January 30 and 31.

Mr. POE, for 5 minutes, January 30 and 31.

Ms. FOXX, for 5 minutes, today, January 30 and 31.

Mr. ROHRABACHER, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. FOSSELLA, for 5 minutes, today.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

Mrs. Haas, Clerk of the House, reported and found truly enrolled a bill of the House of the following title, which was thereupon signed by the Speaker:

H.R. 188. An act to provide a new effective date for the applicability of certain provisions of law to Public Law 105-331.

BILL PRESENTED TO THE PRESIDENT

Karen L. Haas, Clerk of the House reports that on January 25, 2007, she presented to the President of the United States, for his approval, the following bill.

H.R. 475. To revise the composition of the House of Representatives Page Board to equalize the number of members representing the majority and minority parties and to include a member representing the parents of pages and a member representing former pages, and for other purposes.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Madam Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 3 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Tuesday, January 30, 2007, at 10:30 a.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:

464. A letter from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; Designation of Areas for Air Quality Planning Purposes; Arizona; Miami Sulfur Dioxide State Implementation Plan and Request for Redesignation to Attainment; Correction of Boundary of Miami Sulfur Dioxide Nonattainment Area [EPA-R09-OAR-2006-0580; FRL-8270-3] received January 19, 2007, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

465. A letter from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Approval and Promulgation of Implementation Plans; Texas; El Paso County Carbon Monoxide Redesignation to Attainment, and Approval of Maintenance Plan