

we have dramatically increased funding for research into renewable energy, but we must do even more by declaring a new Apollo Project for energy independence.

Even as we provide incentives to accelerate scientific research into reducing the cost of renewable energy, we must also act now to reduce our fossil fuel imports. The cheapest and quickest way to accomplish this is to reduce energy and fuel use through fuel efficiency, energy efficiency, conservation, and green development. We can also reduce our dependence on fossil fuels and foreign oil in the short term by a responsible increase in domestic production, but this must be viewed for what it is—a short-term expedient and a bridge to a future based on renewable energy.

We cannot convert our economy from one dependent on fossil fuels to one that is based on renewable energy overnight, but we must take the position that our continued use of oil and gas will be largely phased out in the coming decades and that renewed, environmentally responsible exploration is intended to ease the conversion to a post-fossil fuel economy.

As a threshold matter, we must improve the fuel efficiency of our cars and trucks, as Congress mandated last December, and develop plug-in hybrid vehicles to drive further efficiency. Doing this will not only break our addiction to oil, it will also reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 30 percent.

This effort should be undertaken in conjunction with the national effort to improve our public transportation system, which still receives just a fraction of the investment that we put into roads. Congress has acted to increase public transit, but more needs to be done both at a local level and, more importantly, at State and regional levels.

We must also make our homes more energy efficient by installing rooftop solar panels, switching to energy-efficient appliances and enabling consumers and businesses to pay lower prices for electricity at night so that we can reduce the daytime spike in electricity usage that requires utilities to keep high-price power generation on call.

Companies have invested and workers have trained themselves in industries that were supported by our past Tax Code and its provisions. Climate change legislation will change those incentives, and while many high-tech American industries will prosper, some industries will suffer. For example, in my home State of California, solar and geothermal are growing by leaps and bounds. There are start-ups throughout the State building solar energy plants and installing solar energy systems. The silicon shortage that has slowed solar development in the last 3 years is fading as new factories come online.

But this new development is still dependent on the tax incentives that Congress has still not extended past

the end of the year. We must not let these tax incentives expire and, instead, extend them for several years so that this expanding industry can become a driver in the economy.

Mr. Speaker, my constituents are telling me they want Congress to take the steps necessary to transition our Nation to clean, renewable energy. I urge us to do exactly that.

They have told me that the energy crisis has imposed enormous hardship on them and on millions of other Americans. But, as in crises past, they also believe that our ingenuity, our can-do spirit and optimism will enable us to bequeath to our children and grandchildren a world that is cleaner and more prosperous. I share their hopes and their determination.

□ 2015

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

30-SOMETHING WORKING GROUP

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

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to come down once again with my good friend from western PA, just over the border, Mr. ALTMIRE from Pennsylvania, to just kind of clear up the record here a little bit and talk a little bit about what we have been doing here over the past

year-and-a-half in Congress, to talk a little bit about the hole our country is in and how it has led to a lot of the stress that most American families are feeling now, most small businesses are feeling now.

But I'm going to take some liberties here, Mr. Speaker, and congratulate my brother and my sister-in-law. A few days ago, Andrea Maria was born to my brother and sister-in-law, and now my godchild, Nicolas, and the second-in-command, Dominick, now have a little baby sister. So I wanted to congratulate my mom and Joe and Shari Burkey, the grandparents, and my brother and sister-in-law for having another one, three for three. So, if the gentleman has a few kids of his own, he knows they're not getting much sleep, but the baby is healthy.

Also, I want to talk about, I think with that in mind, is what kind of legacy we're leaving to this next generation of Americans. And our friends today who spoke before us and spoke on the floor a little bit earlier today, you know, were talking about the importance of getting oil into the market and how if we would get oil into the market that it would reduce the cost of a gallon of gas.

And what the Democratic leadership has done—and just today we voted on taking 70 million barrels of oil out of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, which is what we have as a country, 700 million barrels of oil, just in case, if there's some kind of catastrophe, if there's some kind of crisis, that we can go to this oil and use it for whatever purposes we deem necessary.

