

supplies about 30 percent of the Nation's supply of oil and gas, and we're proud to do it because we know we can do this in an environmentally safe way. And in fact, if you want to go fishing in south Louisiana, you go next to an oil rig because that's the best place to go fishing because the fish actually use that as a sanctuary.

We've got the ability to solve our problem here in this country. All we're asking for is a vote here on this House floor, Mr. Speaker.

30-SOMETHING WORKING GROUP

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

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it's an honor to be on the floor. As you know, the 30-Something Working Group has been quite consistent coming to the floor over the years, sharing with the American people and the Members of this House, sharing with them and shedding light on things that we should be working on or things that we have worked on and try to push hopefully for their passage throughout this Congress and to get the President to sign many of these great reforms that we're actually doing now.

Mr. Speaker, it has been quite interesting. I kind of got a false alarm that I needed to be on floor by 10 o'clock because the previous hour was going to end, but I'm kind of glad, Mr. Speaker, that that false alarm was wrong because I had a chance to do something usually I don't do, spend some time here prior to going on the floor. Our schedules are so tight, but I was actually running out to get here, and I'm sitting here and listening to the Members on the other side of the aisle, many of whom I would call colleagues and friends.

But the thing about our democracy is that we can disagree on many issues and we can speak to each other and have debate, and at the same time come together as colleagues towards common change on some issues that we can work together on.

But, as you know, many pages of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD have my words and many words of Mr. ALTMIRE and others that are here in this House in the 30-Something Working Group. I always say that we focus on fact and not fiction, and I could not help but listen to the colleagues on the other side saying they want votes up or down on drilling or they want to conserve or we need to move towards a greener America.

And I lived through the 108th and the 109th Congress under Republican control. Conserve? Green? What's that? Efficiency? What are you talking about? I sit on the Ways and Means Committee, and we spend a lot of time trying to figure out how we could put forth tax credits to Americans who are

looking to turn greener, have greener homes, and to be able to conserve and help us towards trying to push the scientists and industry, pushing them in the direction of alternative fuels so we can invest in the Midwest versus the Middle East.

□ 2230

I just couldn't help, Mr. ALTMIRE and Members, to listen to some of the Members that went over to ANWR this past weekend.

It's quite interesting, because I took a trip down with the Speaker and several other Members down to Louisiana to fulfill our commitment to the people of the gulf coast that this government will never leave them behind as they were left behind in many areas immediately after the storm, and that's well documented. That's not me talking, you can get on the Internet or you can just remember how folks were stranded there.

Now they are trying to bring their lives back together. I am very, very pleased and encouraged to report to the House, and I know that the Democratic leadership will share, but this was a congressional CODEL. It wasn't just a Democratic CODEL. We had Republican Members at the last minute drop out, some of whom are from Louisiana, whose districts we visited, their constituents, that we were concerned about what they haven't received yet and also looking at what has worked so that we can make sure that the taxpayers' dollars are being spent appropriately.

When we look at the whole issue of the gulf coast and the rebounding of the gulf coast, you can't help but understand the gas down there is like \$3.97. I even found gas there at \$3.89. It was interesting, because the refineries are there, and it's closer for the transportation costs that many of us have to pay in your district and down in my district down in south Florida.

But when we started talking about the solution, toward some of the issues that the Members from the other side were talking about, on the Republican side, I have the names, which I will not call, but 11 Members from the Republican side went on this ANWR trip, went to the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. When they were in the majority, they didn't go.

When they had the opportunity to deal with some of these issues, they didn't deal with them. They were too busy, some of them, watching this chart climb to the top, watching these record-breaking profits on behalf of Big Oil.

I don't blame Big Oil, I just blame the old Republican majority for setting the stage and the administration for setting the stage for these record-breaking profits that these oil companies were making or are making. To try to turn this around and to hear now, talking about conserve and all, this has happened under their watch, this perfect storm that they had, both House and Senate and the White House.

I am not going to dwell on that, but I just wanted to bring that chart out one more time, because I think it's very, very important to what we're looking at. Then when I start looking at the Members that went on the trip, the ANWR, quote-unquote, we're going to come up with a solution to bring gas prices down.

On the DRILL Act, which encouraged use it or lose it, which was a Democratic initiative that we had votes on the floor, every last Member that went on that trip voted against that bill. That was about bringing gas prices down now. That was about let's deal with the Strategic Oil Reserve, bring them down now.

