

Mr. Speaker, we can do this. We should do this. We must do this. And any idea that says that we should strike off of our list of options any component, and you will hear almost every source of energy vetoed and opposed by Members of the other side of the aisle. Some will stand up and say, no more nuclear. We will not do any more nuclear plants.

Some will say, can't drill in ANWR because 36, 38 years ago, somebody said, well, we're not going to ever drill ANWR. That's our deal.

And somebody else will say we can't drill the Outer Continental Shelf because people sit on the beach in Florida will figure out that there must be a drill rig out there 199 miles away.

Mr. Speaker, I will tell you, I talked to three children in Lineville today. They're down on the border with Missouri and Iowa.

□ 2315

And if they stand with their back to Missouri and they look north, it's 200 miles to the Minnesota border. And for them to say, I can't have a drill rig up there on the Minnesota line because it offends my idea of sightseeing with my back to Missouri 200 miles from there is as ridiculous as the people on the beach in Florida saying you can't have a drill rig 200 miles offshore.

No, Mr. Speaker. There is a reason, and more like an excuse. And my father taught me a little bit about that. He said there's a difference between reasons and excuses. There are all kinds of excuses for not developing energy. I can't find a single reason, Mr. Speaker.

Unless you like \$4 gas, unless you like \$5 gas, and unless you like expensive energy, expensive energy shuts down our economy. You shut down our economy, it uses less energy; if it uses less energy, it emits less greenhouse gas; if you emit less greenhouse gas, somehow or another in this fantasyland world where you're out there in Pa-la-la-losi land, you're going to save the planet if you shut down the economy is the only rationale that's there. It's weak and it's unfounded, Mr. Speaker; and we've got to open this energy for the American people.

And with that, I thank you for your indulgence.

I yield back the balance of my time.

A NEW ENERGY POLICY FOR THE COUNTRY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. ELLISON) until midnight.

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Speaker, tonight the freshmen, the Democrats of the Freshman Caucus are going to take the rest of this hour to talk about our economy. And it's an excellent way to move forward, Mr. Speaker, because the prior speaker had some interesting things for us to chew on, and we will

help the American people to see that under Republican control, the economy has not fared well, that they're not good at running the economy, and the proof is out there for everybody.

We'll be able to show how, when Democrats are in charge, that we do have job growth, we do have strong economy, we do have an economy where we are reducing poverty. We have an economy where all Americans are doing better than they were doing before.

I think it is obvious to everyone if you reflect only a few years ago in the late 1990s—I think it was a different President in office than the one we have now—that the economy was much better than it is today and that it is these policies that we've seen over the last 8 years where it was a Republican House, a Republican President, that have really led us to the difficult situation that American consumers and workers are seeing today.

So we have a different vision. We have a vision that includes everybody. We have a vision that says that workers should have the right to organize. We have a vision that says we should have a fair trade policy. We have a vision that says that we need investment in our public infrastructure. We have a vision that says that we need universal health care coverage for all people. We have a vision for an economy, Mr. Speaker, that says that everybody counts and everybody matters.

And, you know, I really couldn't be happier tonight because I'm joined by my good friend from Colorado, ED PERLMUTTER, not only a very excellent legislator but a really nice guy.

ED, how you doing?

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Good evening. It's good to be here with my friend from Minnesota, and we just were listening to the gentleman from Iowa, and he was talking about what's the Democrat's plan.

Well, what is the Democrat's plan for energy? Well, it's just obvious what the Republican's plan has been with two oil men in the White House. You can see exactly what has happened to the price of oil under the Bush administration. From \$25 a barrel to \$134.35.

So when he is making comments or generally people are saying what is going on here, we can see with two oil men in the White House what the energy plan has been for this country, and that's higher and higher and higher gas prices.

