

and keep firearms. I vigorously oppose all attempts to restrict the second amendment.

I believe that any law, whether at the local, State, or Federal level, which restricts or infringes upon law-abiding citizens' ability to own a firearm is unconstitutional and should be repealed.

The plain language of the Second Amendment clearly indicates that it was written to protect an individual's right to keep and bear arms. I believe, as George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, John Adams, and other founding fathers believed, that the individual right to bear arms is a representation of freedom and independence and I will always defend that right from abusive regulations and licensing.

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

(Mr. BISHOP of Utah addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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

(Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

AMERICAN ENERGY SOLUTIONS FOR LOWER GAS PRICES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. WESTMORELAND) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Madam Speaker, I just wanted to start out by saying that I know that I can't talk directly to the American people, but I hope that if anyone is out there listening that they would listen to my comments that I make to you.

Madam Speaker, I guess about 2 weeks ago probably I started getting some phone calls about different petitions on the Internet and other places about the prospects of America becoming more energy independent, that we would not be dependent on foreign oil sources, and that we would be able to use our own natural resources to meet our energy needs.

And people began to ask if I had gone and signed them or had seen them. One was on americansolutions.com, which offered to increase domestic oil drilling. There was one about a gas holiday. There were several about developing alternative energy sources. But there were some interesting petitions against drilling by Democratic Senator Ms. BOXER, the Sierra Club and Greenpeace.

As I walked into a service station in my district, there was a petition on the counter, Madam Speaker, that said:

Sign here if you want to let your representatives know that you're for lowering gas prices. And I'm assuming that the proprietor of that station had it there to keep people from talking bad to him about the price that was on his pump.

But what I decided after looking at all these different petitions is that I would come up with a petition so the American people could understand where their representative was at. We know where our constituents are. I think on the American Solutions petition they are at like 1.7 million people. So we can kind of understand where the American people are at. They want us to be independent. They want us to increase our U.S. oil production.

So what I decided to do was come up with a petition, and what this petition says is: American energy solutions for lower gas prices. Bring onshore oil online; bring deepwater oil online; and bring new refineries online. Realize, we have not built a refinery in this country since the late 1970s.

□ 1900

And you may not realize this, because we're always talking about crude oil, but you might not realize that the United States imports 6.2 billion gallons of gas and 4.6 billion gallons of diesel every year. We import these from the United Kingdom, U.S. Virgin Islands, France, Canada, Netherlands, Norway—which, by the way, Norway is now the third largest exporter of crude oil, and back in 1965 they were energy dependent on foreign oil and they decided that they would open up to drilling in the North Sea. They are now the third largest exporter of crude oil. But we import refined gas from them—Germany, Russia, Italy, and of course the OPEC countries, which don't even really have that much refining capacity, Madam Speaker, but yet we buy refined gas from them.

So I got a petition, I've had it over here on the wall, Madam Speaker, for probably about 2 weeks now. There are 435 spaces for the Members, and then there are seven spaces for the delegates from the U.S. territories. And I'm happy to say that we've had 191 signatures. Now, this may be too simple for some people because all it says is, "I will vote to increase U.S. oil production to lower gas prices for Americans." And so we need your help, Madam Speaker. We need you to sign. I don't think you're on it, Madam Speaker.

But we've got a Web site, and it's our Web site at house.gov/westmoreland. And on there we have everybody that has signed, and we have everybody that we've talked to that said they would not sign. So we've got two columns, we've got a signers and a non-signers. And then also, just to let you know, we have notified every office here at least once, we will do it again next week. And some people said have, well, Congressman, they ask me how long have you been working on this? And I say,

well, about almost 2 weeks. Well, how come you only have 191 signatures? Well, Madam Speaker, I'd ask people that ask me that question, Sunday, when they're at church, try to talk to 450 people on a Sunday, it's almost hard to do, especially when you get in different conversations with folks. So if you want to understand, house.gov/westmoreland, Madam Speaker, that's where somebody would go if they wanted to see where their Congressman was at on this simple petition that basically just says, "I will vote to increase U.S. oil production to lower gas prices for Americans."

I would like to yield some time to my friend from Indiana.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Let me just say to my good friend, Congressman WESTMORELAND from Georgia, I am so happy that you are going to all this trouble to get all of our colleagues to sign this petition. And if you're at 191, you're not too far short of 218. And when you get 218, I will join with you to go to the Speaker and show her that we have 218 signatures—or you do—and that they ought to bring this to the floor for a vote because a majority of the House wants this done.

You know, we passed another week. A week has gone by since you and I, I think, last were on the floor. And everybody's going home for the 4th of July recess—they're going to be in parades, they're going to be on radio, they're going to have town meetings—and we haven't done anything about reducing the price of gasoline or moving toward energy independence. And so I, like you, if I were talking to the American people right now, I would say, when your Congressman or your Senator is in that parade, I want you to talk to them strongly and say, we want you to drill in America. We want you to move us toward energy independence. We've been talking about it since Jimmy Carter was President 30-something years ago, and we aren't doing anything. And that's why we're dependent on foreign oil and that's why gasoline prices are over \$4 because we aren't producing the oil here, we're sending it overseas.

We're sending over \$400 million a day to Saudi Arabia to pay for oil that we're using. We could use that money right here in America, and it would help create jobs and expand our economy. We're sending \$125 million a day to President Chavez in Venezuela, who's trying to move every country in this hemisphere toward communism and who is a good friend of the Castro brothers, Fidel and his brother Raul.

We have big problems here because we aren't drilling in America. And we need to have everybody in this country contact their Congressman and Senator and say, hey, listen, get with the program, it's time for us to move toward energy independence. We can't have this economy of ours suffer anymore.

I would like to enter into the RECORD, Madam Speaker, if I might, a

letter that was sent by the American Association of Petroleum Geologists. These are the experts that say there is oil here, we ought to drill here, and here's how we ought to do it and here's how we ought to explore. And when you read this letter—which is now going to be put in the record—it tells very clearly that drilling costs for one well onshore costs a half a million dollars, and offshore it can cost up to \$25 million. And so these geologists, when they get these permits to drill in a certain area, they go out to make darn sure that there's oil there before they sink a well that's going to cost \$25 million. And that's an exploratory well. And it's a half million dollars if you drill onshore. So we're talking about big money. And when you realize that 68 percent of the people who drill for oil are independent drillers, they're not the big oil companies, and 87 percent of the people who drill for gas are not the big oil and gas companies, they're individual people who have small companies, and if they find oil they're going to get it, and if they find gas they're going to get it. And so this idea that these permits are not being researched and looked at is just crazy.