Use it or lose it, another piece of legislation, H.R. 6251, every last Member that went on that trip voted no for gas prices to come down, price gouging. Every Member with the exception of two folks that went on that congressional CODEL trip voted "no."

This is the real kicker, H.R. 6049, and the reason why I am calling these House Resolutions out is that I don't want any Member or anyone that can hear me or see me to think that it serves any great pleasure for me to be here on the floor spreading fiction and stretching and embellishing. I don't have to do that. Go to the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

H.R. 6049, Renewable Energy Act, every last Member that went on that trip voted no.

So when you start thinking about it and you start hearing what's being said here, that's the reason why I like that we have folks that get all this information, we go back and forth, we meet weekly, and we try to get all this stuff together.

We spend all this time, we come to the floor, I think that's the reason why the 30-Something Working Group has the credibility that we have and have built over the years, because we don't come to the floor for entertainment purposes. We come to the floor because this is serious business. There are people going through heartache and trying to figure out how they are going to get from point A to point B.

We don't have time to say, well, if we could only have a vote. Well, you know something, we're having these votes, and the folks on the other side of the aisle are saying if we could only have a vote, they're just not there.

Energy security, a number of them voted "no." No OPEC price fixing, only five of those individuals out of 11 that went on the trip voted for no price fixing.

So when you look at how you can make this turn, and many of those votes have sent a signal to the White House on some of these votes that he knows that we can't override them, because a number of Republicans have voted on behalf of a philosophy that has allowed Big Oil to make these record-making profits.

So we are going to talk about many things, and I know that we are going to

go around to Members here tonight. But I am just so glad to be here tonight like I am when we do get together to be able to talk about these issues.

I yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

Mr. ALTMIRE. I greatly appreciate the gentleman from Florida yielding his time, and I just want to say to start, I think that the gentleman is, unfortunately, kidding himself when he says that he is not an entertaining speaker. He says we're not here for entertaining purposes.

You're selling yourself short, I would say to the gentleman, Mr. Speaker, because he is somebody who can be a very entertaining speaker. So don't sell yourself short on that. We do have some fun here, but we do get to the facts.

The facts are that the price of gas has gone down a little bit over the recent week, week and a half, and we are going to talk about why that has happened. But it's hit an all-time high over the last several weeks. We as a Congress have taken action. We have brought legislation to the floor to address this issue and specifically dealing with drilling, we have brought legislation to the floor to encourage the big oil companies to drill on the 86 million acres of land, 91 million acres of land, that is already ready to go, approved by Congress. Sixty-eight million of those acres are already leased, permitted, ready to go, owned by the oil companies. There is no reason why they can't start the process of surveying, doing the geological work, getting down to the business of drilling here and drilling now. Like the slogan says, there is no reason why they can't do that.

The other 20 million acres plus are in an area of Alaska outside of ANWR. We're going to talk about ANWR, and this area is called the National Petroleum Reserve. That's the area we are talking about.

It's already been approved by Congress to drill in the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska. There is more oil in the National Petroleum Reserve, in the reserves, than is in ANWR. That is a fact. It has been documented, and we are going to talk about that.

Now, the folks on the other side, who we listened to for the hour before us, we heard about how there is no oil in those 68 million acres, and those are dry wells. I think it's a pretty hard case to make that there is no oil in an area of Alaska that's called the Strategic Petroleum Reserve. That's the area that we are talking about. So why aren't the oil companies drilling there?

In some cases the oil companies own the leases, but in some cases the Department of the Interior has dragged their feet in getting those leases out and having the auctions and the lease sales to get the process started.

We brought legislation to the floor to say to the oil companies, you use it or you lose it. You have 68 million acres on which there is 4.8 million barrels of

oil per day every day in our own land and in our own territory that we can bring out, 4.8 million barrels that would almost double domestic production.

Those lands are already leased, and if you as a big oil company don't start producing on that land, or at least do some due diligence, we understand it takes time, takes 10 years before the first drop of oil comes. At least start the process, do the surveying, do the geological work. If you can't prove that you are doing that, we are going to give it to somebody who will, because we are for domestic production.

My good friend from Georgia (Mr. GINGREY) was on right before us. I take him at his word when he talks about how Republicans are for conservation, and Republicans understand the issues around this very complicated problem with our energy crisis and the environmental situation that the gentleman referred to. I take him at his word when he says Republicans are for that.