So, a few months ago, as we put oil into this reserve every day and every month, we said, as Democrats, that starting I think on June 30 that this oil would not go into the Strategic Petroleum Reserve every day; instead, we would divert it out of the reserve and into the market. And analysts were telling us that that would have some short-term effect in bringing the cost down.

We have seen the cost of a gallon of gas go down in the past few days, not significantly enough, but we feel like that strategic move that we made is having some effect.

So, today, we wanted to take that to the next step and say that we're going to take 10 percent of this reserve, 70 million barrels of oil, and pump it right into the market, and it would affect all the speculation that's going on through the Enron loophole, and it would inject oil into the market.

And today, we had a vote. And a lot of our friends, who were down on this floor, Mr. Speaker, just minutes and hours ago and have been railing on how we need to get oil into the market, voted against this oil going directly into the market. And you can't have it both ways, Mr. Speaker. You can't say you want more supply of oil into the market, and then when we bring up a bill and just cause the Democrats bring the bill up and say take 70 million barrels of oil and put it into the market to

drive down costs immediately, our friends all voted against it. You can't have it both ways. Either you want oil into the market, you want more supply, or you don't. And just because the Democrats say use the reserve and put it in to stop the speculation and drive the price down, our friends voted against it.

I yield to my friend.

Mr. ALTMIRE. I thank the gentleman, and I do congratulate him on his new niece as well.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Thank you.

Mr. ALTMIRE. And the gentleman is correct, and we were sitting here listening to some of the Members that came before us talk about the importance of supply, and there's a couple of issues.

One is the fact that we are dealing with folks who are advocating increasing supply 10 and 20 years from now. The policies of drilling off the coasts and opening up new areas of the Outer Continental Shelf, opening up the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska, the first drop of oil does not come for 10 years. We don't achieve peak capacity in either of those areas for at least 20 years, according to the Department of Energy, President's Bush own Department of Energy. Those aren't our numbers; that's their numbers.

So the issue of increasing supply—and they have a really nice slogan that they like to use: Drill here, drill now. And we'll see them wearing their buttons, and you hear some of the radio talk show hosts around the country: Drill here, drill now. And that's a great slogan, but that's not what ANWR is. That's not what opening up new areas of the Outer Continental Shelf is. If you are advocating that policy, if that's your energy policy, then your slogan ought to be: Drill here, drill in 10 years, drill in 20 years. So that's one side of the equation.

But to what the gentleman talks about, if you're going to make the argument that the only way to solve this energy crisis is to increase the supply of oil, domestic supply, let's get more oil on to the market—and again, what they're advocating isn't doing it immediately—but if you're saying we need to do it immediately, well, there is one way to do it immediately, and let's take a look at the history.

The gentleman talked about, effective July 1, the 70,000 barrels a day every day that this country was placing into the Strategic Petroleum Reserve is now going into the private market, effective July 1. What's been the impact? Well, on July 7, which was that first day after the July 4 holidays, the price of gas was at an all-time high. I believe it was four-eleven-and-a-half, highest it's ever been. We're right now about 6 cents less than that, not a substantial decrease. But instead of the exponential increase that we had seen for months, trajectory of price straight up, we've now seen a very slight decrease, but a decrease nonetheless. Certainly, some stability in the market

where none existed before as a direct result of the action this Congress took to begin withholding shipments in the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, and now we've seen the impact. It has reduced the price.

Well, what do you think the impact would be instead of 70,000 barrels a day, how about taking 70 million barrels out of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, over a certain period of time, not all at once, but putting 70 million barrels into the market? You would see an amazing decrease in the price, as the gentleman knows, and that's what we advocated here today.

And while we were sitting here listening to the Members that came before us, a couple of them in particular talked about how this Congress has done nothing advocating increasing supply. Well, today, not last week or last year, today before we came on the floor for this speech, this whole House took a vote a couple of hours ago on releasing 70 million barrels. You want to talk about now, that's now, 70 million barrels from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, put it into the market.