And when you read what the American Association of Petroleum Geologists said, and the President is a Mr. Willard Green, you realize that these people want to get oil and gas out of the ground, they want to get it out of the offshore sites on the Continental Shelf, and they can't do it simply because they don't have the ability to pursue these permits.

Only 3 percent of the area offshore is available for permitting and for drilling for oil; 97 percent of the Continental Shelf isn't being touched. And we have about 80 percent onshore that's not being touched. We ought to explore every place we can to move this country toward energy independence. We ought to remove ourselves from being dependent on Saudi Arabia, who isn't really a friend of ours, and on Venezuela, which really isn't a friend of ours, and other countries that aren't friends of ours. We ought to really move towards energy independence. And the minute we announce we're going to do that, we're going to drill on these sites, I'm sure the American people realize the price of oil is going to go down. The competitive nature of the free enterprise system and supply and demand will force the price of oil down, and it means the price of gasoline will go down as well.

JUNE 3, 2008.

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

Hon. STENY HOYER,
Majority Leader, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

Hon. JOHN BOEHNER,
Minority Leader, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SPEAKER PELOSI, MAJORITY LEADER HOYER, AND MINORITY LEADER BOEHNER: Given the on-going debate about access and leasing activity on federal onshore lands and

the Outer Continental Shelf, I would like to offer some perspective, on behalf of the American Association of Petroleum Geologists (AAPG), on the science and process of finding oil and natural gas.

AAPG, an international geoscience organization, is the world's largest professional geological society representing over 33,000 members; The purpose of AAPG is to advance the science of geology, foster scientific research, promote technology and advance the well-being of its members. With members in 116 countries, more than two-thirds of whom work and reside in the United States, AAPG serves as a voice for the shared interests of energy geologists and geophysicists in our profession worldwide.

AAPG strives to increase public awareness of the crucial role that the geosciences, and particularly petroleum and energy-related geology, play in our society.

Finding and developing oil and natural gas blends science, engineering, and economics. It has distinct phases: exploration, development, and production. And it is risky, because finding oil and natural gas traps, places where oil and natural gas migrate and concentrate, buried under thousands of feet of rock is like finding the proverbial needle in a haystack. Talent and technology increase our chances of a discovery, but there are no guarantees.

What is exploration? Well, the grid pattern on a block map makes it tempting to think of exploration as a process of simply drilling a well in each grid block to determine whether it contains oil. But because of the natural variation in regional geology, one cannot assume oil and natural gas are evenly distributed across a given lease or region. Rather, exploration is about unraveling the geologic history of the rock underneath that grid block, trying to understand where oil or natural gas may have formed and where it migrated. If the geology isn't right, you won't find oil or natural gas.

Legendary geologist Wallace Pratt once observed, "Where oil is first found is in the minds of men." When preparing a lease bid, geologists use their knowledge to identify the specific areas in a region that they believe have the highest likelihood of containing oil and natural gas traps. Successful exploration begins with an idea—a hypothesis of where oil may be found.

Since exploration is about developing and testing ideas, some acreage available for leasing is never leased. That is because no one develops a compelling idea of why oil or natural gas should be there. Similarly, some acreage is leased and drilled repeatedly with no success. Then, one day, a geologist develops an idea that works, resulting in new oil or natural gas production from the same land that others dismissed as barren.

Once a lease is awarded, geologists begin an intensive assessment. They collect new geological, geophysical, and geochemical data to better understand the geology in their lease area. They use these data to construct a geological model that best explains where they think oil and natural gas were generated, where it may have been trapped, and whether the trap is big enough to warrant drilling.

If there is no evidence of a suitable trap, the explorer will relinquish the lease and walk away. If they see a trap that looks interesting, they schedule a drill rig to find out if they are right. Drilling is the true test of the geologists' model, and it isn't a decision to be made lightly. Drilling costs for a single well can range from \$0.5 million for shallow onshore wells to over \$25 million for tests in deep water offshore.

As the well is drilling, geologists continually collect and evaluate data to see whether they conform to their expectations based

on the geological model. Eventually, they reach the rock layer where they think the trap is located.

If there is no oil or natural gas when the drill reaches the trap they were targeting, they've drilled a dry hole. At this point the explorers will evaluate why the hole is dry: was there never oil and gas here; how was the geological model wrong; and can it be improved based on what they know from the drilled well? Depending on the results of this analysis, they may tweak the exploration idea and drill another well or decide the idea failed and relinquish the lease.

If there is oil and/or natural gas, they've drilled a discovery. Typically, they will test the well to see what volumes of oil and/or natural gas flow from it. Sometimes the flow rates do not justify further expenditures and the well is abandoned. If the results are promising, they will usually drill several additional wells to better define the size and shape of the trap. All of these data improve the geological model.

Based on this revised geological model, engineers plan how to develop the new field (e.g., number of production wells to drill, construction of oil field facilities and pipelines).

Using complex economic tools, they must decide whether the revenue from the oil and natural gas sales will exceed the past and continuing expenses to decide whether it is a commercial discovery.

The process of leasing, evaluating, drilling, and developing an oil or natural gas field typically takes five to ten years. Some fields come online sooner. Others are delayed by permitting or regulatory delays or constraints in the availability of data acquisition and drilling equipment and crews. Large projects and those in deep water may require a decade or more to ramp up to full production.

As you can see, oil and natural gas exploration is not simple and it is not easy. It requires geological ingenuity, advanced technologies, and the time to do the job right. It also requires access to areas where exploration ideas can be tested—the greater the number of areas available for exploration, the higher the chance of finding oil and natural gas traps.

U.S. consumers are burdened by high crude oil prices. Conservation and efficiency improvements are necessary responses, but equally important is increasing long-term supply from stable parts of the world, such as our very own federal lands and Outer Continental Shelf.

As Congress considers measures to deal with high crude oil prices, I urge caution. Policies that increase exploration costs, decrease the available time to properly evaluate leases and restrict access to federal lands and the Outer Continental Shelf do not provide the American people with short-term relief from high prices and undermine the goal of increasing stable long-term supplies.

I am happy to further discuss these ideas. Please contact me through our Geoscience & Energy Office in Washington, D.C. at 202-684-8225 or 202-355-3415.

Sincerely,

WILLARD R. (WILL) GREEN,
President, American
Association of Petro-
leum Geologists.

