

WELCOMING REPUBLICANS TO THE NATIONAL RENEWABLE ENERGY LAB IN COLORADO

(Mr. PERLMUTTER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, good morning.

Tomorrow, several of my Republican colleagues are coming to Golden, Colorado, which is my home, to visit the National Renewable Energy Lab, and I want to welcome them, and I want to thank them for coming out to take a look at that laboratory. It's the finest laboratory in the world to come up with energy efficiency and renewable energy alternatives.

In this day and age with gas at \$4 a gallon, we have to look forward. We cannot remain hooked and addicted to oil and dependent on the Middle East. And so by them coming out to Colorado—they've never really favored renewable energy and energy efficiency—but it's time that we stop this addiction that we face.

And so we all know, and I'm beginning to hear my friends on the Republican side of the aisle recognize the need for renewable energy and energy efficiency because it's good for national security, it's good for the climate, and it is good for jobs; and I welcome them to my home in Golden, Colorado, and I look forward to them looking and visiting the National Renewable Energy Lab.

□ 1030

MOTION TO INSTRUCT CONFEREES ON S. 2062, NATIVE AMERICAN HOUSING ASSISTANCE AND SELF-DETERMINATION REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2007

Mr. ROSKAM. Mr. Speaker, I have a motion to instruct at the desk.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the motion.

The Clerk read as follows:

Mr. Roskam moves that the managers on the part of the House at the conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the House amendment to the bill S. 2062 be instructed to include in the conference agreement the provision in section 202(2)(A) of the Senate bill providing that development and rehabilitation of utilities and utility services shall be eligible affordable housing activities under the Indian Housing Block Grant Program.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. ROSKAM) and the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. FRANK) will be recognized for 30 minutes each.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois.

Mr. ROSKAM. Mr. Speaker, in the interest of full disclosure, my side of the aisle is looking at every conceivable opportunity under the House rules and in any reasonable parlance of conversation to talk about energy.

So when we're beginning this conversation today, follow me along, because we're going to start about Native

American housing, but eventually, the conversation is going to turn to energy. And why is that?

It's true, Mr. Speaker, because that's what the entire country is talking about, and that's what the entire country, I would submit, wants the House to focus its, no pun intended, energy on. So follow me, if you will.

When the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act of 1996 was passed, it reorganized housing assistance for Native Americans by eliminating several disparate Federal assistance programs and replacing them with the Indian Housing Block Grant program.

In the underlying statute, section 202 specifies eligible affordable housing activities for the block grant program, with the goal of developing, operating, maintaining, or supporting affordable housing or homeownership.

Further, section 202(2)(A) of S. 2062 amends current law and expands the eligible affordable housing activities under the statute. The language of the aforementioned bill would give tribes more flexibility under the Act by allowing a recipient to utilize funds not only for the acquisition and new construction of affordable housing, but it would also allow tribes to utilize block grant funds for the development and rehabilitation of utilities and necessary infrastructure to achieve greater energy efficiency.

Native Americans in this country are facing serious housing problems. Last Congress, the Financial Services Committee held several hearings to investigate the housing situation in Indian lands, which are the result of widespread poverty, high unemployment, homelessness, and a lack of affordable housing on Native American lands. In addition to reorganizing the program, the statute sought to provide Native Americans the right to self-determination and self-governance by allowing tribes to have greater freedom over their tribal housing. Reauthorization is an important step in addressing many of these issues.

Like every American today, Mr. Speaker, Native Americans are struggling with the high cost of energy. Whether on tribal lands or in suburban America, families are grappling with the escalating cost of energy in today's economy and the effect it has on maintaining housing affordability. Rising energy costs associated with renting or owning a home and the transportation cost of traveling back and forth from home to work are having a devastating impact on everyone's budget, including families in Indian country.

So the conversation then surrounds itself around greater flexibility and enhancing, literally, the opportunity for Native Americans to pursue energy solutions, particularly as it relates to utilities. And why is this important?

This is important, Mr. Speaker, because we need to take a holistic approach. We need to pursue every conceivable, reasonable energy alter-

native, Mr. Speaker. We've got to make sure that we don't leave any solutions on the table and we pursue everything.

So, for example, yesterday we had a hearing in the Financial Services Committee where the Chairman of the Federal Reserve, Chairman Bernanke, came in and commented on a wide range of elements of the economy. But what was particularly interesting, I found, among other things, was the assertion that he made when he said this: that if we increase production of oil by 1 percent, he anticipates a 10 percent drop in price. Let me say that again. I'm going to say that two more times, it's so unbelievable. A 1 percent increase in production, according to the Chairman of the Federal Reserve, who we defer on many things in our economy, he said would create a 10 percent decrease in price. A 1 percent increase in production would create a 10 percent decrease in price.

That is a staggering assertion from the person that both sides of the aisle give a great deal of deference to, both sides of the aisle listen to and consult with and are very interested in his comments. And he says, again, a 1 percent increase in production creates a 10 percent decrease in price.

So how does the motion to instruct weave into this? The motion to instruct is part of a broader conversation on energy, and I think what my side of the aisle is trying to assert in this and in other bills obviously that have come before the floor in the past several days, Mr. Speaker, is that when it comes to energy and when it comes to solutions, we need a holistic approach, and not to allow ourselves to be hidebound by an orthodoxy that has developed among some elements that are driving the other side of the aisle, to say, well, we're not going to pursue those things, those are not on the table, we're not going to pursue enhanced production, we're not going to pursue clean coal technologies, we're not going to pursue some of these other technologies that are so dynamic and are so vibrant.

So I have done my best, Mr. Speaker, to weave the energy debate into this motion to instruct.

With that, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, first, let me say that I think this is a very reasonable motion to instruct, and I urge all Members to vote for it.

I do want to take a moment, since we are talking about the Native American housing benefit, to explain to people what the major issue is. It's not the subject of a matter of discussion. It wasn't that controversial in our committee, and it has to do with the action of the Cherokee Tribe.

The Cherokee Tribe was one of several tribes that owned slaves in the 19th century and fought on the side of the South in the Civil War. When the Civil War was concluded, treaties were signed, not just with the Confederacy.