It would have an incredible effect, not only on decreasing gas prices because you have more supply, but maybe even more importantly, on these speculators who are betting on the price of oil continuing to go up and manipulating the price in the market, and that's a very real issue. It's a very big part of why gas prices have gone up as high as they have because of this market speculation. They wouldn't know how to react if we put 70 million barrels in a time sequence over time into the market. That would have real impact on their ability to continue to manipulate, and they would lower the cost in the market as well. It would have two impacts.

And how do those Members who talk about increasing supply and the need of this Congress to do something about gas prices—it's all they talk about. Well, what did they do? Well, most all of them voted against it. We have the numbers here on the vote. 157 Republicans opposed that vote today. 157 voted against increasing domestic supply of oil. After all the lectures we've had to endure for the last several months about how we need to put more oil in the market, we had a vote to do just that today. A hundred plus of them voted against it.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. And that's the thing. We get a card, you've got a vote, the board lights up, your name's up there, you either hit the green button for "yes" and the red button for "no." And the same people that said, you know, we've got to get oil, we've got to put it on the market, voted against it. And as you said 157 Republicans.

Now, we're big on third party validators here with our 30 Something because we know you may not necessarily believe everything that we are saying so we make sure that we back some of this up.

Now, here is the statistics, and I will share also some quotes. This is what's

happened in the past when we've taken out of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve this oil that's just sitting there and we've put it into the market.

In 1991, this was done by the first President Bush, and prices went down by 33 percent. In 2000, it was done again, 18.7 percent prices went down, and it was done in 2005, which is 9 percent. So any of these examples in which we took directly out of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve and put it into the market has driven costs down and in 1991 to the tune of 33 percent, but even if it was 10 percent, you're talking about immediately knocking 40 cents a gallon off of a gallon of gas.

And that's what we tried to pass today, and 157 Republicans prevented that from happening. That's the bottom line. And so you can't say one thing and then do the other.

So you know Mr. ALTMIRE is saying this. I'm saying this. Speaker PELOSI is saying this. But that's not it. We're not the only ones saying it. Former Speaker Newt Gingrich says, First thing is dump about half the Strategic Petroleum Reserve into the world market. You can pump about 2 million barrels a day. The marginal effect of that will bring down the price of oil very substantially.

Mr. ALTMIRE. If the gentleman would yield, to put that in perspective, former Speaker Gingrich by that quote is advocating—did he say half the Strategic Petroleum Reserve?

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Yeah.

Mr. ALTMIRE. To put that in perspective to what we did today, half of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve would be approximately 350 million barrels. We voted today on 70 million barrels, time released over time. Speaker Gingrich recommended a much more drastic course of action, 350 million barrels, and again, 157 Republicans voted against a much smaller version of that today.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Right. So we had an opportunity today to do this, and the Republicans have prevented it. You can surmise why maybe they wanted to do that, but we have experts who we try to listen to when it's coming to these major economic decisions that are going to reduce the price at the pump, and we had the opportunity to do that today and it was prevented. So it wasn't just Speaker Gingrich.

Mr. ALTMIRE. I'm sorry, if the gentleman will yield, because I hadn't seen this quote before we came on today, that quote—because people at home might say, well, when was that from? Was that from 1996? What are we talking about? That quote was from June 12 of this year. Last month is when that quote came from. So that's a real-time quote, talking about half the Strategic Petroleum Reserve as a course of action.

□ 2030

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Absolutely. So just a few days ago, our good friend from Tennessee, Representative

WAMP—who I sit on the Energy and Water Subcommittee of Appropriations with—RODNEY ALEXANDER, a Republican from Louisiana, Johnny Isakson, Republican from Georgia, there are some Republicans who are saying, “put this into the market,” but not enough to actually have the kind of impact to actually get this done, not as many as we need.

And when you look at the American Trucking Association, when you look at the National Farmers Union, when you look at the Air Transportation Association, all of these groups wanted us to do this today. We did it, and it was prevented from happening: 70 million barrels of oil going into the market today.