Now, what we've got to do is we've got to take ourselves off of oil to a greater extent than we are right now. We have to relieve ourselves of this addiction. And in the short run, we're going to feel some pain, but in the long run, the liberation from being addicted to one commodity the way we are, which is oil, which is really having a ripple effect throughout the economy, will be fantastic.

And so what we are doing as Democrats is to provide other ways to save energy. A gallon saved is a gallon

earned. A kilowatt saved is a kilowatt earned. And so what we want to do first is make sure that we're efficient in how we use our energy so that there is a lower demand and we aren't so hooked on petroleum and petroleum by-products.

Second, we've got to find other commodities that compete with petroleum, whether it is cellulosic ethanol or better ways to make electricity through renewable energy sources. As Democrats, those are the kinds of things we're doing. It's time for us to get to the future and not continue to be hooked on oil like we have been for the last 30, 40, 50 years.

Mr. ELLISON. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. PERLMUTTER. I certainly will yield to my friend from Minnesota.

Mr. ELLISON. Now, let me just ask you this question sir. You have studied this issue. I consider you one of the most learned persons on this issue in the Congress, and I just want to know, isn't this proposal of just drilling in the Continental Shelf, drilling in ANWR, isn't this kind of like trying to cure a disease by simply treating the symptoms of the disease? For example, if I were to have cancer, you could try to find a cure for my cancer, or you could simply try to alleviate the symptoms of the suffering that I am enduring but not really get to the root of the matter.

Is this kind of like—does that analogy work when it comes to just drilling for more oil and continuing to spoil our natural wilderness areas and to risk oil spills? Isn't that sort of an analogous situation?

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Well, if the gentleman will yield.

Mr. ELLISON. Yes, sir.

Mr. PERLMUTTER. It clearly is.

This is the time for us to get healthy, and we can get healthy in many, many different ways. And it is going to be across the spectrum, whether it is making our buildings more efficient, our homes more efficient when it comes to energy consumption, our cars more efficient, come up with different fuels, different ways to power this country, we can do those things; and it's just so obvious because it's good for national security, it's good for climate, and it is good for jobs.

But let us go back to this thing about they want to drill in ANWR, they want to drill offshore, they want to drill a million places.

Well, we know that right now, and I'll put up a chart, that right now oil companies are not drilling 30.6 million acres that they have offshore and 30.5 million acres that they have on shore.

Mr. ELLISON. Well, then, why are they crying about wanting to drill in ANWR and wanting to drill off the Continental Shelf when they have all of these places they can drill now? I mean, I know that there's got to be a million Americans watching this broadcast who want to know that question.

Mr. PERLMUTTER. I think the question is to try to distract from the real answer which is the plan, the energy plan has been to raise gas prices, and the energy plan has not worked. It's hurt Americans. And we have to come up with other ways so that we aren't dependent upon one commodity like that because we're dealing with eight or so countries in OPEC and five, or about five big oil companies. Very few countries and very few companies. And we need to have other ways to power this Nation, and we can do it.

I mean, we have the ability to come up with better and more efficient cars. We have the ability to come up with more efficient homes and not in expensive ways. We're talking about changing out windows, putting in more insulation. There are opportunities to add solar or wind so that we have renewable energy sources, and these are thousands and thousands and thousands of jobs; and certainly in the construction industry, those jobs are needed today. So it is a win-win situation if we're just going to have to do these things.

But even in the short run, we know that oil companies have plenty of places to drill that they aren't drilling today. So it's a phony argument.

Mr. ELLISON. Well, you know, the gentleman from Colorado makes an excellent point, Mr. PERLMUTTER. And what you're describing is a slice of a Democratic vision for our country for a fair economy and a cleaner economy.

I think it's important when you mention construction jobs and retrofits and things like that, what you're talking about is the green economy, an economy that can include everybody, people who can do relatively menial jobs and also the innovators. Up and down the educational scale. But it's going to take training, it's going to take opportunity, and it is going to take courage.