And when they talk about these speculators, there are people that speculate in gas futures and oil futures, there is no question about that. But the minute we say we're going to drill here in this country, you watch those prices drop; you watch those speculators start getting out of the market and selling what they have. And that will force the price

down on oil, it will force down the price of gasoline, and it will help this country.

And let me just say to my colleague—and I really appreciate him yielding to me—if we don't get with the program, if my colleagues on the other side of the aisle and the Senate and the House don't work with us on this side of the aisle, we're going to end up with gasoline prices being \$5 or more per gallon. And if we have a conflict in the Middle East, as we've heard talked about here tonight, it could go much higher than that. That will put extreme pressure on this economy.

And I hate to predict this, but I really believe that if we don't get control of this situation and start drilling onshore and offshore in our territory, I think we could have a severe economic recession in this country. And when I say severe, I mean severe. The price of food is going up rapidly, the price of gasoline is going up rapidly. The price of products that are shipped across this country, which is almost—everything is going up very rapidly, and we're not doing a darn thing about it because we're depending on the Saudis.

We had Senators go over to the Saudis just recently and ask them to open up more oil fields so we can buy more of their oil. Why are we doing that? Why aren't we drilling in America so we don't have to depend on foreign oil? It makes absolutely no sense to send billions and billions and billions of dollars overseas and to other countries that don't even like us when we won't even drill here in the United States.

And so I am so happy that my colleague has taken the time and the effort to get the message out to our colleagues that they ought to sign onto this petition. And I know he feels like I do—and we come down here night after night talking to each other—that we would like, if we could talk to the American people, to put pressure on their Congressmen and Senators to sign onto this policy of drilling in America, to sign this petition so we can move toward energy independence. If we do that, and I would say this to my American friends all across this country, if we do that, you watch the price of gasoline go down. It will go down like a rock. You will see gasoline below \$3 before you know it. But we have to say that we're going to drill for oil in this country, onshore and offshore. The minute we do that, America, just watch these prices go down. But first of all, we have to get this body and the other body, the House and the Senate, to get together and say, okay, we're going to drill. And we can't do that unless the American people put pressure on their Congressmen and Senators to sign on.

You have done yeoman service to this country, Congressman WESTMORELAND, because you've got 191 Members that have already signed that. And I'm going to work with you to get 218. And as I said before, the minute you get 218,

I will walk with you to the Speaker's office and say, hey, it's time to bring this to the floor.

You're doing good work. I'm proud of you.

Mr. WESTMORELAND. I want to thank my friend from Indiana. And I want to get 300 signatures because I would like for the American people to know that way more than just a simple majority is behind them for making sure that, not necessarily those of us that are our age, but our children and our grandchildren will not have to go through the things that we're going through today. Because in 1995, this Congress passed drilling in ANWR and President Clinton vetoed it. And by all estimates today, 13 years later, we would be getting one million barrels of oil a day.

And as Senator SCHUMER said over in the Senate about 2 weeks ago, if we could get OPEC to increase oil production by one million barrels a day, it would lower the price of gas 50 cents a gallon just like that.

We don't need to be sending our President over to foreign countries—and especially those that are not that friendly to us—with hat in hand on bended knee asking them to use more of their natural resources to provide us with oil when we won't use our own natural resources.

In talking about that, because this is the one thing that gets people fired up, Madam Speaker, and really gets those lines hot, that they want to find out if their Congressman has signed this very simple one sentence, is that it says, "In a recent interview on al Jazeera, Chavez"—now this is Hugo Chavez from Venezuela—"Chavez called for developing nations to unite against U.S. political and economic policies. What can we do regarding the imperialist power of the United States? We have no choice but to unite," he said. "Venezuela's energy alliances with nations such as Cuba, which receives cheap oil, are an example of how we use oil in our war against neoliberalism," he said. Then there was another date, on March 15, 2005, in the Washington Post, Mr. Chavez says, "We have invaded the United States, but with our oil."

Now, that would make your blood kind of boil, Madam Speaker, but this is what really gets people off is the fact that every day American families and businesses in this country write Hugo Chavez a check for \$170 million. That \$170 million could be going to our country. It could be going to provide energy independence. It could be going to provide jobs and build an industry, put into infrastructure; \$170 million a day to Mr. Chavez.

Now, what we've been doing this week with the Democratic majority—and let me remind you, Madam Speaker, that it was back in April of 2006 that then Minority Leader NANCY PELOSI made a statement, and she said, "Democrats have a commonsense plan to bring down the skyrocketing price of gas." And at the time it was about

\$2.06 a gallon. We are waiting on that commonsense plan to be unveiled. We're waiting on it. And we heard that there were going to be about four energy bills this week. And Madam Speaker, the energy bills that were brought out this week was kind of like putting lipstick on a pig.

H.R. 6377, the speculation bill, this is what it says, "to direct the Commodity Futures Trading Commission to utilize all its authority." In other words, we passed something that's already existing law. That's what we did, we passed something that was already existing law.

I want to read to you what happened in some quotes from H.R. 6. H.R. 6, Madam Speaker, was a bill that the new majority passed in January—I believe it was January 18, 2007—shortly after taking over, after they had promised the American people that they were going to lower gas prices. And I do want to read this one quote before I start reading these others. This is from PAUL KANJORSKI, and this was about 2 weeks ago. It said, "A man was trying to question Mr. KANJORSKI about his remarks that Democrats had overpromised during the 2006 congressional elections by implying that they could end the war if they controlled Congress."

□ 1915

"Now, anybody who is a good student of government would know that that wasn't true," Mr. KANJORSKI said at an Ashley town hall meeting in August, "but you know the temptation to want to win Congress back. We sort of stretched the facts, and people ate it up."

Yep, they ate it up. And right now they're paying a price for it.

I want to read you some quotes. These are from January 18, 2007, when we were debating H.R. 6:

Mr. PETER DEFAZIO: "It is sad to see the Republicans come to this. Now they laughingly say that this will lead to higher gas prices."

Well, gas was \$2.23 a gallon on the day Mr. DEFAZIO made his statement. It's about \$4.08 today. So we were probably right. This was no way to lower gas prices.

The same day, January 18, 2007, Mr. JIM MCGOVERN said: "What we are doing today really is responding to the outcry of the American people who are outraged by the fact that in the midst of being gouged by Big Oil . . ."

Well, we have had seven investigations into price gouging, and it hasn't lowered the price of gas. In fact, it has gone up almost \$2 a gallon since that statement was made.