There was a treaty. Treaties were signed with these Indian tribes that were independent in which they agreed to incorporate into the tribe from that day forward the former slaves, known as the Freedmen, and their descendants.

To my great disappointment, the Cherokee Tribe has decided that they don't want to continue that arrangement. I think it is a violation of their tribal obligations, their treaty obligations. The Bureau of Indian Affairs agreed. They're a fairly small number of people. The question is not what blood people have but this treaty obligation that the Cherokees undertook.

Our committee voted to exclude the Cherokees from the housing benefit as long as they are out of compliance here. Now, it's interesting, some defenders of the Cherokees have said, well, let's let it go to the courts. But I've read the Cherokee's brief on this subject. It's been in a court case, and they say to the court, stay out of this, it's up to Congress. Well, I agree with the brief, and that's an important part of this bill. And that's one reason why we have asked for the appointment of conferees, and the conferees are people who strongly believe it's a fairly small number of people to talk about, that the Cherokee Tribe should not be allowed to expel them.

Now, as to the energy piece, we very much agree with this. I think it's probably the case that we have more to learn from the Native Americans about energy use and conservation than they from us, and it is, therefore, entirely appropriate that we say that the funding that is available be available for them to use in this way. As I said, I don't think this is a group that we have to force this on, but I think it's a useful one.

Indeed, it's a principle that we think very important, and in fact, later this month, the Committee on Financial Services will be voting on a bill. The gentleman from Colorado is the prime author. The gentleman from New Hampshire (Mr. HODES) has worked with the gentleman, Mr. PERLMUTTER, on it, and we very much agree with this principle, and indeed, we want to incorporate it in Federal housing policy in general.

Essentially our view is that where the Federal Government is funding housing in a fairly direct way, then we ought to require energy efficiency, and where the Federal Government is not funding it but helping enable it, we ought to encourage it. Of course, as we know, if you do energy efficiency into the building of the housing, you may have an increase in immediate cost and a long-term saving, not just in energy efficiency but in funding.

So I'm going to be yielding time to the gentleman from Colorado because we agree that this is a very useful, broad principle, and we agree with the approach of the gentleman from Illinois which is, since this instruction itself isn't controversial, we'll all use

it to talk about other things that we want to talk about. That's perfectly reasonable. We have nothing else to do this morning.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROSKAM. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I appreciate the chairman's encouragement on this motion and the clarity with which he spoke and articulated the need for it, and I think I want to follow up on a couple of the things that he highlighted, and I think they're important, and I think they're a first step.

But I would encourage all Members to take that first step and not stop walking, and I think the first step that the chairman talked about—and he mentioned the gentleman from Colorado and his efforts as it relates to energy efficiency and creating incentives, Mr. Speaker, in the Federal housing market, a tremendous goal, no question about it, pursuing efficiency, pursuing conservation efforts.

This whole energy debate that we're having, it seems to me, is a time at which there should be a sense of unanimity within our country about moving forward. We should be now a Congress that is listening to the overwhelming majority of Americans that are just hamstrung by the high price of energy. It's having a disproportionate impact on the poor, who are very concerned about it. It's having a disproportionate impact, creating a disadvantage for American businesses as they're struggling to compete overseas.

This should be the one issue that is able to transcend sort of regionalism. It should transcend other past alliances, frankly, because the crisis is so great.

In past national crises, what happens is that legislative bodies tend to get over themselves, and rather than looking inwardly, they look outside of the walls of the legislative body and say we've got a responsibility here; 435 people, we can do this, we can move forward.

Part of what the gentleman from Massachusetts talked about is part of that equation, that is, conservation, that is, energy efficiencies. But that's not enough.

Part of what the gentleman from Colorado mentioned a couple of minutes ago in renewables in his 1-minute speech is part of the equation, too, but you know what, that's not enough.

□ 1045

If we choose to go to the Financial Services Committee hearing and we choose selectively to listen to what the Chairman of the Fed says, then I think we're deluding ourselves and we're not serving the public well. What we've got to do is listen to when the Chairman of the Federal Reserve comments about energy production and the de minimis amount of production that has to be created and its impact on price. It was a staggering, staggering figure; 1 percent in increased production yields a 10

percent decrease in price. That is a bargain any day of the week. And the idea that this Congress, that somehow 435 people can't come together and come up with a plan to increase oil production by 1 percent, that's just ridiculous that we can't meet that challenge. One percent increase in production, a 10 percent decrease in price.

And so what you're seeing manifested here today, I think, is part of the conversation that this side of the aisle wants to have—wants to have on almost every conceivable bill—because what we're hearing back in our districts is I think what everybody's hearing back in their districts, and that is, the crushing weight of energy.

When there is that much pressure, we've got to make sure that we are not the generation of a Congress that simply chooses to kick the can down the lane. As Americans, we have a history of doing this, don't we, Mr. Speaker? We have a history. When we got the wake-up call in the mid-1970s that our energy policy at that point was dysfunctional and we had a real vulnerability as it relates to manipulations by actors overseas who have a low view of us and want to put foreign policy pressure on us—that is, the OPEC oil embargo—rather than dealing with that, what did we do as a country in the mid-seventies? We kicked the can down the lane. Prices sort of receded a little bit, the lines for gasoline went away and shortened, and rather than dealing with it, we kicked the can down the lane. So here we are, decades later, not only in the same place, but, in fact, at a more vulnerable place.

And so I sense that the country is hungry, Mr. Speaker, for this Congress to act, for this Congress to come together and say, you know what? There is not one side of the aisle that's got all the answers on this. You've got to completely move the ball. And I know it was sort of a foolish throw-away line that was quoted in the press by a Democrat staffer a couple weeks ago, but when he said the strategy is drive small cars and wait for the wind, I hope that that is not speaking for the majority.

And I hope that the majority is willing to say, you know what? When the Chairman of the Federal Reserve comes in and makes an assertion of the relationship between production and price, we need to listen to that. We need to pivot off of the past orthodoxy that has said we're not going to allow new production, we're simply going to close our ears and not allow the conversation to shift to new production.