I would hope that he takes me at my word and takes us at our word when I say that Democrats support domestic drilling. Democrats have brought legislation to the floor to encourage domestic drilling. The only way we can drill here, drill now, is if we allow the oil companies, encourage the oil companies, to drill on land that's already permitted, leased and ready to go.

I yield to the gentleman from Connecticut.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. I thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania. I can't let you continue. I think you're giving a little bit too much credit to our friends from the other side of the aisle.

I certainly take Mr. GINGREY at his word that Republicans are for conservation, but being for it is a little different than voting for it. Being for it is a little bit different than putting it into practice. Words are one thing and actions are another.

Listen, I am not going to endeavor to try to guess as to exactly why from all of the different reasons that our constituents may have sent us here were at the top of their mind, but I think one of them was that they had figured out for 12 years in this House while the Republicans controlled it and the President for 6 of those years was in the White House, that conservation was simply not a policy of this Congress, that they were following the lead of Vice President CHENEY who now somewhat infamously stated that conservation, in his mind, and we can guess in the administration's mind, is a personal virtue, not a policy.

So I don't think it's any coincidence that that seemed to be the ruling mantra of this House, that conservation wasn't something that the government should get involved in, it's just something you do in your private life. And during that time, that 12 years that the Republicans controlled the House of Representatives, we saw absolutely no action on conservation. In

fact, it took the Democrats taking control of the House and the Senate to pass, for the first time in 30 years, a very simple increase in fuel efficiency standards for vehicles, up to 35 miles a gallon. You and I know that's low-hanging fruit. I think we're going to be embarrassed in just 5 or 10 years to think that we set our sights so low as 35 miles per gallon. I think we are going to get up to 45 and 50 miles per gallon on the average fuel efficiency of fleets in this country.

The fact is, I don't suggest that Republicans weren't personally for conservation, I am sure many of them practice it in their own homes. The fact was they weren't setting policy here to actually make that a reality. That fuel efficiency bill that we passed, first time in 30 years, when we passed it, when gas prices were a little bit lower than they are now, that was a \$1,000 savings per year for every commuter, for every car owner.

It's probably now, unfortunately, up to \$1,500 per year in savings, but that's real action on conservation. That's actually taking words and putting them into action.

Mr. ALTMIRE. The gentleman talks about the lack of action in the previous Congresses. For 6 years, prior to this current session of Congress, the Republicans controlled the Congress, they controlled the White House, and they controlled the agenda, most importantly, of what legislation was brought to the floor, and what issues were talked about, and what the legislative priorities were of the Congress, and what did they do on their pet issue that they talk about right now?

Their top issue, every time they have one of these hours, they come down here and they talk about drill here, drill now. There is nothing more important we can do than drilling and opening up ANWR and opening up the Outer Continental Shelf.

So when they controlled the Congress and the White House for 6 years and controlled the agenda and could have done anything that they wanted, what were they able to do on drilling? How important did they think that it was?

Well, you may have noticed, I say to the gentleman, that they didn't open up ANWR, and they didn't open up the Outer Continental Shelf. For the most part, they didn't even talk that much about it because they didn't see it as a political wedge issue that they can use in an election year when everything is going against them, except for, they feel, this issue.

□ 2245

When they had the opportunity to deal with this, they didn't act. So it falls on deaf ears to this Member of Congress to have them continually come down here and criticize this Congress for a lack of action. When they controlled the agenda, they didn't deal with it. And more importantly, when we control the agenda, we're constantly bringing legislation to the floor

encouraging the oil companies to use the land that's already permitted and ready to go.

Withholding shipments to the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, which has led to the decrease in gas prices that we've seen over the last week to 10 days, that was an action of this Congress that led to that decrease. And many Members on the other side opposed that.

Well, we're bringing legislation to the floor dealing with a variety of issues, dealing with gas prices and energy independence, and they continually vote against it. Yet they have the audacity to come before us for a full hour right before and lecture us on our lack of activity on this issue.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. If the gentleman would just yield for a moment.

I think it's worthwhile also to talk about what was happening here during the time that the Republicans controlled the House of Representatives, during the time you and I, Mr. ALTMIRE, were watching with agony from afar.