The same day, JOHN HALL: "Today we are going to take back the tax giveaways to Big Oil so we can give the American people a break at the pump."

January 18, floor statement, KATHY CASTOR: "Instead of giving away billions of dollars to big oil companies which made multimillion dollar profits last year, the new Congress intends to

chart a course in a new direction by investing in alternatives for the American people. This will help America become energy independent and ultimately lower the utility costs for average Americans."

I would like to tell the gentlewoman that the price of natural gas is twice what it was.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Will the gentleman yield for a moment?

Mr. WESTMORELAND. I yield.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. I just want to follow up the train of thought that you have.

These taxes that they want to put on Big Oil, if there are excessive profits made and there is collusion or something like that, if there is criminal behavior, obviously everybody wants to make sure that doesn't take place. But whatever they're promising, everything that I have seen the opposition party promise, is that they are going to hit Big Oil with more taxes. That isn't going to get one more drop of oil to the—

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Reclaiming my time, evidently taking these tax breaks away is not lowering the price of oil either.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. No. That's right. They want to take tax breaks away. They want to increase taxes. And when you pass a tax increase on to a business or industry, oil or automobiles or whatever it is, it's passed on to the consumer in the form of price increases. So if they raise taxes, it won't give us one more drop of oil, which we ought to be drilling for right now, but it will make more expenses for the companies, and unless they can prove wrongdoing, those expenses will be passed on to the consumer in the form of another price increase. So raising the taxes on the oil companies is only going to exacerbate the problem and make the cost of oil go up more. And I don't understand why my colleagues don't understand basic economics and the law of supply and demand. It makes absolutely no sense whatsoever.

We need to pass legislation that will get more oil to the refineries, build more refineries, as you've said, and start getting the price of oil down because we are energy independent. And just talking about, okay, we're going to hit Big Oil, that may resonate with a lot of people. Some people say, oh, my gosh, they are not paying enough taxes. They ought to be taxed more. They are making too much in profits. That's not going to bring any oil to the market, not a drop.

So I just say to my colleagues, quit beating on a dead horse. We have got to become energy independent. We have to drill here in America. And I hope everybody in the country who may be looking at this, and we can't talk to them, but everyone in the country who is looking at this tonight ought to ask their Congressmen and Senators, Is what you're talking about in Washington going to bring one more drop of oil to the marketplace? Is it going to

move us toward energy independence? And if it isn't, they ought to sign that petition. They ought to get on with the program in making us more energy independent.

I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. WESTMORELAND. I thank you for saying that because that's exactly true, and the petition is actually so simple, one line: "I will vote to increase U.S. oil production to lower the price for Americans." And you can go to house.gov/westmoreland and see if the Congressman is there.

Madam Speaker, you would really have been intrigued at some of the things that I heard about why they couldn't sign it.

But I want to continue on. These are quotes from the H.R. 6 debate, which was on January 18 of 2007, after the new majority, the Democrats, had overpromised the American people, as admitted, and now they were coming up with something that was satisfying that radical environmentalist base of theirs, whom they felt like they owed their victory to, at least in part. So they were going to take away the tax breaks and other things.

I'm not a big fan of Big Oil. Don't get me wrong. But I had a high school economics teacher, and I didn't pay that much attention in school, but Colonel Wofford at Therrell High School there in Atlanta taught us that taxing manufacturers or producers does not lower the price to consumers. So for whatever that's worth, I will give that to the majority.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. If the gentleman would yield, let me just elaborate on that really quickly.

I hope everybody who may be paying attention to this, our colleagues in their offices, realize that business and industry have a certain margin of profit that they have to make to keep the doors open, whatever it is. And as you have just said, if they are taxed and they have a margin of profit of 8 percent and you raise their taxes, they're going to pass that cost increase on to the consumer in the form of a price increase. And that's what my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, your colleagues, don't understand.

We really need to do what's necessary to move toward energy independence, and raising the price of gasoline by taxing these companies is not going to solve the problem.

I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Thank you.

January 18, and these are quotes from H.R. 6, which was their mantlepiece legislation. This was their commonsense plan, I guess, for bringing down the skyrocketing gas that at the time was \$2.23 a gallon:

Ms. SHEILA JACKSON-LEE said: "The price per barrel of oil is \$50 plus." Today I think it's about \$140.

She goes on to say: "And so what is this Congress and this leadership doing? It is doing the right thing."

January 18, floor statement by STEVE ISRAEL: "This dependence on foreign

oil, Mr. Speaker, is a glaring threat to our national security."

I could not agree with you more. But we are more dependent today than we were when you made that statement.

Mr. JOHN LEWIS, my colleague from Georgia: "More than ever we need to get our priorities straight. We need to stop dancing while Rome burns and reverse the damage we have done to our environment. The American people need relief from energy costs."

And I couldn't agree with you more, Mr. LEWIS, but the problem is that gas has almost doubled since you made that statement.

RAHM EMANUEL: "Mr. Speaker, let's review the score: 'Big Oil, one; taxpayers, zero. Now the score is tied, and we are just getting warmed up.'"

Well, I hope you're about as warm as you're going to get, Mr. EMANUEL, because I don't know if we can stand any more of this.

January 18, 2007, floor statement from ALLYSON SCHWARTZ: "The United States imports 65 percent of the oil we consume. We spend \$800 million every day on foreign oil-producing countries. This threatens our economic stability, our environmental security, and our national security, and today we say 'enough.'"

Well, I say "enough" too, but if we had said "enough" then and started producing our own oil and started using our own natural resources, maybe oil wouldn't have almost doubled since then.

The chairman of the Democratic Congressional Committee, Mr. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN, said this: "This is the time to change direction, to set a new course on energy policy, to say to the country we're not just talking rhetoric, we mean what we say."

Mr. JOHN YARMUTH: "Mr. Speaker, my constituent, like yours, paid over \$3 a gallon for gas last year. Isn't that enough?"

Absolutely it's enough. But today we are paying over \$4 a gallon, and the reason we are is because we refuse to use our own natural resources for the health of this country and, like so many of these other statements said, for the national security of this country.

STEPHANIE TUBBS JONES: "Critics of H.R. 6 argue this measure will place an undue burden on oil companies which will lead to higher gas prices."

Okay. We must have been right because what happened was after H.R. 6, with gas being \$2.23 a gallon, today it is \$4.08.