You know, when Jonas Salk, who cured—came up with the polio vaccine, when he was—he could have spent his time making better braces for kids who had polio, right? But what did he do?

What did he do, Mr. PERLMUTTER?

Mr. PERLMUTTER. He came up with a vaccine so that they didn't have the disease in the first place.

Mr. ELLISON. So what we need is a vision for a green economy for now and in the future where we can increase the fuel efficiency of vehicles, where we can invest in transportation and transit, where we can move people and not just cars, where we can take some of our old windy buildings where right out of the roof the heat's just going out, retrofit them for some green roofs.

Are these the kinds of things that you have in mind, Mr. PERLMUTTER?

Mr. PERLMUTTER. And, Mr. ELLISON, you are right on the mark. This is about changing the direction of this Nation and not doing things the same old way that now is forcing us to see \$4-a-gallon-priced gasoline. This is

about changing the direction of this Nation, moving us into this century where we have many other ways to power this Nation.

Now we just, all of us as a country, as Americans, we have to step forward and do this and knowing in the short run that we're facing \$4-a-gallon gasoline. Now, we're going to take a look, as Members of Congress, why we've seen this dramatic spike to \$4, whether—hopefully there's not been manipulation, there's not been speculation that's been improper.

But even so, we need to come up with other ways to power this country, and we can do that whether it is through the research being conducted at the National Renewable Energy Lab in Colorado, whether it is the new designs that we're seeing for cars across the globe. There are many, many ways that we can improve our energy situation, and most of them start with really pretty low-hanging fruit; and that's just being more efficient.

Mr. ELLISON. Conservation.

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Conservation but efficiency.

We can, through just engineering, basic engineering, architecture, design work, be more efficient in how we power this country and how much energy we use and consume. And we don't want to be putting a lot of carbon, continue to be putting carbon into the atmosphere. We don't want to continue to be so beholden on oil countries and oil companies.

So we are, as the Democratic Congress, moving us to a new energy future. We are changing the direction of this Nation. We're not going to follow the energy plan of two oil men in the White House. That's just not where we're going to go any more.

Mr. ELLISON. Well, you know, Mr. PERLMUTTER, when you talk about these energy issues, it makes me think that this is where the country, I think, really wants to go. I mean, in these last several months we've heard a lot about change. It seems Americans want change. We don't want to be stuck in oil handcuffs. We want to go towards an energy future that includes everybody and that where we need to invest in our innovation, we need to invest in our brain power, you know, where we can have a into new opportunity in our country to make sure that we're not polluting the air, warming up the globe.

And again, as our friends on the other side of the aisle talk about, well, why don't we just drill off the Continental Shelf off Florida, they kind of imply it's just a matter of sunbathers not wanting to see an unsightly rig out there. Of course it is ugly to see that. But that does minimize the real concerns we're talking about; isn't that right, Mr. PERLMUTTER?

Mr. PERLMUTTER. I think it minimizes it. I think there are plenty of opportunities to drill.

You know, having said we're going to change direction, we're not going to go cold turkey from oil and gas. It will play a role in our energy spectrum for a long time to come. But we certainly can reduce our demand.

There are certainly places to drill now that aren't being drilled by the big oil companies, and there are other ways that we can wean ourselves from the dependence on foreign oil.

□ 2330

We just have to do that. We can't ignore this any longer, and this particular White House and the Republican Congress before us would just want to drill and drill and stay hooked on one commodity. It is never smart in business to only have one supplier.

Mr. ELLISON. Don't the businesspeople say you've got to diversify?

Mr. PERLMUTTER. You have to diversify, yes.

Mr. ELLISON. I'm all for saying let's not build more leg braces; let's find some vaccines.

Mr. PERLMUTTER. And I'm going to not add to that because that is a very good analogy.

Mr. ELLISON. As we talked about the gas prices and things like this, we'll be talking more about that as we get closer to the end of the hour. But I also want to bring some other things into the conversation which I think are very important.

