

call, Iraq recession. Yet, they're being asked to hand over \$40,000, most of which goes to the foreign nations that are lending us the money to keep the occupation going. And that \$40,000, Madam Speaker, will get much bigger if the occupation goes on for another few years, for 100 years as some cheerleaders for the occupation are discussing.

What have we gotten for our occupation money? General Petraeus told us last week that the security situation in Iraq has gotten much better. But 19 of our incredibly brave soldiers died last week. And our top military leaders continue to warn us that our obsession with Iraq is breaking our military and that we may wake up one day to find that we can't meet a real threat to our national security.

Next month, the IRS will mail out economic stimulus checks. I'm glad that that relief is on the way. But the best economic stimulus plan would be to end the occupation of Iraq. The American people agree. A recent New York Times/CBS poll found that 89 percent of the American people believe that the cost of the occupation has contributed to our economic problems.

Last month, the Progressive Caucus put forth an alternative budget that showed that we can actually achieve an end to the occupation in Iraq and reorder our spending priorities. The budget is truly remarkable. We were able to fully fund the education that our children deserved and that our Nation must have to remain competitive in the global economy.

We were able to invest in green jobs that could employ millions of our citizens and put our Nation on the path to the energy independence we must have to fuel our economy and ensure our national security. And we were able to provide health care coverage to every American who lacks it, not only fulfilling our promise to care for each other, but making our country stronger and more competitive in the process.

But instead of revving up these engines of economic growth and social justice, the administration will soon send to Congress yet another request for emergency Iraq funding. This time around, the request will be for \$108 billion.

Madam Speaker, I agree that we must spend money on Iraq but not the way the administration wants to spend it. It wants an open-ended occupation. Instead, we must fully fund the safe, responsible redeployment of our troops and military contractors out of Iraq.

And we must help, not do it all, but we must help to reconstruct Iraq. We've all heard of the so-called Pottery Barn rule: If you break it, you own it. We need to expand that saying: If you break it, you have a moral obligation to help rebuild it.

It's time for the madness to end, Madam Speaker. It's time to bring our troops home, get our fiscal house in order, give the Iraqi people back their sovereignty and help them rebuild their country and their lives.

## AMERICA'S DOMESTIC OIL SUPPLY CANNOT MEET ITS DEMAND

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE. Madam Speaker, the price of gasoline goes up every day, and Congress is partially to blame. The price of crude oil is increasing because demand is increasing. Our domestic energy supply cannot meet that demand. The global demand for oil is also rising with the industrialization of China. And increased demand for oil leads to increased prices for many products, including products made out of plastic.

The problem is that Congress has made it difficult for our supply to meet that demand. There is a solution to the problem. The solution is to increase our supply by exploring domestic energy sources and drilling in ANWR.

Like it or not, crude oil is still the energy base of our Nation. Unlike every other country on the planet, the United States does not take advantage of its own natural resources. When Congress abolished tax credits for domestic exploration and production, Congress effectively abolished reasonable oil prices and then raised taxes on oil companies to \$18 billion, taxes that are eventually passed on to us, the consumer. Thus, higher prices at the pump.

And this Congress decided to even award Venezuelan Dictator Chavez and his nationalized oil company with a large tax break, a tax break they did not give to American oil companies.

It's common knowledge that, if you tax something, you're going to get less of it. If you tax oil, you get less of it. Less of what? Less production and less crude oil. Less oil on the market equals higher prices at the pump. And if we look at the world crude oil reserves, 80 percent of the world crude oil is controlled by foreign nationalized oil companies. We call them OPEC. Six percent is controlled by Russian companies, and only six percent of the world oil reserves is controlled by American-owned oil companies. You know, those American-owned oil companies that are capitalistic, that have stockholders, we call them Americans. And those companies are making about 8 percent, 8½ profit.

So the world is controlled by OPEC, not American oil companies. We may be the world power, but the United States does not control the world oil market.