What we are trying to do, before I yield to some of my colleagues, we have that petition that my friend from Indiana and I have been talking about, and what it says is "I will vote to increase oil production to lower the price of gas." And what that means is bringing onshore drilling online, offshore drilling online, deepwater oil online, and bring in more refineries online.

If we bring onshore oil online, it will save anywhere from 70 cents to \$1.60 a

gallon. To bring deepwater oil online, the Outer Continental Shelf, 90 cents to \$2.50 a gallon. To bring new refineries online, and not one has been built since 1976, would save anywhere from 15 to 45 cents. The gas tax holiday, 18 cents. To halt oil shipments to the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, a nickel.

Now, I have got some more quotes on that, and, of course, this was passed in the House probably back in May. We stopped those shipments in July, and so we should find out if it's going to bring it down a nickel a gallon. But if you look at what the Democrat plan was, and this is that commonsense plan, I'm assuming, but "sue OPEC," we have had a lot of success with that. "Launch the seventh investigation to price gougers." "Launch the fourth investigation to speculators." Now, we put that lipstick on that pig today with the speculation bill, that we just really passed something that's already on the books.

"Twenty billion dollars in new taxes on oil producers." I can hardly wait to see what that does to lower the price of gas. And we've seen that just not even putting the new taxes on them but just taking tax relief away from them has caused gas to almost double.

And then of course they've got "halt oil shipments," which is a nickel.

You can see that if we put our policies in place that gas today would be somewhere around \$2.10, and that's using very conservative savings over there. And you can see that if this works, and we don't even know that this is going to work, it would be about \$4.03.

So we hope that we will get 300 signatures on this petition to show the American people that we are not going to lie here in a fetal position or just keep doing repetitious things to make you think we are doing something. So if you could just go to the house.gov/westmoreland and look at it. We had 45,000 hits on it, Madam Speaker, last night. And we have had a couple of Members that have come to us and said, We have heard and we want to go from the "would not sign" to the "sign." So we can't do it, Madam Speaker, if people aren't going to be involved with us because we don't have that much influence over the majority.

I would like to yield to the gentlewoman from North Carolina, my classmate (Ms. FOXX).

Ms. FOXX. Thank you so much, Mr. WESTMORELAND. Thank you for leading this Special Order tonight and for the work that you have been doing for the last several weeks on this issue.

I think it's important that we say over and over and over again that the Republicans do have a plan to lower gas prices. We are doing everything that we can to create new sources of American-made oil because we are in touch with the American people. We go home every weekend. Most of us worked for a living before we came here; so we know what it's like to meet a payroll. We haven't been in govern-

ment all our lives. We haven't served in the Congress for 53, 54 years.

□ 1930

We are out there every weekend talking to the folks that we represent, and we know how the high prices of gasoline are hurting them. I think the Democrats are in strong denial. They think, again, that they can continue to bash the oil companies and hide their heads in the sand about what is going on.

I want to thank you and our colleague from Indiana and our other colleagues that are going to be speaking tonight who are exposing the Democrats for who they are and what they are. Again, as I said earlier, it's important that we let the American people know it's the Democrats who are in control. The President cannot create new gas sources or new oil sources. Only the Congress has the power to do what needs to be done. So we need to set the record straight.

It seems like the Democrats want to do everything possible to avoid creating new oil and bringing down the price of gasoline. They purport to represent the little person, the common person, the average person in this country, but it's obvious that that's not who they care about. They care about the radical environmentalists and toeing their line.

Now I consider myself an environmentalist. My husband and I are in the nursery and landscaping business. I cherish the earth. I am a big recycler. I am very careful about how I spend things. When you grow up poor, you learn to be careful with money.

But we know that our Speaker is the wealthiest person in Congress. Many of the Democrats are among the wealthiest people in the Congress. This really isn't hurting them at all. Again, I think it's very important that we debunk what they are trying to say to the American people about why their "use it or lose it" is what needs to be done. Again, they are good at blaming everybody else in the world for the problems that they create or that they can't solve.

I want to talk a little bit about their comment that all we have to do is get the oil companies to use the leases that are available to them and put out some facts. We had the Truth Squad. The Truth Squad hasn't been active lately, but we need to bring it back. As our colleague says, You're entitled to your own opinion, but you're not entitled to create facts.

So let me say something about why we need to do something more than simply pass legislation that has already been passed. During President Reagan's administration, 160 million acres of onshore land was leased for exploration. Today, only 50 million acres are leased. Only 6 percent of Federal onshore land is available for leasing. ANWR contains 10.4 billion barrels of oil, but is 100 percent closed.

I want to say something about ANWR, and I want to say something—

I saw these pictures on TV again tonight. When ANWR is portrayed, it is usually portrayed as this meadow with daisies growing in it, animals grazing. That isn't what ANWR is. ANWR is a frozen desert. The temperature gets to 60 degrees below zero there sometimes. Practically nothing grows there.

I was all over Alaska in 2005. I saw the oil fields. And, you know what? The oil fields don't look like the oil fields they show you on TV either. We have got to get those guys to get up-to-date pictures. You don't have these big cranes going up and down and back and forth like this. The oil wells don't even look like oil wells. They are little boxes with some gauges on them. If somebody didn't tell you that they were drilling oil there, you couldn't possibly know it. So we are not going to be spoiling our scenery, and we are certainly not going to hurt ANWR.

The OCS contains 86 billion barrels of oil, the Outer Continental Shelf, but 97 percent of it is closed. Onshore Federal land contains 31 billion barrels of oil, but only 6 percent of it is open to exploration. Oil shale on Federal land contains 2 trillion barrels of oil, but is 100 percent closed.

The Democrats' claims are wrong. They claim that there are 4.8 million barrels and 44.7 billion cubic feet of natural gas per day that may be extrapolated from unused Federal leased lands. Stephen Allred, Assistant Secretary of the Land and Minerals Management, wrote that anyone who makes these claims has a "misunderstanding of the very lengthy regulatory process. Lessees must comply with permit upon permit, often 27 total permits, without any drilling, and a lease does not equal oil. A lease is not a permission to drill, a lease is a permission to explore."

The Democrats assume that every acre of leased land can produce the exact same amount of oil and gas as the very best producing acres. This argument is not based on science, fact, or even common sense. A lease doesn't guarantee the discovery of oil and gas. A lessee may never actually find oil or gas. Between 2002 and 2007, 52 percent of all exploration wells were dry.

We have got to set the record straight. We can't let the Democrats get by with talking about things that aren't true and trying to fool the American people.