There are some that say we're not going to drill our way out of this. Well, that's a thought. But certainly, responsible exploration has to be a part of this equation, Mr. Speaker, it has to be a part of this equation.

Some of our colleagues, as the gentleman from Colorado mentioned a couple minutes ago, they're going to go to Colorado and look at essentially the next generation of technology that is

clearly part of this. But they're also going to go up to ANWR and begin to really see what that's all about. Had we not been in the situation where the ANWR bill was vetoed in the mid-nineties, it would be, by conservative estimates, now pumping and producing at least a million barrels a day. Can you imagine what that does to the price equation?

Ultimately, what our job is, as Members of Congress, if we are united in our desire to get off of foreign oil, then what we've got to do is come up with 9 million barrels a day, or the equivalent, in terms of energy, or savings and conservation, efficiency and so forth. Nine million barrels a day. We can do this. We can absolutely do this. Far greater challenges have been laid out that our country has looked in the eye and has risen to, as the United States of America, and taken on that challenge.

I think that we cannot let this Congress adjourn, we can't go home for the August recess until we wholeheartedly take this challenge on. And if it means discharge petitions, if it means all kinds of procedural things to continue to drive the debate, I think we really have no other choice.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, preliminarily I would say that not only do I agree with the gentleman that we should not rule out any new production, I know of no Member of the House who takes that position. And even later today we will be dealing with legislation that the Committee on Resources brings forward that tries to increase and encourage production.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. PERLMUTTER), a member of the committee and a leader in the committee on matters of energy, be allowed to control the remainder of the time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Massachusetts?

There was no objection.

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Well, I appreciate the comments of my friend from Illinois, who has assisted me on what we call the Green Energy Act in the Financial Services Committee. And that really is an act—which we will hear in that committee in a week or 10 days—designed to improve energy efficiency and renewable energy in various housing across the United States. Because he recognizes, as do I, as do millions and millions of Americans, that if we save a Btu, if we save a gallon of gas, it's earned; a gallon of gas saved is a gallon of gas earned, a Btu saved is a Btu earned. We can do much better, Mr. Speaker, than we've been doing when it comes to energy efficiency and adding renewable energy sources. And that's what the Green Energy Act is all about. And it

applies to Native American housing, as does the motion to instruct, so that all Federal housing that's underwritten, supported by the Federal Government will be improved to energy efficient standards.

That's what we need to be doing, looking at efficiency, looking at renewable energy types of approaches. Because as the Chairman of the Federal Reserve said yesterday to the gentleman from California (Mr. BACA) when he asked the question, well, what do we need to do to improve our energy situation? The Chairman of the Federal Reserve said we have to be more efficient in the way we use our energy and we have to start with renewable energy sources.

But I agree with my friend from Illinois, it's a comprehensive approach. We need to have drilling in the 68 million acres that currently is under lease by the oil companies and is not being used. And we have the bill that comes up this afternoon, Mr. Speaker, called the DRILL Act, "Drill Responsibly In Leased Lands," that will go forward this afternoon so that oil companies take advantage of all the acreage that they have. Sixty-eight million acres is the size of New England plus, I think, New Jersey added on. It's a huge piece of property both on land and in the Outer Continental Shelf. That land and that water is already available for drilling.

So part of it is drilling, in terms of what we have right now. And I would encourage all my friends on the Republican side of the aisle to support the DRILL Act this afternoon because what we want to make sure is that oil companies don't just hold the property, but they use it. So they use it or they lose the lease; and we get it on to somebody else who's willing to proceed with drilling. Because we know we need to have oil—that's really a transitional fuel for the next 10 years—but we need to then move to energy efficiency and renewable energy sources so we're not addicted to one commodity.

This country has to have other ways to power itself. And as the gentleman from Illinois remarked, tomorrow some of my friends from the Republican side of the aisle are going to discover Golden, Colorado. It's the finest place on this planet. That's my home, that's my neighborhood. And I would recommend that everybody come visit Golden, Colorado, but the reason they're coming is to visit the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, which is the finest laboratory for alternative energy and sustainable development in energy efficiency in the world. And at that laboratory we are working on those next generation of energy and fuels and the way to power this Nation in solar, in wind, in biofuels, in hydrogen, in geothermal, and all sorts of other things. And I congratulate my friends for coming over to visit the National Renewable Energy Lab, which they really have never supported much until now.

But I do see some unanimity coming among both sides of the aisle and a

consensus coming among all of us that we have to really work on all phases of an energy plan, whether it's drilling, renewable energy, or energy efficiency.

Now, I've sort of boiled it down to three things, and I call it the three P's: Produce what we've got. We haven't talked about this second part, which is punish the people who are hoarding and gouging and speculating. And the third P is promoting energy efficiency and alternative energy. We can do that. And this country will be better off because it will be good for national security, it will be good for the climate, and it will be good for jobs. Thousands and thousands and thousands of "green energy" jobs will be available through promoting renewable energy and energy efficiency.

One of the things that my friend from Illinois just talked about, which is drilling in ANWR, which is a reserve, a refuge, that's 10 years off. And the greatest projections are that that's 3 months' worth of United States supply of oil. So we're going to wait 10 years to drill for 3 months' worth of supply.

Now, one of my friends who I just saw on the floor, the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. YARMUTH), calculated that an average American family will spend \$57,000 on fuel costs before the Republican plan to drill in ANWR would ever take effect. We've got to be working on other things before that. And the first one is to drill on the 68 million acres that are under lease and ready to go today. The second is to punish the people who continue to drive up the futures prices if, in fact, there is speculating or gouging going on. And the third is to promote alternative energy and energy efficiency.

But I support the bill that will come up before the House this morning, as does my friend from Illinois, and I would urge an "aye" vote.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROSKAM. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire as to the amount of time remaining on both sides.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Illinois has 17 minutes remaining. The gentleman from Colorado has 19½ minutes remaining.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROSKAM. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the motion to instruct conferees on S. 2062.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Illinois?

There was no objection.