The only control we have is over our domestic energy supply, which we don't take advantage of because of the U.S. restrictions on offshore drilling and exploration. We have succumbed to the environmental fear myth that we cannot drill safely offshore. Other nations, including Britain, Norway, Holland, and Denmark, take full advantage of their natural resources and even permit offshore drilling in the North Sea, that area of the world where offshore drilling is the most dif-

ficult, and they do it without environmental damage.

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We can increase our energy supply and reduce the price of gasoline at the pump by also allowing drilling in ANWR.

On top of the heightened demand for crude oil, there is a heightened demand for new refineries. Madam Speaker, I represent 21 percent of the Nation's refineries in southeast Texas, but we don't have any new ones. The last oil refinery was built 32 years ago. Our oil refineries have been punished by bureaucracy and unnecessary Federal regulations. Too many unnecessary Federal regulations, too many government controls, too many high taxes, the second highest corporate income tax in the world, and what happens? They leave town, they go somewhere else. We must lift these burdens and encourage refinery development. Our gasoline prices will eventually drop as soon as we build new refineries and we drill offshore and we drill in ANWR.

The high prices of gasoline have thrown the airline industry into chaos. Twenty-two percent of the Nation's jet fuel is made in my district. But one example, Madam Speaker, it costs an airline company \$44 a minute to allow a plane to idle on the runway. Thus, every plane that takes off that's been sitting there about 30 minutes costs \$1,500 in additional oil prices.

The high gas prices even affect the 170,000 independently owned gas stations in the country. They no longer make a profit on selling fuel. They hope to make one cent on every gallon, so they are thrilled if they make that penny. They make money by selling lottery tickets, donuts and beer, that's how they make their profit.

It's time for us in Congress to encourage more domestic oil production, lift the restrictions to offshore drilling, and take care of ourselves. We must stop relying on unstable, volatile regions in the world and pompous dictators who hold Americans hostage with their crude oil.

We have a problem, but we can solve it. Otherwise, we'll be parking our vehicles on the side of the road, riding bicycles to work, then blissfully wondering where all the crude oil went.

And that's just the way it is.

## THE STATE OF OUR ECONOMY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. SCOTT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I appreciate this opportunity to address the House for a few moments.

I think it's very appropriate for us to pause for a moment here and just reflect on where we are as a Nation and as a people when it comes to our economy and our financial House. This April 15, it's Tax Day. It's important

that this House of Representatives be mindful of the difficulties that the American people are faced with.

Madam Speaker, millions of American people and families are absolutely hanging on by their fingernails. They're on the verge of losing their homes. Many have already. And so much of it has been because of bad policies by their government. It is important for us to understand that, Madam Speaker, so much of this could possibly have been prevented had we moved quicker, had we made different policies.

This is a very sobering time. Two major events happened today. One is, the American people, many are in line at post offices as we speak trying to meet the midnight deadline to pay their taxes. Others are struggling to do so. Others are having difficulty even beginning to comprehend the complexities, the complications of a tax code that even if they sat down to read it, it would take them over 1 year trying to read the tax code, let alone trying to understand it, just the volume of trying to read it.

And Madam Speaker, we in Congress must take into consideration how difficult that is, the fact that the American people, many are not even taking the credits or getting the deductions that they should have because they don't understand it. Twenty-five percent of American families that are entitled to the Earned Income Tax Credit don't even get it because they don't understand how to do it.

Last year, over 65 percent of American families had to get a private person from the outside to come help them with their taxes. That has increased up 25 percent, since just 10 years ago it was 40. And in 1950, it was just 20 percent that did that. The complexity of our tax code is just out of whack. Many are gathered around the kitchen tables right now trying to find out how they're going to have ends meet.

And Madam Speaker, the other phenomenal event in our economy that took place today was the merger of Delta Airlines and Northwest Airlines, making the largest airline company in the world. That is certainly room to celebrate, but it's very important that we be very mindful to both Delta and Northwest to understand the implications of that, to have the sensitivity that there are many thousands of families that are impacted, and that we do not use the word "synergy" to equate with a loss of jobs, but that there are no jobs lost.

We in Congress must have the empathy of putting ourselves into the mindset of the American people, and we must show that we understand the difficulties that the American people are faced with; we understand the difficulties of knowing when they wake up the next morning, their car may be repossessed, they may have a foreclosure notice.