During that time, they passed an energy bill in 2005 that was written by the oil companies in secret at the White House in DICK CHENEY's office. That, no so coincidentally, gave billions in tax breaks to the oil companies, leading today to the biggest profits—not in the history of the energy industry, not in the history of the oil industry, the biggest profits in the history of American capitalism are being made today by the oil industry. Guess what? The actions taken by this Congress to give away more tax breaks to that industry had something to do with that.

During that time, they continued to spend money out of control, racking up record deficits in this country, which has led to the devaluing of the dollar, which is a big part of the problem today. Maybe 25 percent of the increased cost of a barrel of oil in this country is attributable to the dollar, which has fallen in value, which is attributable to the actions of this Congress during that time. Over and over again they took steps here to basically invite the crisis that we have seen here today.

And so, Mr. ALTMIRE, I think you're right to say that they had a lot of time to do good things, but one of the biggest problems is during the time in which the Republicans were in control of this House they did a lot of bad things, which led us to the place we are today.

Mr. Meek.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. MURPHY and Mr. ALTMIRE, the real issue is that I know folks that have died on the battlefield so that we can celebrate the kind of freedoms that some folks just take for granted.

I'm fine. I don't have a problem with our colleagues coming to the floor and sharing the things that they've been sharing for a number of years. And I know sometimes Members, they come,

and maybe the information may be inaccurate, and then they have to share the information all over again once they correct themselves, or staff or someone. I mean, human, people make mistakes. And that's the reason why we spend so much time here trying to make sure that we have what we have done. And there is a lot that we're doing and a lot more we can do and a lot more we want to do.

We don't have the White House. And when you don't have the White House, it's hard—and I'm talking about Democrat or Republican. If you have a White House that's saying, you know something, I disagree with eight of the 10 things that you're trying to do, even if the American people have said they want it. A number of bills the President—he didn't change his mind because he thought he needed to change his mind, it was just the uproar of the American people. I can go down the list, starting with one of the major battles in Social Security, privatization of Social Security. All kind of Federal jet fuel was burned flying throughout the country trying to make it so that the American people would endorse such a plan. And on and on and on.

And I see Mr. ALTMIRE is getting his chart out. But these are the things that we've done. And there are one or two things that are not on this chart. But we see the green here that says "now law," "now law," "now law," "now law." You have "veto threat," "veto threat," "veto threat," "veto threat."

I didn't come to the floor to share with the Members where George W. Bush stands on these issues. I mean, his term is coming to an end and, come January, there will be a new President that will occupy the White House and that will work with this Congress.

I also believe that the American people, Members, are not fooled. I don't come to the floor to say, you know, hey, I told you so, or I told you this would happen, or I told you this is the way the American people feel. I don't feel that's my job or obligation to share that information.

I've also said in the past that if this was about politics, coming to the floor, then I would just be somewhere at the house maybe watching, you know, a DVD or reading a book or listening to music, or whatever the case may be, and just let the course of democracy play its role.

I try to share with many of my friends on the other side of the aisle that sometimes when you're following the leadership and they're headed in the wrong direction, somebody needs to tap them on the shoulder and say, you know something, there's a new direction, there's a new direction in Congress here. I know we have to show the differences politically of philosophy, but I may not be marching with you next year. And I can tell you right now, I'm talking to some of these candidates that are out there, and it is almost—I never thought that I would see the

kind of support—and I'm just talking about support in the polling and everything of saying "we want change. We want to move in a new direction. We want lower gas prices. We want to be able to see the kind of housing bill that passed this floor today that is going to help my situation."

If someone is a Republican or a Democrat or an Independent, they didn't elect a Member of Congress or someone to come up here and represent them and say, I sent them up there to represent my partisan views. No, nine times out of 10, and even more than that, they sent us up here to make sure that we represent them and provide a better day for their children and grandchildren. So that's where I feel that this major political paradigm shift is taking place in this country, and it will continue.

So Mr. ALTMIRE and Mr. MURPHY, we should continue doing the good things that we are doing on behalf of this country as it relates to policy. We should continue moving in a bipartisan way, having more bipartisan votes on major pieces of legislation than the Congress has had in the previous Congress under Democratic control, bills that Republicans in this House can vote for because they are good bills that serve the entire country, not just a segment of the country.

So we have to continue moving down the road. We have to continue, as we move to close out this month and before we go on break next month to go back to our districts, to be able to finish the business at hand. And when we come back in September, be able to deal with that business, because there is going to be a lot said between now and then. We're almost within 100 days of the country being able to make the decision of who's going to be the Commander in Chief, who's going to be in the House, who's going to be in the Senate.