Mr. ROSKAM. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

In response to the gentleman from Colorado, a slight word of caution. I think it was maybe an overstatement to say that the National Renewable Energy Lab didn't enjoy any support from this side of the aisle until now. I find that difficult to believe. I don't have any roll calls in my presence, but

my hunch is that a program that big and that expansive didn't just get that way because of support from one side of the aisle.

But be that as it may, I think there is an opportunity here, because the opportunity is a recognition of all Members of Congress that we are at a pivotal point as it relates to energy policy. And the pivotal point is one that should bring us together.

Regardless of what one's motivation is, there is a desire to have a long-term energy solution. And part of that has to be an increase in our supply, Mr. Speaker; part of it has to be an increase in renewables. It has to be pushing new technologies, as the gentleman from Colorado talked about, conservation and efficiency measures.

There is a whole host of bills that, unfortunately, the Speaker is not allowing to come to the floor. For the life of me I don't understand it when, at the beginning of her assuming the office of Speaker, she talked about really having a desire for a bipartisan solution to most problems. She was going to change the tone. Unfortunately, we just haven't seen that.

Let me go through a couple of these bills that are literally pending that are bottled up in committee that the majority party, and its leadership, I sense—and I don't want to speak for the rank-and-file, but I do know several rank-and-file members of the majority that are terribly frustrated right now and have a desire to have some bills voted on that are sensible and that the overwhelming majority of the American public says would be a good idea.

□ 1100

For example, H.R. 3089, the No More Excuses Energy Act of 2007. Here is what it does. It reduces the price of gasoline by opening new oil refineries. That's something we haven't talked about this afternoon or this morning. We've not had a new oil refinery put in place in the United States in 30 years. Investing in clean energy sources such as wind, nuclear and captured carbon dioxide and making available more homegrown energy through environmentally sensitive exploration of the Arctic Energy Slope and America's deep-sea energy reserves, that's one bill.

Why isn't that bill on the floor in an open rule with amendments and with the ability to have a conversation about it? Well, unfortunately, the New York Times today gives us part of the answer, and the answer is not really a pretty one.

According to today's New York Times, in a report, it says: "Ms. Pelosi, who is now House Speaker, can prevent a vote on expanded drilling from reaching the floor." Further quoting: "She and Senator Harry Reid of Nevada, the majority leader, appear intent on holding the line against calls to approve drilling in areas now off limits." Then further—and this is actually, I think,

the darkest part of this report—"In a private meeting last week, according to some in attendance, Ms. Pelosi told members of her leadership team that a decision to relent on the drilling ban would amount to capitulation to Republicans in the White House and that she was having none of it."

Is that what this has come down to? Is that what this has come down to? Depending on how you're calculating, 70-plus percent of the American public says, "Give us more energy. Please, put these tools on the table." Then we have a meeting that this is about "capitulation" and not wanting to give someone a political advantage. Is that what this has come down to?

I can't even tell you, Mr. Speaker, how incredibly disappointing that is to me that someone would say that it is a matter of political pride that's going to keep an idea off the table. Why can't we have the bill on the floor that I just mentioned?

How about this, H.R. 2279, to Expand American Refining Capacity on Closed Military Installations. That is nothing but a good idea. We've got distressed military installations. They're not well utilized. Let's use them. It reduces the price of gasoline by streamlining the refinery application process and by requiring the President to open at least three closed military installations for the purpose of siting new and reliable American refineries. We have not had a new refinery for 30 years in this country, and this is our opportunity to change that dynamic.

There is H.R. 5656, to Repeal the Ban on Acquiring Alternative Fuels. It reduces the price of gasoline by allowing the Federal Government to procure advanced alternative fuels derived from diverse sources such as oil shale, tar sands and coal-to-liquid technology.

In my State and in your State, Mr. Speaker, in southern Illinois, there are more British Thermal Units of energy in the coalfields of southern Illinois, in those gigantic fields, than in the entire Saudi oil fields. Imagine that. There are more BTUs of energy, more energy in southern Illinois, than in all of the oil fields of Saudi Arabia. Yet it is largely untapped.

Why is it untapped? Well, it's untapped, in part, because it's high sulfur coal, and it's pretty nasty stuff to burn and to have emitted.

I have referred to this word "orthodoxy." There has developed this thinking that has become so hidebound that, regardless of the facts that are around, it eventually says we don't even want to have a conversation about coal. We don't even want to contemplate coal because certain interest groups have told us that all coal is always bad all the time. Well, maybe not so.

Maybe this Congress should be part of the solution. This Congress could be part of the conversation that says no, no, no, that we're not going to listen to the bumper stickers. We're going to be policymakers, and we're going to unleash the potential to begin to transform a region.

Mr. Speaker, you and I represent Illinois. You know southern Illinois, and you know how challenged that area is. Can you imagine if in this country we began to unleash resources and, with that, the type of dynamic social and economic change that could come about in an incredibly challenged rural area? It begins to transform everything. As a State legislature, we struggled constantly with diverting State money to those areas, to diverting Medicaid money to those areas. Why? Because they were devastated from an economic point of view.

What do we have here? What is the opportunity here? The opportunity here is not only to create more energy but ultimately to transform regions to make them prosperous and to make them environmentally sensitive. Absolutely. It is to get them to the point where they're producing and where they're on their own two feet. We ought not to squander that opportunity.

There is H.R. 2208, the Coal Liquid Fuel Act, which reduces the price of gasoline by encouraging the use of clean coal-to-liquid technology, authorizing the Secretary of Energy to enter into loan agreements with coal-to-liquid projects that produce innovative transportation fuels.

These are all bills where there are discharged motions either pending or coming. A "discharge motion" is where 218 of us come together, where 218 of us come together and say: You know what? We're not going to be limited. We're not going to be limited to secret meetings where this is about capitulation and political agendas. We're not going to be limited to that. We're going to break free of that. Two hundred eighteen of us are all it takes for us to sign those discharge petitions. Whether one is a Republican or a Democrat, it doesn't matter. All that has to happen is that 218 Members go down to the well and sign their names. Then you know what? The bills are on the floor. Then we can talk about them, and we don't have to whisper about them in the corridors. We don't have to be held hostage to secret meetings where agendas are about—and this is the characterization—capitulation. I mean I can't even begin to tell you how disappointing that is.