Our policies must be, here in this House of Representatives going for-

ward, to keep Americans in their homes, even if it means coming up with the policies and moving as fast as we can. If we could move with lickety-split speed to save Wall Street, Bear Stearns, and Madam Speaker, I believe that was the right thing to do because, had we not, global markets would have cascaded and we would have had an extraordinary world calamity in the financial markets, but just as aggressively as we moved with those policies that helped Wall Street and Bear Stearns, we must move to help our homeowners and our families.

And then finally, Madam Speaker, the real elephant facing us in the room, the real looming threat economically and financially to this country is our overwhelming debt. Madam Speaker, it is staggering to look at the debt that we are in. Every dime we are spending is on borrowed money. And we have spent, Madam Speaker, as I conclude, in the last 5 or 6 years, more money from foreign governments than in the entire history of this country.

Madam Speaker, that's the state of our economy. And it's very important that we reflect it from the perspective of the American people. And I thank you for this opportunity.

#### COMPLEXITY OF TAX CODE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BURGESS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BURGESS. Madam Speaker, you know, it is said that nothing in the world is certain except death and taxes. And I'll tell you, being a physician in my former life, that sometimes even death is a little less complicated than our tax system.

The complexity of the tax code is a consequence of countless deductions and exemptions that are aimed not at collecting revenue, but steering a social agenda. And the result is a Federal law that is fraught with opportunities for avoiding taxes and full of loopholes to be exploited, all at the expense of fellow Americans.

My criticizing the tax code is as American as apple pie and baseball, and for good reason, because every year Americans spend billions of hours and billions of dollars, and that's not counting the billions of hours that we spend complaining about the tax code. Time is money, and time should be spent growing the economy and creating jobs.

There is a strong prescription for real change in our tax code. We caught a glimpse of it when Ronald Reagan cut the tax code in half back in 1986. As a result of that reform, the economy grew, revenues increased, and jobs were created. The prescription is pretty simple: Flatten the tax, broaden the base, and shift the burden away from families and small businesses.

And we do have a practical and effective blueprint, it's called the flat tax. Back in 1981, Robert Hall and Alvin

Rabushka proposed a radically simple structure that would transform the Internal Revenue Service and our economy by creating a single tax rate for all Americans. Today, several States have implemented a single rate tax structure for their State income tax, and from Utah to Massachusetts citizens are realizing the benefit.

In Colorado, a single rate tax generated so much income that it was reduced 10 years after its implementation. In Indiana, the economy boomed after a single rate went into effect in 2003, and since that time the corporate income tax receipts have grown by 250 percent.

Now, several people in Congress are working on the problem. I have a bill, H.R. 1040, which is a voluntary flat tax. A companion bill was introduced by the senior Senator from Tennessee just this past week. We have bills from DAVID DREIER, the gentleman from California, PAUL RYAN from Wisconsin, all trying to accomplish the same goal, and it is so simple. You have a single rate, you have a single piece of paper. You put in your name, just a little bit of identification data, write in your income, there's a line for personal exemptions, calculate your deductions from personal exemptions and calculate your taxable income, multiply it by a flat rate, subtract the taxes already withheld, and you're done. And what did that take? Not even 30 seconds. No more expensive tax attorney bills, no more hours of stressful research, no more headaches. It is much less costly, saving the taxpayers more than \$100 billion per year. And it would increase tax compliance. The result: Increase in personal savings, and there is a stimulus package that would have an immediate effect on our American economy.

Recent polling by a group called American Solutions shows that over 80 percent of Americans favor an optional one-page tax return form with a single rate. Now, we hear a lot of talk about change this year. You practically cannot turn on the television without some political commercial talking about change. Well, let's consider how change could improve the most complicated of institutions, the Internal Revenue Service. And more importantly, consider how that change could deliver prosperity and return time, the precious commodity of time, to the American taxpayer. Now, that's a stimulus package worthy of everyone's vote.

#### THE REAL CULPRIT FOR RISING FOOD PRICES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Madam Speaker, the world is beginning to understand what my constituents have known for far too long, higher food prices and higher