One of those things is that today the House tried to increase the unemployment insurance, and we tried to put it on the suspension calendar and pass it that way. Unfortunately, we did not meet the marker we were looking for. We needed three more votes to get there on suspension calendar, and we are not going to quit. As you know, the Democrats have a lot of fortitude, and we don't quit, and we are persistent and dogged in our efforts to stand up for the American people.

But the Senate recently did pass a 13-week extension of the unemployment insurance as part of a supplemental appropriation, and I think that it is really indicative of the situation people are finding themselves in.

As we're talking about \$4 a gallon gas, we also have to take into consideration, Mr. Speaker, that we've seen 30 years of stagnant wages, except for that period in the late 1990s when we had a Democratic President. We have seen 30 years of stagnant wages except for that 1990s blip, and now that paycheck is being asked to do more, being asked to take on more child care, more health care, more fuel prices, more in terms of food prices.

Americans are in a difficult situation, and I dare say that now we have about 8.5 million unemployed people

who need help, and I think that it is a little unfortunate we were not able to pass that mark today with that unemployment insurance, but I'm sure that we're going to keep on trying until we get it.

I just wonder how the people in Colorado are faring. Are they unemployed, having a tough time there, and basically, as we see ourselves having creeping expenses for our food, fuel and things like that?

Mr. PERLMUTTER. In Colorado, we've had kind of a slow economy for several years now. We've faced a lot of foreclosures in the Denver metro area and throughout the State. We keep feeling like we're going to come out of this slump and then kind of get bumped back in. I believe in Colorado we're going to come out of the slump before much of the Nation just because we went into it before much of the Nation.

But even so, with the oil prices the way they are, with the way the economy has been managed by this administration, the people in Colorado need a safety net which is what unemployment insurance is. These are hard-working people who, for one reason or another, may have lost a job. They're looking for work. They want work. They want to get back in employment, and they need to do that. People in Colorado are workers. They like to be employed. They like to earn an income. They like to provide for themselves, and given the slow economy that we've had in Colorado, which I think and I hope is ready to turn, people do need that extra safety net.

Mr. ELLISON. Well, you know, all of us are looking for better days. You know, I can tell you that my constituents in Minnesota let me know that we've been hit with the foreclosure crisis as well as stagnant wages, and I'm sad to report to you that the Nation's job market showed clear signs of recessionary conditions, as the jobless rate leapt up a half a percent in May alone from 5 percent to 5.5 percent. That's a lot of people, and that's according to our Bureau of Labor Statistics. And this monthly increase was the largest since the mid-1980s. It's been a while, pushing unemployment to the highest rate since 2004.

I don't like to rattle the sabers in terms of the partisan divide, but I'm one, speaking only for myself, who's prepared to say that, you know, the Democrats have a better vision for how to run the economy, vision in terms of trying to get some unemployment insurance extended so that people can have a little relief as they try to find that next hard-to-find job.

But I think it's important that we see this thing in a broader context.

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Well, and in a broader context, I want to go back to our prior conversation on the green jobs, the green collar jobs.

One of the things that we see in Colorado, and I think this can be nation-

wide, is that there are thousands and thousands and thousands upon thousands of jobs in the green industry, in the energy industry with renewables and with energy efficiency in housing. There are thousands of jobs, and they are jobs here in America.

Mr. ELLISON. Right.

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Not overseas, but they're here in America.

Mr. ELLISON. I've got to ask you a question. If you are training somebody to retrofit a downtown office building in, say, Denver or Minneapolis, and they're going to retrofit that building to be green and efficient, can you offshore that job?

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Your question answers itself. Of course not. When somebody comes in to change the windows in my house, they're doing it at my house in Golden, Colorado. These are good construction jobs. They're design jobs. There are some manufacturing jobs attached to it.

The new direction for energy also is a place where there are thousands of jobs which will help us stem this unemployment, but for those people who can't find those jobs right now, we need to have a safety net for them.