There is H.R. 2493, the Fuel Mandate Reduction Act of 2007. It reduces the price of gasoline by removing fuel blend requirements and onerous government mandates if they contribute to unaffordable gas prices.

Mr. Speaker, our constituents are in crisis. They are crying out to us. They want us to lead. They want us to get over past grievances. They are tired of this place. Haven't we all seen the polls? Haven't we all seen the low view that they have of the United States Congress? Why? Because of meetings like this that characterize solutions as capitulations. We can do much better than that.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I might consume for a couple of comments.

I want to respond to my friend from Illinois concerning the support of the National Renewable Energy Lab. We'll start with that one.

I would concur that there certainly has been some support, but the two things I would point out to my friend are one, last in 2007 was the first time, really, the budget had been increased to the National Renewable Energy Lab in years and years and years under a Democratic majority. My friends who are going to go visit the National Renewable Energy Lab all voted against that, number one.

Number two, in the prior Republican Congress, there were cuts to the National Renewable Energy Lab where, in fact, scientists and engineers were going to be laid off. They were, in fact, laid off until the President went out to visit the National Renewable Energy Lab, and the department scrambled and reinstated those engineers and scientists who were going to be laid off in the face of the need for coming up with other ways to power this Nation. So I know that my friend from Illinois and I are in agreement that we need to change the way we power this Nation, and there is a transition to get there.

Then we need to be efficient in the way we use our energy, and we need to come up with other ways so we're not beholden to just one commodity. When we're beholden to one commodity, oil, we're beholden to eight oil countries, many of which don't like the United States, and to five oil companies. We have to change that picture or we're always going to face this problem. It's time for us to learn from our past.

The other thing I'd like to say in response to my friend from Illinois is that he talked about secret meetings. Well, the secret meeting that we really need to be talking about is the secret meeting held by Vice President DICK CHENEY to create the energy policy that now has resulted in \$4-a-gallon gasoline.

When the Bush administration took office, the price of oil per barrel was less than \$30. Today, it's \$150 or thereabouts. Maybe it has come down a little bit in the last few days, but is it any wonder that that happened with two oilmen running the White House? I don't think so.

With that, I'll yield 5 minutes, or such time as my friend may consume, to Congressman YARMUTH from Kentucky.

Mr. YARMUTH. I thank the gentleman from Colorado, and I appreciate his excellent work on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, the one thing that's encouraging about this debate is that we all agree in this Chamber that we need to do something about high gas prices. We need to do something to reduce our dependence on oil. We need to do something pretty quickly because the American people are hurting. The economy

is feeling the impact of these prices, and immediate action is required.

Now, let's consider the two options that we have before us. We have the option that has been put forward by our colleagues on the other side of the aisle, which basically is to open up new areas of potential oil reserves for drilling, which everyone agrees is a solution that will not manifest itself until years down the road. The Bush Energy Department, itself, says no appreciable reduction in gas prices will occur from drilling in the Outer Continental Shelf or in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge until 2030.

As attested by my colleague from Colorado, the average American family will spend \$57,000 on gasoline before the Republican plan saves them a penny. That is hardly the kind of relief that the American people are looking for.

There was a very wise man once who said the significant problems we face today will never be solved by the same level of thinking that got us into those problems. That was Albert Einstein, a pretty smart guy, and that's what the Republican plan is. It's to do more of the same to solve the problems that we're now in. I think the American people are much smarter than to fall for that type of proposition.

On the other hand, the Democratic majority has a plan that can reduce oil prices virtually immediately. We call it Free America's Oil because we do have plenty of oil at our disposal to use to bring down prices immediately. That is only half the problem, though, because, as my colleague from Colorado mentioned, we've got a long-range proposition to deal with. We don't want to find ourselves year after year after year in the same dilemma in which we find ourselves now. We've got to look in a different direction. I'll return to that in a second, but let's talk about the immediate action we can take.

We have 700 million barrels of oil right now that the United States owns that are sitting in the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, 700 million barrels. When we invaded Iraq, we took that down to 600 million. When we had the Katrina disaster, we went to about 600 million barrels. We have far more oil in the Reserve than we will ever need for any eventuality. If we were to release just 10 percent of the oil in the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, 70 million barrels, into the market over the next few months, history has shown us that we can immediately impact the price of oil.

There are three times in the last 17 years that we've done it. The first was in 1991. The most recent was in 2005. Each time we did it, the price of oil dropped, in 2005 by 10 percent, in 1991 by a third. Wouldn't it be great to have oil down under \$100 a barrel. Again, it seems hard to imagine that we're actually thinking that would be a desirable goal, but at \$140, it would be very desirable.

□ 1115

We can do that if the President just uses his authority to release that oil.

We own it. It's ours. We have paid for it. We can use it to benefit the American people and get action now.

Two other things we're proposing can bring relief in the relatively short term. First, we have 68 million acres onshore and offshore already under lease to oil companies. They can drill virtually immediately. They don't need to do exploration. They don't need to clear environmental hurdles as they would in these other areas they want to drill. They can drill tomorrow. We have a proposal. We call it "use it or lose it." It's part of our "free America's oil" proposal that if we pressure the oil companies by threatening to take those leases away if they don't make a good-faith effort to produce on them, we can encourage them, again, to use the resources we already have to get oil onto the market, increase the supply and bring the price down.

Finally, we have in Alaska, west of the area that they want us to drill in, the wildlife refuge, 23 million acres that are already available for drilling. It's called, ironically enough, the National Petroleum Reserve area because there is petroleum there, estimates up to 10.6 billion barrels of oil, more than would ever be in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. We want them to drill there, not in a pristine area where we don't know how much oil exists. So again, we have options. We have oil on American soil. We have oil we own that we can use to bring prices down in the very short term. And we ought to be embracing that policy.