I see my colleague from Georgia has some wonderful maps here. Let me defer to you to talk about ANWR a little bit.

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Well, what I wanted to point out, this is what ANWR looks like. It's kind of a frozen tundra. I had some young people up here the other day from a school, and one of them asked me a question, said, Are you for drilling in ANWR? I said, Yes, I am. She kind of frowned. I said, Why? She said, I don't want you to ruin all the beautiful trees up there.

I tried to find a tree. I couldn't find a tree on the place. So there's a lot of

misunderstanding out there about what it is. Then you can look at the size of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and then the ANWR part as compared to the whole State of Alaska. A lot of people don't understand that Alaska—we have got a map of it somewhere—it's bigger than Texas. I know Mr. CONAWAY is here from Texas. Three times the size of Texas.

In fact, I will let Mr. CONAWAY talk about Texas and ANWR and other things, if he would like.

Ms. FOXX. If I might, before Mr. CONAWAY speaks, I want to make one more comment. I have been getting a lot of letters in the last couple of weeks from boy scouts who are talking about their concerns with what is going on. I got one this week that was really heart-rending. He said, If the price of gas keeps going up, we are not going to be able to go on vacation, we are not going to be able to go to the grocery store. We are not even going to be able to go to church anymore.

I think it's a real shame that we have people out there who are being denied the opportunity even to go to church because they cannot afford the price of gasoline. That is a sad state that we have come to in this country, and it's a sad commentary on the Democrats when they want to allow that to continue, when they have the power to do something about it.

I yield back.

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Let me say this, that it is a shame that we are having to limit so much of the travel. We need to conserve, but we can't conserve our way out of this. The real shame of this is when winter comes and natural gas is twice what it was. Mr. PETERSON from Pennsylvania was down here the other night and really opened my eyes to it. Not only are people not going to be able to leave their home, they are not going to be able to stay warm in their home when the winter comes and the price of natural gas.

To another one of my classmates and colleagues, Mr. CONAWAY from Texas.

Mr. CONAWAY. Well, I thank my classmate from Georgia for hosting this hour tonight.

We spend an awful lot of time at these microphones, both sides, basically talking past each other. Usually, the rhetoric is heated, and we don't listen. My experience is this is the worst 435 listeners on the face of the Earth because we are clearly more interested in hearing what I have got to say than listening to what you have got to say.

It happens time and time and time again at these microphones, basically because we tend to polarize and take the absolute positions, knowing full well that the best path for America is somewhere in the middle.

The best path for America includes working all the other alternatives and trying to develop those and trying to see as far over the horizon as we can for a day in which crude oil and natural gas will no longer be available, not by choice but by the fact it has all been

used up. It is a finite resource. We should be conserving everywhere we get, not on an individual basis but collective as well.

Yes, from our position, we should be exploring and developing and producing American resources; crude oil, natural gas, uranium, nuclear, oil shale, tar sands, the full gamut of these resources.

So if we can actually spend some time and sit together and try to work out our differences, I think there is a solution here that is really best for America.

When I first read the "use it or lose it" bill, my first reaction was how can 236 of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle and all of their staffs and all of their hired consultants know so little about a fundamental industry that is so vital to our national security, our economic security, and that is the oil business. Then I came to the cynical conclusion that I was wrong; they do know about it.

They do know exactly what they are doing by this bill that was up earlier today on a suspension calendar that we were able to defeat because over a third of us said that is wrong-headed.

Here's a quick basic. When an oil and gas oil company, generally a major oil company because it requires so much money, leases in the Gulf of Mexico, where we have been drilling for a long, long time, they pay a lease bonus, which is a sizable amount of money that is given to the Federal Government, that says for a time certain I get exclusive rights to explore and try to find crude oil and natural gas on this particular parcel of land. That bonus money is a sunk cost because if they find oil, they get to produce it. If they don't find oil, too bad.

This industry, much maligned from these microphones, is a group of dedicated, hardworking, patriotic, honest people who have an incredible tolerance for risk in this environment.

So they put up the lease bonus money, sometimes millions and millions of dollars, just for the right to wade into the bureaucratic morass that we have created around these circumstances, where you have got 27 permits and all kinds of stuff to get to just until you get to start the process. The process includes geological studies, geophysical studies, evaluation to try to find where on that parcel of land the best spot may be. You have got sunk costs, regulatory compliance costs.

Then, once you have decided where you are going to drill, that you decided that you think there are commercial reserves in place under that dirt, under that ocean, then you still don't know it until you drill it. Then you have got the cost of drilling, all the expense there. Then, if you find commercial quantities of crude oil, you have to build a production platform that has got to be uniquely built for the particular formation you have got, and that has got to be moved out into the gulf and anchored.

So what you have is many millions and millions, in some instances, billions of dollars of shareholder equity and debt that's been invested in trying to find crude oil and natural gas. Most of that is sunk cost. The only way they get a return on their investment, the only way they justify to their shareholders that they are making the right decision is to produce whatever crude oil and natural gas is in place.

So there are plenty of incentives already built in to produce. The idea that they would "sit" on production in the hopes that this price gets even higher, which they know the price is too high now, is just wrong-headed.

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Not only that, reclaiming my time for a minute, did not the Democrat majority in 1992 extend that lease period to 10 years? Was it prior not 5 years or 7 years what it was?

Mr. CONAWAY. The traditional offshore lease needs to be at least 10 years because from start to finish—we have got some graphs here that we can show you the logical, businesslike progression that companies have to walk down. What is not mentioned so far is all the litigation costs that are associated with these leases, particularly in the Rocky Mountains. If a company is able to win a lease, they are immediately sued by environmentalists to prevent their exploring for it. This current price of gasoline and crude oil is a product of supply and demand.

□ 1945

About 86 million barrels a day of production, about 85 million barrels a day of usage, and that varies from day-to-day. Inventories start dropping. That means demand has gone beyond the current production supply.

The most immediate area for quick relief in this regard would be Iraq. The Iraqi government has recently reached out to ExxonMobil, Shell, BP and Chevron to ask them, ask the experts, the folks who have the money to be able to do it, to come into Iraq and help them increase the amount of production that Iraq produces from oil and gas. They are about half of what they were under the Shah. And their fields are on land and the most quickly responsive to getting new oil and gas supplies to the market.

CHARLES SCHUMER, a colleague on the other side of the building, immediately weighed in, said that is wrongheaded and said he wants to find out some way to prevent Iraq from developing Iraq's resources.