Mr. ELLISON. We need a safety net. We need to have a caring Nation, and Americans are a caring people and a compassionate people, but we also are a working people and we want to work, and we also need a vision for our future because if you're unemployed right now, this might not be a bad time to think about getting some extra education, as long as you can get some unemployment insurance, and if you get that education, maybe you want to think about a green job for a green energy future.

You know, I want to add, too, while we're on the subject of jobs, the payroll contracted for the fifth month in a row, down 49,000 with most of the net job losses occurring in the construction industry, factories, offices, and retailers. Since the total payroll peaked last December, they've been down by around 324,000 jobs since the government sector tends to be less cyclically affected by downturns.

And looking at just the private sector, job loss can provide a more accurate gauge of the lagging economy's impact on job growth. Private sector employment has fallen over the past 6 months by over 400,000 jobs. I'm not happy to report that to you, Mr. Speaker, but it is the situation that people are facing, and I think it's important that this Congress be willing to respond to the needs of the people, which is why we needed three more votes in order to get that extension of the unemployment insurance passed as we tried to do today.

I think we're going to hit that mark. We're certainly not going to quit. I certainly believe that there are a lot of people out there who really want this policy. They certainly can get on the phone, get on the e-mail, and let folks who represent them know how they

feel. But this unemployment extension is a big deal, but I think it's important as we push to extend unemployment insurance benefits that we tell folks that while they know they're dealing with putting the food on the table tomorrow and paying the rent tomorrow and paying the mortgage tomorrow, we want them to look to a better future, and that involves the green job economy that you've so amply described.

I also want to just say, too, as we talk about the economy and the job situation that, you know, we've got to have a real clear understanding about those indicators that tell us which direction the economy is going in. And I'm looking for a time when we can actually set policies in place that really will give Americans the kind of vision that they need, as we talked about just a little while ago.

Mr. PERLMUTTER. If you would yield, I think one of the places where, again, going back to your education and a vision for this country that looks beyond just tomorrow but to next year and 10 years down is the GI Bill that we would like to see passed that the President has threatened to veto.

Mr. ELLISON. Wait a minute, wait a minute, wait a minute. This President, who shakes his finger about supporting the troops, would never, never veto the GI Bill. Certainly you jest.

Mr. PERLMUTTER. I'm sorry to say that he's considering that, and what I find so hard to believe is that the best investment this country ever made was in the GI Bill after World War II. And now we have had our men and women in Afghanistan and in Iraq for more than 5 years, which is longer than we were in World War II, and to provide them with education and educational opportunities simply will be a fantastic investment for this country.

The wealth that was created, the happiness that was created because people could live full lives and educated lives after World War II, those are the kinds of things that we want for America. And my Dad, when we're talking about this, and you can see him well up with pride about the GI Bill and how so many men came back from World War II and then were successful after seeing the horrors of war, but came back and were able to provide for their families in ways that nobody anticipated. He describes that as the greatest investment this country has ever made, and he kids around by then saying, "And a distant second was the Louisiana Purchase."

So this GI Bill that we're proposing now for the 21st century will be a fantastic investment for our men and women who have served us. I believe we owe them a responsibility to provide for education, and we just need to go forward with this. And the White House has objected to this. Senator McCain has objected to this, as I understand it. And it just doesn't make sense.

Mr. ELLISON. Well, you know, Mr. Speaker, these are important facts you bring up. I kind of think of that period

after World War II, up until about 1973, as the almost, almost golden age of America. I say "almost" because it was marked by Jim Crow and other things like that, very important, serious issues. And we've come a long way. Our country's come a long way.

But you cannot ignore the fact that after World War II, you had the GI Bill. You had FHA. We had already established Social Security to make sure that no seniors had to live out their retirement in an undignified way. And we also had tax rates for the very wealthy that were much, much higher than they are now, and we also had a higher rate of unionization.