One other mention about the long-term effects. President Bush said the other day that the reason we need to open up all these other oil areas, potential oil areas, is because of the psychological effect, because if the oil speculators know that down the road there is this massive supply coming on, the price will drop. If that is what we are relying on, I say we have a much better chance to affect the psychology of the market if we change our emphasis from oil to alternative and renewable fuels, alternative sources of power. We know the technology is there. We just have to invest in it, develop it and refine it. But that is the kind of psychological effect, the knowledge among speculators not just that there will be more oil on the market 20 years from now, but we won't need any oil 20 years from now because we're going to go in another direction. The psychological effect of that will be compelling and will be devastating to oil prices.

So I say we have a plan both for short-term and long-term energy policy that does make sense, that is not the same old rhetoric and that is not the same level of thinking, as Einstein said, that we had that got us into this problem. And I think the American people know that this is the direction we need to go on. And I think that by responding today, by passing the DRILL Act, that we can take the first step towards energy independence and toward helping the American consumer deal with these incredibly high prices.

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, how much time does each side have?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Colorado has 11 minutes. The gentleman from Illinois has 7½ minutes.

Mr. ROSKAM. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SESSIONS).

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, we have heard about this rise in oil prices that is related to this meeting. And I would like to yield to the gentleman from Colorado to tell us about this meeting that took place and why he can make the accusation that George Bush and DICK CHENEY as a result of this private meeting have raised oil prices. That meeting took place years ago. I would like to hear about this.

I would yield to the gentleman.

Mr. PERLMUTTER. I appreciate my friend from Texas yielding to me. If people knew what happened in this secret meeting, we might know today why oil is at \$4.35 a gallon, why it has gone from under \$30 a barrel to almost \$150 a barrel. But the Vice President has refused to provide any information to the public or to the Congress about that meeting.

Mr. SESSIONS. Reclaiming my time, it is obvious that the gentleman made a statement saying gas prices have risen because of this private meeting. And now the gentleman has not only no clue what took place in the meeting, as I don't either, but now makes the leap of assumption that 8 years later that gasoline is going to rise in price.

The facts of the case are this. The facts of the case are that this Congress refuses to provide the energy companies, the oil companies, with what they need where they say the oil exists. And this Democrat Congress is refusing to help consumers. And since this Democrat Congress, this new Democratic Congress has taken over, prices have risen dramatically.

There is not some plan that exists. There is no secret plan. There is no plan because the plan that is happening is what the Democrat plan is. It's working exactly as the Democratic Party wanted. Prices are rising significantly. And that is their plan. What I think would be disingenuous is to say, oh, my gosh, we wish prices would go down. That is just disingenuous if you don't back it up with facts of the case of how that could be done.

To go to the emergency petroleum reserves would be a disaster. And it would be a disaster because that is there in an extreme national emergency. We've heard this morning, we can think of no reason why that would not be used. Well, there are people who can think of reasons. And it's called if a group of terrorists wiped out every tanker that was coming to the United States and our military did not have any energy or oil. That could be a good reason not to go to the Strategic Petroleum Reserve.

The fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, is the new Democrat majority does

not intend to do anything to help the American consumer to get more oil supplies and thus reduce the price of gasoline.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman from Texas has expired.

Mr. ROSKAM. I yield the gentleman 2 additional minutes.

Mr. SESSIONS. The fact of the matter is that this entire body, on virtually every single piece of legislation, sees where the energy and oil issue comes up because the Republican Party is trying to get the new Democrat majority to change the rules that are hamstringing consumers all across this country.

And what we're trying to say, whether it be an appropriations bill up in Rules Committee or here today, is that the American consumers, the American people deserve and want this Congress to act. And all we hear are excuses. We hear about all this land that is available out there. There sure is. Oil companies don't want to drill dry holes. They want to drill where the oil is. And we are coming here to the floor, virtually every piece of legislation, every single committee in this House of Representatives is asking for the opportunity to be for the American consumer as opposed to some special interest group.

And what we're told is that we need to change the way we do business and we need to be more like Europe. Well, being more like Europe is not an answer for America. We're not just a country. We're the greatest nation on the face of this world. And we need the ability—and the American people are asking all over this country for the new Democrat majority to quit what they're doing and allow our free enterprise system and the oil companies to bring to bear those oil resources that we have. And arguing all day every day that they have all that land is not the right answer.

What is the right answer is we need to go offshore. And we need to be able to go to ANWR. The amount of the acreage is 19 million acres in ANWR. But all they need is 2,000 acres. They don't need the other 18½ million. They need that 2,000. It is one-ninth the size of DFW Airport, my airport that I land at every week. That is all we need. We will not rest our case.

Mr. PERLMUTTER. I yield myself such time as I might consume.

First, I would just like to say to my friend from Texas that with two of them in the White House and both Houses of the Congress in Republican hands up until 2006 when we started changing the direction of this nation, we saw that oil price going up and up and up and up. And it didn't change under them. If we always continue to drill and don't look at that as a transitional fuel and move to alternative energies, we're going to be in trouble. And we're going to have to learn this lesson over and over and over again.

With that, I will yield 4 minutes to my friend from Wisconsin.

Mr. KAGEN. Mr. Speaker, today's impossible prices for oil have finally forced America to ask the essential question: "Where's the plan?" We're in a situation where every business, every homeowner, every retiree, every local and State government and every United States citizen is being forced to live under crisis management which is a recipe for failure.

To become an energy-independent nation, the first step we must take together is to develop a plan, but not behind closed doors, but to do it right here in the open. So let's stop pointing fingers and start holding hands. Let's join hands. Let's begin to think together because we're really all in this together.

And let's agree. Let's begin by agreeing that a successful energy plan must begin to include three essential elements. First, drill for new oil right here in America with any such oil obtained from within our territorial waters or national boundaries being sold to American citizens first. And the Oil for America Act will do just that. Secondly, we must invest in every form of renewable energy available and provide the tax incentives for wind, for solar, geothermal, biomass, cellulosic and every form of clean, home-grown energy. We have to provide those incentives so private industry will take charge and take the lead. And third, we must act to prevent any price manipulation anywhere in the world in our oil marketplace.

Now we have already passed legislation. We passed H.R. 6377. This was to direct the CFTC to do immediate oversight to prevent manipulation. We passed a farm bill that moves us towards energy independence, towards home-grown ethanol and energy. But we can't grow our way out of this problem. We also closed the Enron loophole, guaranteeing that the marketplace will work more effectively.