So when you start thinking about it, they're going to kick into autopilot, they're going to make the decisions, but I just want to make sure that—not that I'm trying to preserve and increase or maintain the levels that the Republican Caucus is at right now in the House, but I'm just saying what's bigger than politics is getting the job done on behalf of the folks that are counting on us to do it. So that's the reason why we come here.

Mr. Murphy.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Mr. MEEK, you said it right, it doesn't matter whether you're a Republican or Democrat, when you pull up to that pump you're paying a price that you can't afford. It doesn't matter whether you're a conservative or a liberal, if you can't afford to heat your home this winter, you're going to freeze. That has nothing to do with partisan politics.

I think we come down to this floor and we try to educate people on some of the differences between the two sides of the aisle here. But when it comes down to it, you're very right. I mean,

the people didn't send us here to have a Democratic idea or a Republican idea, they sent us here to try to find some common ground to make this world a better place. And I wish more of that happened here. I mean, I wish we didn't have a chart like the one that you just put up that showed so many vetoes and veto threats from the President. Because I think sometimes the folks in the White House don't understand that pain, that bipartisan, nonpartisan pain that's happening out there. I think some of our colleagues on the other side of the aisle don't maybe feel that as well. I think sometimes, as Mr. ALTMIRE said, it feels like the debate down here is more about scoring political points than it is actually getting things done.

And so, Mr. MEEK, I'm glad you put it that way because I think it's important for us to continue to remind our colleagues here on this floor, through the Speaker, that we can come together, that there are things that we agree on. And if we put politics aside, we can do the will of the American people.

Mr. ALTMIRE.

Mr. ALTMIRE. I appreciate the gentleman from Connecticut.

And the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK) talked about the difference between the freedom that we all enjoy to say things on the floor and the responsibility that we have to quote facts, to use real numbers. And the people on the other side who come down here on occasion I would say are very good at the PR aspect of the job, at getting the message out and in trying to undermine the message that we put out.

We think about this drilling issue, we think about the Outer Continental Shelf, and we think about the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, ANWR, and we say, well, the numbers that they're using on the other side may not be as accurate as they could be. They might be overstating the situation a little bit, both with regard to the time necessary to get that oil, but more importantly, the amount of oil that's there at all. And the pushback that we get from the other side is often, oh, those are Democratic talking points, and they don't know what they're talking about, and we're not going to listen to them because they're Democrats and they're just reading talking points. So I wanted to read a quote from someone, and then I'm going to put the source of the quote up.

This is from a hearing that was held yesterday here on Capitol Hill, because we're working every day to try to figure out what we can do on a daily basis to bring the price of gasoline down in the short term and the long term. And a hearing was held, and one of the witnesses said this: "They mislead the public"—talking about the big oil companies and the proponents of opening up ANWR and new areas of the Outer Continental Shelf is who this gentleman is referring to.

"They mislead the public. And the public thinks, well, if we've got 86 bil-

lion barrels of oil sitting out there, why don't we just go drill it and produce it and lower the price of gasoline? We can lower it to \$2 a gallon. That's the way it's been characterized, which I think is totally misleading. Experts are way off when they say there's 86 billion barrels of oil off the coast. That number is way overstated. They also talk about ANWR having 16 billion. I think the number there is a lot closer to 2 billion. That's all you can get out of there. I don't see any fuel that's going to replace gasoline and diesel except natural gas."

Well, is that a Democratic talking point? That's basically what we've been saying for the last several months, but no, that was not a Democrat that said that, that was none other than an oilman, and certainly not someone historically who has been very complimentary of Democratic policies, Mr. T. Boone Pickens, somebody who understands the oil industry in this country. That's what he said. And I would ask my colleagues if they've seen the commercials that he's running on TV. And the slogan that he uses is, "We can't drill our way out of this problem." And this is the quote that I read.

So we have validation from sources that understand the oil industry and understand that this is more than just a political hot button issue that we can use to score cheap political points. This is the biggest problem facing the country. And we have to come together as Republicans and Democrats and do everything we possibly can to work on short-term solutions and long-term solutions to solve this energy crisis.

And it's going to take all hands on deck. And the quicker that we move away from the cheap political points and trying to play one-upmanship on the rhetoric, the better chance we're going to have of solving this problem.