I know some folks don't understand how important that is, but the fact is, in 1957, 33 percent of all workers were in a union. Another 33 percent were paid like they were, and folks were living relatively well. We all look back at those old TV shows and kind of chuckle now at how corny they were, but they actually were doing pretty well economically in the 1950s.

And the fact is that some of these kind of policies are things we need today, but we have the advantage today to have greater equality which is so great, you know. It's a great honor of America that we have overcome some of those things of the past, those lack of equality issues. But as we've gotten greater social equality, we've lost in the area of income and economic equality, and we've got to revitalize our economy to make sure that everybody can share in it. And I think that green jobs are the way, but a compassionate response to people who are unemployed now is also part of the picture as well.

And you mentioned your dad. My dad was born in 1928, went to World War II, to the Pacific at a very young age, about 17 years old, but he did go. He was a military person and served in the Pacific, was in Hawaii and was a beneficiary of the GI Bill and was able to go to college, Wayne State University in Detroit, on that program. And it made him into a man who could put five boys through college, me and my brothers, and you know, it's an amazing thing.

You know, I am proud of my brothers. They're all doing well. They're all doing great. And the fact is, none of us would be doing this well if our dad had not been the beneficiary of an enlightened, compassionate, common-sense program like the GI Bill, and I'm glad that we're able to pass it through this House. And I pray that the President sees the light and passes and signs that bill.

□ 2345

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. ELLISON, while we're on the subject of our service men and women, I think one of the things where there really was a change in the direction of this Nation in the past year was the fact that the Democratic House and the Democratic Senate, the Congress, sent to the President and he signed—and I want to applaud

him for doing that—the greatest increase in veterans' benefits in the 77-year history of the Veterans Administration. And again, when we send men and women into harm's way, when we ask them to protect us, serve us, we have a moral contract, a moral responsibility to provide them with as normal a life as possible and to provide the benefits that are promised when they go in.

Mr. ELLISON. Well, you know, soldiers are people, too. They want a future. They want an education. They want something to pass onto their children. They want to live a quality lifestyle. They want to own their home.

Mr. PERLMUTTER. And I feel that we've made great strides in living up to our end of the bargain. Now, it has to have execution, but I know in Colorado, for instance, in terms of veterans' claims, there was this tremendous backlog. Because of what we did last year, we've added 65 people to the benefits section so that claims can be processed in a reasonable and timely fashion so that the benefits are received by our service men and women in a reasonable and timely fashion. So there has been actual progress on the ground.

Mr. ELLISON. There has been actual progress on the ground in Colorado. I'm happy to report that in Minneapolis we have a wonderful VA hospital there, and we've seen things getting better all the time. But I want to let the veterans know that, as we talk tonight about the economy, we've talked about gas prices, we've talked about unemployment insurance, looking out for our veterans, making sure our veterans have economic opportunity, educational opportunity, health care opportunity is part of the whole dialogue. This is a working class prosperity issue, veterans' benefits. GI Bill benefits is a factor when it comes to trying to make sure that the American middle class, American working class has a real chance at doing well in this economy. So I want to thank you for bringing that out.

And I just want to say, you know, that it's important to understand veterans as an important component in our economy because when you just separate the soldier from the economy, you forget that the soldier is coming back. And they should have a good way to go when they get back.

You know, I also just wanted to mention, as we start walking into our final 15 minutes tonight, that we just had a Memorial Day. And on that day, I am proud to tell you that a number of our veterans are well aware of some of these programs; a number of them are well aware of the work that Congress is trying to do, not always with a cooperative White House, but on some things we have found cooperation, and we're thankful for that.

And I just want to mention to you as well that it's really tough on our veterans to have to deal with foreclosure. I've had a few vets in my district, while they were away, they had only their

spouse to try to keep up the mortgage, and they've fallen behind. And I bring that up only because I think that it's important, as we talk about this, that we do mention that a part of what this Democratic Congress and the "difference makers," this freshman class, has been a part of is trying to close the gap when it comes to the foreclosure crisis.