Drill for new oil in America, invest in renewable forms of energy and prevent energy price manipulation. But our economy is still dependent on fossil fuels today and foreign sources of energy, unfortunately. But oil is still one of our most precious assets. So let's make certain that the more than 140 billion barrels of oil that are underneath America go to Americans first.

Now you have a choice here. We have to work together. Under your approach, we will have a solution 10 years from now. Under our approach, we will have a solution in 10 days, because the SPR, Strategic Petroleum Reserve, was opened up several times in the past. In 1991 there was a 33 percent decline in the price of oil almost immediately. In 2000, it went down nearly 19 percent. The oil price went down 9 percent in 2005. We can bring about rapid short-term relief even as we plan for the future. But we cannot solve this problem by drilling alone. We cannot solve it by growing corn alone. We have to work together. We have to drill for new oil, invest in renewable sources of energy

and prevent any marketplace speculation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Illinois has 2½ minutes remaining and the right to close.

Mr. ROSKAM. I have no other speaker seeking recognition. I will reserve the balance of my time and have the right to close.

Mr. PERLMUTTER. I yield 2 minutes to my friend from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO).

Mr. DEFAZIO. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I had to come to the floor when I heard the gentleman from Texas and he talked about the Democrats' plan is working. No, actually, we're living under the Republican energy plan. Remember that in 2001 DICK CHENEY had secret meetings with all the executives in the oil industry and other energy producers. And in 2005—the gentleman has a short memory—the Republicans, after 4 years, passed an all-Republican energy policy written by DICK CHENEY, passed by the Republican House and the Republican Senate and signed by George Bush.

And it is working exactly as some of us predicted. We said it would make us more dependent on Saudi oil. It did. Fifty-two percent imports when George Bush took office, 58 percent of our oil is imported today. We said it would raise the price. It did. When George Bush took office, gas was a \$1.47 a gallon. Today it is \$4.39 a gallon in my district.

But it raised one other thing that is vitally important to the Republican Party. Their friends in the oil industry have made a pile of money since George Bush took office. Five hundred eleven billion with a "B" dollars profit for the oil industry since George Bush took office. So, yes, this is intentional. And yes, it was designed, signed, sealed and delivered by the Republican Party when they controlled all of Washington, D.C. We are living under their energy policy.

We are trying to set a new, sustainable energy future for this country. And in the interim, yes, we want to develop domestic resources with the DRILL Act to help us with that transition. But we want to break the dependence. You don't. You made it worse.

□ 1130

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Vermont (Mr. WELCH).

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I would like to refer people to the photograph that was just on display when the gentleman from Oregon was speaking. It showed the President of the United States hand in hand with King Abdullah as they were about to go into a meeting to discuss oil. And the President of the United States had a mission, and it was to ask the leader of another country, not particularly a friendly country to us, to solve our problem by increasing production of oil

in Saudi Arabia in order to get us out of the jamb we are in here in America.

The question that we face in this country is whether or not we are going to address in the manner of a confident country, of an ingenious country, of a country willing to take on its own problems, the challenge of changing our energy future.

The President's approach, as was described by Mr. DEFAZIO from Oregon, is to drill yesterday, to drill today, to drill tomorrow, and to drill forever. And the news is in. Oil is not in infinite supply. And if we need any better authority about the limitations of oil, think about Mr. T. Boone Pickens who made a very successful career as a Texas oilman, and he points out the obvious: if you have 87 million barrels of oil consumed today, you have production at 86 million, the proven reserves are limited, the capacity to actually get more out of the ground is somewhat limited, it can be expanded but not at infinite levels, it is time to begin yesterday to plan an alternative energy strategy.

Mr. Speaker, a self-confident country does not put its head in the sand and ignore the problems that it faces; it challenges them. It accepts the burden of responsibility. It has the confidence that we have the people, the talent, and the political will to make that transition to an alternative energy economy.

The American people have that figured out. They know if we are going to create jobs and strengthen our economy, we have to know that green jobs are good jobs and that taking on the challenge of filling up the gas tank in a way that uses alternative energy and creates jobs is the pathway to the future.

So this debate is really a fork in the road. It is between two very clear choices. The oilmen in the White House, Mr. Bush and Mr. CHENEY, believe that the fuel of the future is oil. They think that we can drill our way out of the situation we are in. Americans, I believe, have come to the conclusion that is wrong and will fail and that the pathway to the future is alternative energy.

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I think we need to return the Chamber to what this bill is, which is Native American housing and the motion to instruct conferees, which we are all in agreement upon, and I would urge an "aye" vote on the motion to instruct.

We have gotten into a great debate over energy. And as I said earlier, the gentleman from Illinois and I and a number of people that sit on the Committee on Financial Services have worked on a bill which we call the GREEN Act. It is Green Renewable Energy Efficiency Neighborhoods. The purpose of that bill, similar to the motion to instruct with respect to Native American housing, is to provide energy efficiency incentives and renewable energy incentives with respect to housing across America. It creates a green

mortgage market so there is a market to buy mortgages of homes that are energy efficient or have renewable energy features. It also helps to upgrade 50,000 of the 3 million units that the Housing and Urban Development either own or underwrite so that people in low to moderate-income housing have energy-efficient homes and lower utility rates.

One of the things that we and the gentleman from Illinois were talking about at the outset of this bill, was about trying to reduce utility costs in Native American housing, and that goes across the board for all low to moderate-income homeowners.

It has a number of other things involving residential energy development grants, as well as utilizing the services of the banks in particular areas, low-income housing areas to add energy efficient and renewable energy features to homes in various areas in cities and towns across the country.

I urge an "aye" vote on the motion to instruct. I look forward to this bill going forward, and I look forward to having this conversation on the GREEN Act with my friend from Illinois in a couple of weeks when that bill comes for markup.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ROSKAM. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

I want to join everybody that has joined in this debate today. It has been robust and transparent. But I think there have been some false choices placed out here, and I want to clear that up.

I think I am speaking for a majority on this side of the aisle that says, Let's do it all. Let's have an all-of-the-above approach.