So I would yield to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK).

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Well, Mr. ALTMIRE, as we move into closing out tonight, I just want to yield to Mr. MURPHY. And if you have any other closing comments that you would have to make, I think it would be appropriate to make them at this time.

But I can tell you, Mr. ALTMIRE, that I am excited about what we are doing about the solution. You know, the American Housing Rescue and Foreclosure Prevention Act, H.R. 3221, is a part of that testimonial of service that this House has provided, and putting bills on the floor that Democrats and Republicans can vote for to respond to the foreclosure crisis that's out there now. Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, that has been a part of helping so many Americans get the American dream, putting the kind of regulatory reform that's needed for those two entities to be able to provide the kind of service that the American people would look for them to provide, and allowing Americans to be able to get a piece of what we call "the American Dream."

And also being able to watch what's going on as it relates to our economy, investors, and others, to stabilize the market through this legislation, and so much work that has gone into it. And hopefully the Senate will be acting on it soon.

□ 2300

This is a piece of legislation that the President said that he can sign. These are solutions. That is what I tell my constituents when, nine times out of ten, we run into someone, and they start sharing their problems with you. I want to respond. And nine times out of 10 I respond, now let's have a discussion about how we can work toward a solution. Because we're not here to describe the problem. We're here to come up with solutions, and a solution that all of America can share in and that every Member of the House, every Member of the Senate and the President can feel good about signing because legislation like the legislation that passed here, is probably being noted as one of the major pieces of legislation of this Congress in both sessions, first and second session, that has passed off this House floor that is going to touch so many Americans. And that is the kind of leadership, that is the kind of new direction that we talked about.

Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut. Mr. MEEK, you're very right. And we could watch this housing crisis unfold, this energy crisis continue to squeeze families and we could sit here and do nothing. But as you said, we got sent here to do something, to sit down and figure out solutions. And I think it's incredibly relevant as to whom you ask about what the solution should be.

In the last few years when there was a problem with energy prices, this Congress went and asked the oil companies how you fix it. When they wanted to write a new bill to bring prescription drug coverage to seniors, they went and asked the drug industry how to solve the problem. When this housing crunch came down, when foreclosures started to increase, when neighborhoods started to fall apart, we went to our constituents. We went to the people who sent us here. We went to the very people who are being affected or at risk of being affected by this problem, and said, you tell us how we should solve this problem. And what we heard was, listen, give us a chance to stay in our home. I don't want a hand-out. I don't want a giveaway. I don't want a bailout. I want a chance to stay in my home. I want to pay my fair share. I want a chance to pay a decent rate. But give me a chance. So we passed the expanded FHA insurance program to allow people who were in exorbitant and unfair interest-rate mortgages to get back into something reasonable, at a loss and a haircut to them and to their lender. When people said, I want to buy my first home, but this is a really dangerous time to do it, I think we responded in this bill we

passed today by passing a \$7,500 refundable tax credit to allow people a little bit more flexibility to get into that first home.

When people said, I need some help getting counseling to find out how I avoid foreclosure, we put money into counseling agencies to help people help themselves. When you go to the people who are really hurting, you get the right answers. And I'm just as proud as you are, Mr. MEEK, for voting for this piece of legislation this afternoon. It may be the most important housing legislative package that this House and this Congress has passed in the past several years. And I'm just as proud of where the genesis of the ideas came from.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Very good. Very good. I think that your comments were very appropriate and definitely will give the kind of motivation for bills like it to come to the floor. And it's going to be about solutions, mayors, city council people, individuals back home, everyone along the line of elected officials likes to see bills like this because that is going to help give the backbone to their community that they need.

No one, no Members want to see signs of foreclosure, for sale, quick sales, all of these things. You have folks that are holding on to their mortgage. I have constituents who come to me and say, Kendrick, I bought my condo at \$600,000, \$500,000 or \$300,000 and someone had to carry out a quick sale within our building, and my property value went down. And I have already lost. And I am holding the flag up, and I'm doing all the things I have to do. And I didn't get into an interest-only loan. I went into a conventional. But I'm suffering from that. So everyone, it is almost like folks are getting pulled down. This bill today is helping to shore up that housing market, even rental housing in urban and rural areas.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, it's always an honor to come to the floor to address the House. I want to thank the Democratic leadership for providing us with this hour once again. And we look forward to coming back in the future.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. ORTIZ (at the request of Mr. HOYER) for today and the balance of the week on account of important district business.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

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

Ms. WOOLSEY, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. NORTON, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. KAPTUR, for 5 minutes, today.