You know, I don't have to tell you, Mr. PERLMUTTER, that we're dealing with about 2,800 foreclosures a day. We're dealing with about 20,000 a week. We're dealing with a very serious problem. And I just want to point out that this foreclosure crisis is something that there have been bills introduced that try to forestall foreclosure for a veteran, for a soldier who's overseas, but it's something that really is affecting our entire economy.

We've passed bills through the House recently that will allow FHA to be put in a position to buy some of these mortgages and restructure them going forward. I think it's important that we point this out because the Congress has been responsive. You and I are both on the Financial Services Committee, and so we both know that we've been working on this housing issue quite a bit. And also, last December, I believe, we also passed a bill through Congress, an anti-predatory lending bill that I think should pay some good dividends if we could get that enacted into law.

But this foreclosure crisis is hitting our veterans and it's hitting all of our people. And maybe you would like to comment on that.

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Well, we've taken steps to stem foreclosures by using the FHA guarantee as a way to slow things. And the way it works is that a bank that has a loan to somebody can write the loan down to whatever the market value is. Then the FHA will guarantee 90 percent of this lower amount for the borrower so long as the borrower can pay that 90 percent back. Now they have to go through a credit check, and they've got to be able to pay the lower amount.

So the Federal Government is coming in to stop a foreclosure which, if it takes place, could result in a vacant home that then ends up decaying, and it starts the decay in a neighborhood. So it assists the neighborhood. It allows the bank to become liquid. And it gives the borrower a chance to make the payments at this lower amount.

Now, if the borrower were to sell in, I believe, within 5 years, the Federal Government would receive a portion of anything above the written down purchase price. But the bottom line is, in a very prudent and fiscally responsible manner, FHA is being used to guarantee lower loans, reduced loans so that we can limit the numbers of foreclosures in our neighborhoods and maintain the strength of our neighborhoods.

Mr. ELLISON. Well, you know, I'm glad you mentioned that it's not just the individual who is getting their

mortgage restructured with the FHA assistance who will benefit, actually, it's the neighborhood. Foreclosures really don't hit individuals alone, they hit neighborhoods. Because if you end up with a foreclosed home and an abandoned house, it's an attractive nuisance for people in the neighborhood who have bad intent. We know the price of copper. These houses are being stripped of their copper wiring. And oftentimes the copper strippers are not very careful about how they get it out. They've been known to nick and cut and damage gas lines and cause fires and explosions, not to mention other damage.

And so when you have a concentration of foreclosed and abandoned buildings in a neighborhood, it really does put downward pressure on the homes of everybody in the neighborhood, even the people who have been fortunate enough to pay every single mortgage payment on time every time. And so it really is something to help everybody, not just the individuals who are being directly assisted.

And of course, as you also know, when a house is abandoned, the city cannot receive property taxes on that house anymore. And so really what it's doing is coming up with a practical solution which will allow the bank to keep getting some of that money back, maybe not the originally intended amount, but a portion; of course half a loaf is better than none often. And so it's a practical solution to a serious problem. And it's just one more example of how Democrats and how freshman Democrats like you and I are part of solutions to try to improve our Nation.

And we're trying to bring benefits not only to our citizens, but also, as you mentioned before, our veterans, trying to make sure that our vets and all kinds of people who are going through this foreclosure crisis are able to keep their homes, neighborhoods are able to be stable, cities are able to receive property tax, city police departments aren't having to run out to properties and spend resources kicking people out of abandoned houses, or fire departments putting out fires. It really is a responsible way to sort of operate and try to improve the situation here.

Well, Mr. PERLMUTTER, it looks like we've got about 5 minutes left. Any parting shots?

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Well, I'd like to go back to the gas prices.