It is not good enough that we prevent America from developing America's resources, but now we want to tell the Iraqis how they should be able to do it as well. We are about to run out of time. That is one of the things I wanted to say, and I appreciate getting to weigh in on this.

Here is the bottom line: Post-World War II, we have developed an American lifestyle that was incredibly dependent on inexpensive gasoline, suburbs, rural

America, that requires being able to drive to and from work, to and from recreation. Maintaining these high prices, as our colleagues across the aisle are intent on doing, is, in my view, an attack on that way of life.

You can call it partisan or not, but if you look at where the bulk of the Democratic support is in the Congress, it is in big cities, where they have access to mass transit, trains and buses and those kinds of things. But in rural America, flyover America, where most Republican support is, we don't have access to that.

I can assure you, the folks who live at Lake LBJ, named after Lyndon Johnson, and work in Marble Falls and Llano and Burnet, there are no buses to get to and from work. They have got to drive their cars.

So as we continue to on purpose maintain these high gasoline prices, this is an attack on our suburban way of life, an attack on rural American and the rural way of life and a lifestyle that has served us well since post-World War II.

One final statement: When I go home, this is all my constituents talk about. And if I were to come up here and take the position that I am going to ignore what they are saying, the way our Democrats appear to be doing, I would get tossed out of office, because apparently they are not hearing the same thing that you and I are hearing when we go home. Apparently in Democratic districts the high gasoline prices are not particularly relevant, which begs the question that 71 percent of Americans want to drill.

So I appreciate my colleague letting me speak tonight. We can solve this. We can fix this. But it is going to require some modification on our part, some modification on our Democratic friends' part. But we really do need to start listening to each other and quit demagoging, and particularly with respect to the oil business, considering those folks less than human as we look at what they do for America every day.

I yield back.

Mr. WESTMORELAND. I thank my friend. Now I have got to go catch a plane, but I hope that everybody will go to House.gov/westmoreland, Madam Speaker, to find out who is for drilling and who is for not just drilling, but like the gentleman from Texas said, for producing more of our natural resources to lower the price of gas.

Now I want to yield to my good friend from Nebraska, from the heartland of this country, from one of the corn-producing States, another one of my classmates that came in, and that is Mr. FORTENBERRY.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Well, I thank the gentleman from Georgia, my good friend. I am so sorry you have to leave quickly, but I understand. I hoped we could dialogue a little bit and perhaps broaden the discussion slightly. Mr. CONAWAY just gave a great segue by saying I think we can get this done, and I think that is what the American people are hungry for.

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Mr. BURTON will dialogue with you.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. You got to go. Mr. BURTON of Indiana. So you have to settle for me.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. That is fine too, my good friend from Indiana. But I believe the American people are hungry for a bold new energy vision.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. FORTENBERRY) is recognized for the remainder of the hour as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Madam Speaker, I think the American people are hungry for a bold new innovative vision for a sustainable energy future, and I think we have to have an honest conversation about the full range of options in our energy portfolio; looking at the opportunity to increase domestic resources, use of domestic resources in an environmentally responsible way, while also bridging to a sustainable energy future that looks at the full range of opportunities that are presented to us. And one of the things that I don't think is unpacked quite adequately, Mr. BURTON and Madam Speaker, is the issue of how small-scale entrepreneurs can play an increasing role in meeting a sustainable energy policy.

For many years now, by the way, I have powered my home by wind. Now, I don't have a wind turbine in my backyard. I live in the city. But, nonetheless, I used to be on the Lincoln City Council. Nebraska is a public power State. The Lincoln City Council basically has authority over the electric system.

We greatly encouraged them a number of years ago to move forward on wind energy and they integrated wind turbines into their portfolio. Of course, it is a small portion of their portfolio, but nonetheless, I thought it was important to support that. I paid a little bit more than \$4 a month extra on my energy bill to help underwrite that new development a number of years ago. Now they have integrated that cost and are sharing it with everyone. But, nonetheless, we have been in front of this trend for some time.

There is a hog farmer in my district, for instance. A couple years ago, Danny Kulthe in Colfax County, he just decided he was going to do something different. He has 8,000 head of hog. He captures that manure in a methane digestion pit, takes that methane, puts into a generator and produces enough electricity to power 40 homes from 8,000 head of hog. And he did this a number of years ago by pulling together the capital through a variety of innovative sources, some grant sources as well.

But a small scale entrepreneur like that is helping lead the way in a whole new energy vision that does several things: He solves an environmental problem, he wedded agriculture and energy policy, and he created additional income for his farm. Small scale entre-

preneurs like that I think are yearning to be engaged in this bold, new energy vision to help write the various chapters we are going to need to help solve this.

Mr. CONAWAY said it well. I think we can get this done, but it is going to take bold, new, creative thinking and public policies that I think underwrite this type of vision for a sustainable energy future.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. If the gentleman will yield just for a minute, I would like to say I agree with my colleague. These new forms of energy, these new technologies, are extremely important. I am kind of awed by the fact that you have taken the lead in Nebraska in getting this done.

But while we are doing that, the one problem that I think we have is we have to realize the transition to the new technologies is going to take time, and while that is taking place, we are going to have to have energy. That is why we ought to be able to drill in the United States, and do it in an environmentally safe way, so we can produce natural gas and oil here at home. And while we are doing the transitioning to the new technologies like you are talking about, we won't have to depend so much on foreign oil and what might happen in another part of the world.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. One of the issues regarding our very heavy dependence on foreign oil as well is that it does entangle foreign affairs considerations. That is a very significant issue. It greatly increases trade deficits, it entangles foreign affairs considerations. It leaves us vulnerable, not only economic, but in many other ways.

So I think it is very important as you are saying to look at full range of options in this portfolio we have, potential portfolio, and have a "both-and" discussion about how we bridge to that sustainable energy future by looking at, first of all, the easiest and best thing we can do quickly obviously is to think through the issue of conservation, how we become and continue to be and expand our ability to be good stewards of the resources we have, integrate these new technologies, use the resources we have now to bridge to that sustainable future.

Here is another example for you. I was visiting with a small-scale car manufacturer. They have some proprietary battery technology. I am not an expert in these areas, but apparently this vehicle can go 120 miles on a single charge. It takes 10 minutes to refuel it, so-to-speak, if you have the special equipment. If you don't, you can plug it into your 220 volt outlet, like your dryer plugs into, and that takes about six to eight hours. It goes zero to 60 in about 10 seconds, and it has a 5-star safety rating, crash rating. It is like a regular vehicle, except the engine is different.