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

Mr. WELLER of Illinois, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. POE, for 5 minutes, July 30.

Mr. JONES of North Carolina, for 5 minutes, July 30.

Mr. FLAKE, for 5 minutes, today and July 24.

Ms. FOXX, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Member (at his request) to revise and extend his remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. SCALISE, for 5 minutes, today.

SENATE BILL REFERRED

A bill of the Senate of the following title was taken from the Speaker's table and, under the rule, referred as follows:

S. 3295. An act to amend title 35, United States Code, and the Trademark Act of 1946 to provide that the Secretary of Commerce, in consultation with the Director of the United States Patent and Trademark Office, shall appoint administrative patent judges and administrative trademark judges, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

BILLS PRESENTED TO THE PRESIDENT

Lorraine C. Miller, Clerk of the House reports that on July 22, 2008 she presented to the President of the United States, for his approval, the following bills.

H.R. 3564. To amend title 5, United States Code, to authorize appropriations for the Administrative Conference of the United States through fiscal year 2011, and for other purposes.

H.R. 3985. To amend title 49, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Transportation to register a person providing transportation by an over-the-road bus as a motor carrier of passengers only if the person is willing and able to comply with certain accessibility requirements in addition to other existing requirements, and for other purposes.

H.R. 4289. To name the Department of Veterans Affairs outpatient clinic in Ponce, Puerto Rico, as the "Euripides Rubio Department of Veterans Affairs Outpatient Clinic".

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 5 minutes p.m.), the House adjourned until tomorrow, Thursday, July 24, 2008, at 10 a.m.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

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

7718. A letter from the Director Office of Energy Policy and New Uses, Department of

Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule — Designation of Biobased Items for Federal Procurement (RIN: 0503-AA30) received July 8, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

7719. A letter from the Regulatory Review Group Director, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule — Regulatory Streamlining of the Farm Service Agency's Direct Farm Loan Programs (RIN: 0560-AF60) received February 5, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

7720. A letter from the Secretary of the Army, Department of Defense, transmitting notification that the Average Procurement Unit Cost (APUC) and Program Acquisition Unit Cost metrics for the Armed Reconnaissance Helicopter Program have exceeded the 25 percent critical cost growth threshold, pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 2433; to the Committee on Armed Services.

7721. A letter from the Under Secretary for Personnel and Readiness, Department of Defense, transmitting a letter on the approved retirement Vice Admiral Evan M. Chanik, United States Navy, and his advancement to the grade of vice admiral on the retired list; to the Committee on Armed Services.

7722. A letter from the Under Secretary for Personnel and Readiness, Department of Defense, transmitting a letter on the approved retirement of Lieutenant General Joseph F. Weber, United States Marine Corps, and his advancement to the grade of lieutenant general on the retired list; to the Committee on Armed Services.

7723. A letter from the Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Personnel and Readiness, Department of Defense, transmitting a letter on the approved retirement of Brigadier General Harold W. Moulton II, United States Air Force, and his advancement to the grade of brigadier general on the retired list; to the Committee on Armed Services.

7724. A letter from the Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Personnel and Readiness, Department of Defense, transmitting a letter on the approved retirement of Brigadier General Gregory A. Feest, United States Air Force, and his advancement to the grade of major general on the retired list; to the Committee on Armed Services.

7725. A letter from the Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Personnel and Readiness, Department of Defense, transmitting authorization of the enclosed list of officers to wear the insignia of the next higher grade in accordance with title 10, United States Code, section 777; to the Committee on Armed Services.

7726. A letter from the Inspector General, Department of Defense, transmitting the semiannual report of the Inspector General for the period October 1, 2007 through March 31, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. app. (Insp. Gen. Act) section 5(b); to the Committee on Armed Services.

7727. A letter from the Chief Counsel, FEMA, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Changes in Flood Elevation Determinations [Docket No. FEMA-B-7788] received July 8, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Financial Services.

7728. A letter from the Director, Regulations Policy and Mgmt. Staff, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's final rule — Medical Devices; Medical Device Reporting; Baseline Reports [Docket No. FDA-2008-N-0310] received July 8, 2008, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

7729. A letter from the Deputy Chief, CGB, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting the Commission's final rule — In the