You know, I think that the gas prices show the lack of an energy plan by the prior Republican Congress, by this White House, except to the degree that it has caused an increase in oil prices.

You know, we're in Iraq in a substantial way; and a lot of it, in my opinion, has to do with oil. Now, the average price per gallon of fuel paid by U.S. military units in Iraq is at least \$3.23. The price per gallon of gasoline for Iraqi residents is \$1.36. Why the difference there? Oil revenues for the Iraqi Government is expected to be \$70

billion, which should be paid back to this country when we are running a deficit. We're spending \$2.5 to \$3 billion a week to be in Iraq. And that obviously has had an effect on our economy over the course of these 5 years that we've been in Iraq.

We've got to change the direction of this Nation, Mr. ELLISON. We're trying to do that every day. We need to change the direction when it comes to energy. We've got to change the direction when it comes to Iraq. We've been changing the direction when it comes to our veterans and living up to our contracts and responsibilities in terms of their benefits.

We're making a difference. We have a long way to go to really change the direction of this Nation. This country is in need of big change in a lot of ways. And I'm glad that I've been elected to the Congress by the people of the suburbs of Denver to try and institute some of that change.

And so with that, I would yield back to you, sir.

Mr. ELLISON. Well, Mr. PERLMUTTER, I want to be a witness to what you just said. You have made a great difference. You, together with our freshman class—which I'm also a member of—have been here trying to improve the lives of Americans. And what we've been offering, yes, vision on energy policy, yes, vision on dealing with unemployment insurance and the jobs and the economy, yes, vision on veterans. But what we're really offering is a bigger vision of America, not just a litany of bills, but a bigger vision of our country, a bigger vision, an America that is fairer, that's more prosperous, that's more innovative, that takes care of its own. This is the America that we all know we can have because people like your dad and mine fought for an American that could be that way. And we believe that it is our generation's responsibility to make a better America for our children and our parents and everyone.

So it's been great hanging out with you, Mr. PERLMUTTER. Have a great night.

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Good night.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. FLAKE (at the request of Mr. BOEHNER) for today and the balance of the week on account of attending a funeral.

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

Mr. LANGEVIN, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. WOOLSEY, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. DEFAZIO, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. KAPTUR, for 5 minutes, today.

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

Mr. YARMUTH, for 5 minutes, today.

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

Mr. HUNTER, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. POE, for 5 minutes, June 18.

Mr. JONES of North Carolina, for 5 minutes, June 18.

Mr. BROUN of Georgia, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. WESTMORELAND, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. CONAWAY, for 5 minutes, today.

ADJOURNMENT

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

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 57 minutes p.m.), the House adjourned until tomorrow, Thursday, June 12, 2008, at 10 a.m.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

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

7085. A letter from the Congressional Review Coordinator, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule—Temporary Importation of Horses; Noncompetitive Entertainment Horses From Countries Affected With Contagious Equine Metritis [Docket No. APHIS-2006-0164] (RIN: 0579-AC35) received June 5, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

7086. A letter from the Congressional Review Coordinator, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule—Mexican Fruit Fly; Designation of Portion of Willacy County, TX, as a Quarantined Area [Docket No. APHIS-2008-0057] received June 5, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

7087. A letter from the Congressional Review Coordinator, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule—Amendments to Treatments for Plant Pests [Docket No. APHIS-2006-0091] received May 29, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

7088. A letter from the Administrator, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule—Livestock Mandatory Reporting; Reestablishment and Revision of the Reporting Regulation for Swine, Cattle, Lamb, and Boxed Beef [Docket No. AMS-LS-07-0106] (RIN: 0581-AC67) received May 28, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

7089. A letter from the Congressional Review Coordinator, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule—Exotic Newcastle Disease; Quarantine Restrictions [Docket No. APHIS-2006-0036] (RIN: 0579-AC42) received May 29, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

7090. A letter from the Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's report entitled, "Study on Increasing the Usage of Recovered Mineral