So let's be clear: This spike in gas prices is causing great duress for families and farmers and small business

owners, particularly in an area like I represent that I think has some similarities to where you represent as well. And I think it compels all of us to begin to think boldly and innovatively about how we can get this done by looking at that full range of options that we have in our energy portfolio and bridge into that energy future.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. I want to thank the gentleman for taking this time. I know you have to catch a plane tonight. I think it is important that the people who are watching in their offices and maybe Americans who might be paying attention, that they realize that we are not just talking about oil and gas, we are talking about all forms of energy, and we want to get to that.

But, as you said and as has been said many times, that is going to take a transitional period, and during that transition, while we are trying to encourage more innovation, that we don't sink the ship by not having enough energy to get the job done.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. I really thank you for the opportunity to dialogue on this question and to focus, yes, on the urgency of the moment, while also creatively thinking about where we go. I mean, this is America. This is the land of innovation. We can get that done.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Thank you, Mr. FORTENBERRY. Have a nice trip back, and tell the people of Nebraska we said hi.

Madam Speaker, we are about to wrap this up. I just want to say to my colleagues, I see my colleague from down south is waiting patiently for us to end our Special Hour, I just want to say that we all want to work together. We want to solve this problem for the American people. We want to get the price of gasoline down and we want to go to new forms of energy. But it is going to take time. And during that time for transition, it is extremely important that we start moving toward energy independence. And a main cog in that wheel is drilling here at home for oil and natural gas.

So I hope, if I were talking to the American people, that they would talk to their Congressmen and Senators over this July 4th break. They are going to be there for parades and everything else. And I would say to the American people, if I could talk to them, talk to your Congressmen and your Senators. Tell them you want to be energy independent, you want to move toward energy independence, and we ought to drill here in the United States wherever we can.

REAUTHORIZATION OF THE FLOOD INSURANCE PROGRAM NEEDED

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. TAYLOR) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. TAYLOR. Madam Speaker, let me begin by thanking all the men and

women who work for the House of Representatives. I know that they are anxious to get out of town and begin their 4th of July holiday. But when we come back in July, it will be what I have considered over the course of my life the beginning of hurricane season, and we still have some unfinished business from Hurricane Katrina that affected my district and could potentially affect over half of all Americans, and that is the reauthorization of the National Flood Insurance Program.

If Congress does not act by September, this program that is of vital importance to people in the Midwest from flooding, the people on the Gulf Coast because of hurricanes, the people in New England because of storms, this program is important to everyone, it may not get reauthorized, and I think it would put a lot of Americans in jeopardy. Therefore, I think it is important that we not only reauthorize it, but fix some of the problems that we have discovered in the wake of Hurricane Katrina.

I want to begin with some homes from my hometown. This is one that belonged to Mr. and Mrs. John Hadden in Bay Saint Louis, Mississippi. If you take a look at it, it started about 10 feet off the ground. It had hurricane shutters. It had a low profile roof. It was built to be a hurricane-proof house. It was insured for about \$650,000. This is what it looked like the day before Hurricane Katrina. This is what the family came home to when they could get back to Bay Saint Louis.

I mentioned that they had \$650,000 worth of insurance with their insurance company, State Farm. Almost 2 years to the day of that, they still had not been paid by State Farm Insurance Company. Corky is a financial planner. He thought he had done everything he should do. What he didn't realize is that he was dealing with a company that instead of saying "we are your good neighbor," went out of its way not to pay him.

This is another home, a much more traditional, older home. In fact, it was one of the oldest homes in my hometown of Bay Saint Louis. It belonged to Jody and Betty Benvenuti. They had it insured for \$586,000.

□ 2000

Jody is in the insurance business. He understood the importance of it. He paid his premiums on time. He insured his home for what he thought it would cost to rebuild it. This is what it looked like when he evacuated, as he was ordered to by his Nation, the day before the storm. This is what he came home to. Within a couple of weeks, his good neighbor, the State Farm agent, informed him that he saw no evidence of wind damage, and therefore, he was going to get paid nothing on his homeowner's policy.

Another home in South Mississippi, more of a typical South Mississippi home, belonged to Mr. and Mrs. Pat Street. \$250,000 worth of insurance.

Prior to the storm, prior to all of the inflation that has taken place since then, that probably would have been a very good amount to be insured for. It certainly should have covered the cost of replacing it should something bad have happened. Again, they were ordered to evacuate. So this is what their home looked like as they were leaving before the storm. That's what they came home to. Again, they were told by the insurance company we see no evidence of wind damage. Notice the tree is knocked over to different angles. So, therefore, we're not going to pay you the \$250,000. We're going to pay you \$9,000 on this policy.

Madam Speaker, in South Mississippi, we asked the United States Navy to model what happened that day on August the 29th of 2005. What the Navy told us, I found, as a life-long resident of the gulf coast, to be pretty interesting. It's that we've always thought of maximum wind and maximum water occurring at the same time, but in the case of Hurricane Katrina, as you can see, category 2 and 3 force winds, which is up to 140 miles an hour, actually occurred several hours before the water showed up. When I asked the Navy to explain that to me, they said it's pretty simple. You can push air a lot faster than you can push water. The storm was moving ahead of the water.

So, basically, what it translates to is that homes like I just showed you were subjected to anywhere from 2-to-4-hours' worth of hurricane-force winds before the water ever showed up. As a matter of fact, it's not just that area that we're talking about, but as to the entire State of Mississippi, the insurance companies actually paid claims on wind damage all the way from down here on the Mississippi gulf coast all the way up to Memphis, Tennessee. They paid claims in every county in the State of Mississippi.

What was particularly interesting and what should be particularly interesting to the 53 percent of all Americans who live in coastal America is that the claims they chose not to pay were right down here where the winds were the strongest. They somehow would tell people that no, no, no. Your damage was not the result of wind. It was the result of water.

This is in fairness to them. These are the areas in South Mississippi that were affected by both wind and water. This is where the flood went. For those of you familiar with that area, this is I-1 to I-10. It was designed to be a hurricane-proof road, and by and large, the designers did a very good job. They came close to doing that, but there were some areas north of I-10 that flooded.

Our Nation has a plan to help people protect themselves in the event of a hurricane. Most prudent people whom I know, based on the fact that we have had other hurricanes in my lifetime—Hurricane Betsy and Hurricane Camille—don't know whether it's going