Our side has not come to the conclusion that simply enhanced production is going to get us out of this because it is not going to. But enhanced production has got to be part of the solution. So you would find a great deal of support, Mr. Speaker, for conservation efforts on this side of the aisle, at least from this Member, for increased efficiency efforts, and for renewable efforts. But all of those things by themselves don't do American consumers any good really in the short run.

Even the call by the Speaker of the House to release part of the strategic oil reserves, that only amounts to, one suggestion is selling 75 million barrels out of the strategic oil reserve, about 10 percent of the reserve, so about a 3-day supply of oil. That doesn't do much for anybody. So let's not fall into that trap; although it is an admonition on the Speaker's part, ironically, that supply does affect price.

But here is the real point. The other side of the aisle has controlled 30 minutes this morning, and did you notice something? Did you notice that there was no answer to what the Chairman of the Federal Reserve said yesterday? The Chairman of the Federal Reserve—and this is now the fourth or fifth time that I have put this out on the House

floor today—said simply by increasing production by 1 percent, Mr. Speaker, that has an impact of dropping the price by 10 percent.

We have heard some of the best and the brightest, absolutely the A team, some of the folks who came through in the 2006 election, we have heard from the best and the brightest, and yet no answer. They didn't even pick it up. This is not some fact that I trotted out 2 minutes ago, this is a fact that I put out two or three or four times, and yet the silence on the other side of the aisle has been absolutely deafening. Why, because it doesn't fit into the orthodoxy that has absolutely bound this leadership and has taken this debate from what should be a national security debate, what should be a transition time in our public life, what should bring us all together, Mr. Speaker, and has devolved into simple pettiness and capitulation. We can do better. We know what we need to do.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the previous question is ordered on the motion to instruct.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion to instruct.

The motion to instruct was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

APPOINTMENT OF CONFEREES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the Chair appoints the following conferees: Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts, Ms. WATERS, Messrs. WATT, AL GREEN of Texas, CLEAVER, BACHUS, Mrs. CAPITO, and Mr. PEARCE.

There was no objection.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 6515, DRILL RESPONSIBLY IN LEASED LANDS ACT OF 2008

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 1350 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 1350

Resolved, That it shall be in order at any time on the legislative day of Thursday, July 17, 2008, for the Speaker to entertain motions that the House suspend the rules relating to a measure concerning the domestic production of oil and natural gas.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Vermont is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SESSIONS). All time yielded during consideration of the rule is for debate only.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise

and extend their remarks and to insert extraneous material into the RECORD.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Vermont?

There was no objection.

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, House Res. 1350 provides that it shall be in order on the legislative day of Thursday, July 17, 2008, for the Speaker to entertain motions to suspend the rules relating to a measure concerning the domestic production of oil and natural gas.

The energy crisis that we face is real. It requires immediate attention and short and long-term action. As a Nation, we have in our reserves less than 2 percent of the proven oil and gas reserves in the world. But with 4 percent of the population, we consume nearly 25 percent of the world's oil. That's not sustainable over the long term.

We must take this opportunity now to provide relief immediately to people paying over \$4 at the pump, \$5 for home heating oil, and we need a commitment to a new energy future focused on creating clear and clean domestic alternatives.

Under suspension of the House rules, this body will take up later the Drill Responsibly in Leased Lands bill. The bill promotes the responsible domestic production of oil and natural gas on the 20 million acres that make up the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska. That would provide an estimated 10.4 billion barrels of oil, a higher estimate than the consensus estimate of oil that is available in ANWR.

The DRILL Act, as it is called, will increase oil production and do it sooner than other alternative proposals. It will facilitate also the construction of existing pipelines within 5 miles of where they already are located. So its environmental footprint will be minimal, and engineering challenges also minimal. This will help move oil and natural gas to the market.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this important piece of legislation.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman for yielding me the customary 30 minutes and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to this rule which is a cynical attempt to provide political cover for Members of this body who have chosen to elevate partisanship and politics above American consumers and our economy.

Today, both everyday consumers and our national economy are suffering. Mr. Speaker, we are suffering because of this Democrat majority's mind-boggling unwillingness to increase the supply of domestically produced oil to reduce prices at the pump. That's why we are suffering. We are suffering because the policy here in this body in Washington, D.C., and you can read about it

in articles in virtually every single paper across the country, and that is the leadership of this House of Representatives does not want to get the right thing done so consumers can have more energy and oil at the pump.

For weeks now, Republicans have been unified in a commonsense and comprehensive approach to bringing down the price of gasoline for consumers, only to have every single one of those plans and votes on the floor of this House of Representatives ignored by the Democrat majority in favor of an agenda that prioritizes legislation like naming historical trails and gambling the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to prevent the development of increased energy production in New England alone.

□ 1145

They are going out of their way to make sure that commonsense legislation that will help the free market and the energy companies, who should be our friends, to provide what consumers need and to produce a better economy.

These priorities completely ignore the wishes of the American people and will do absolutely nothing to bring relief to millions of Americans who are really suffering as a result of high energy prices. I think that if the American people knew that the plan, or part of the plan, was to sue OPEC, they would laugh just like Members of this body have done.

Rather than taking this opportunity to work in a constructive, bipartisan way, to address these domestic energy supply issues that have led to sky-high energy prices for consumers, today we are being asked outside of regular order, and with no opportunity for Members to offer their own good ideas to bring down the price of gasoline, to spend a whopping 40 minutes debating a fig-leaf legislation that wasn't even released to Republicans until late last night.

Republicans have already put forth a number of smart, innovative ideas to bring down gas prices like H.R. 3089, the No More Excuses Energy Act of 2007, which would reduce the price of oil by opening new American refineries, investing in clean energy sources such as wind, nuclear, and captured carbon dioxide, and making available more American energy through environmentally sensitive exploration of the Arctic energy slope and America's deep sea reserves.

But, of course, we know we can't get close to that. We also have H.R. 2279, the Expand American Refining Capacity on Closed Military Installations Act, which would reduce the price of oil by streamlining the refinery application process and by requiring the President to open at least three closed military installations for the purpose of setting new and reliable American refineries in place.