But part of it—and I know the gentleman wants to talk a little bit about this as well—is what is happening with the dollar and how the dollar has been, because of its weakness at this point, the dollar has increased the cost of a lot of these commodities.

And I'd like to yield to my friend.

Mr. ALTMIRE. And I appreciate the gentleman yielding.

And I would put it in the perspective of, let's take a look at how we got where we are today, take a little walk down memory lane. And why have gas prices gone up so dramatically? And the speakers on the other side will bring up their charts with their timelines and try to point fingers and cast blame.

The three major reasons that gas prices have increased so dramatically over the past several months is the increased demand for growing economies like China and India. There is nothing we can do about that; that is going to continue to grow, it's going to continue to be a problem. And we're going to have to continue to deal with that, the increased demand in growing economies.

However, two of the other main reasons why the price of gas has gone up so much over the past several months, the speculators in the market manipulating the price, driving it up beyond reasonable levels because they're betting that the cost of oil is going to continue to go up. That's something we can do something about, something we are going to do something about.

And the other factor, a major reason for the price of oil in the market having risen to all-time record highs—before we stopped the Strategic Petroleum Reserve shipments, which has led to the decrease in recent weeks, but it's still at a near record high for the price of oil—is the U.S. dollar and the low dollar around the world.

Oil is traded in the world market with the U.S. dollar. Obviously we use the U.S. dollar, so we're going to pay more for oil as a result of the deflation that has taken place with the dollar at near record lows in relation to other currencies around the world. Anyone who has traveled this summer to other countries can see the impact of the low dollar on your exchange rate.

Well, let's take a look at why that happened. Why do we have such a low dollar? Two of the main reasons:

Our trade deficit, the imbalance in trade from what we're shipping out overseas to what we're bringing in. We're bringing in a lot more from overseas than we're exporting. The trade imbalance plays a huge role in that.

And of course the debt, the national debt. And we've talked many times—I won't give you the long lecture on it. But suffice it to say 8 years ago we were looking at a \$5.5 trillion surplus over the next 10 years, could have paid off the entire national debt. Because of the economic policies of this administration and the previous Congresses when they controlled both the White House and Congress on the other side, the decisions that were made have led to a skyrocketing national debt, deficits every year, deficits as far as the eye can see. And now, instead of having paid off the entire national debt, what do we have? We have a debt ceiling that's now over \$10 trillion. That's why the dollar is at an all-time low. That's one of the big reasons why oil has skyrocketed in the world market.

So the very people who made those decisions, the very people who are responsible for those economic policies and those trade policies that have led to devaluation of the dollar in the world-wide market, the very same people who made those decisions are now coming forward with their ideas on what to do with regard to the energy crisis. And we should take that with a grain of salt, at minimum, because we've seen the impact of their policies, we know what happened. The American people have cast judgment on what they thought about those policies.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Well, let's think about it. When the second President Bush got in in 2000, two oilmen in the White House, and Vice President CHENEY has this secret meeting—that nobody was allowed to know about—to begin to implement the energy policy of this administration, Republican House, Republican Senate, Republican White House, and here we go, here comes the energy policy.

Now, an energy policy that we agree on today doesn't necessarily have an effect today. Moving barrels out of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve is a unique example of something having an immediate effect. But with energy policies, today's decisions have an effect years later. And so in 2000, when the Bush administration came, Mr. Speaker, and implemented this policy, headed up by the Vice President, we are now feeling the effects of it.

There was no massive move towards alternative energy. There was no expansion of nuclear. There was no expansion of biodiesel. There was no significant investment into alternative energies so that we can become independent. And when you look at the fact that we import—nearly 70 percent of the oil that we use in this country is imported from other sources, com-

pletely dependent on the Middle East and other countries in South America.

So they have implemented their energy policy, and today we have \$4 a gallon gas. And the comments saying somehow that it's not their fault, it's not their responsibility, when their policies have been implemented, is ridiculous.

Mr. ALTMIRE. And I would remind our colleagues and the gentleman—he probably was sitting here when President Bush stood right behind him at that podium in this House for his State of the Union Address—probably 2005, I think—and talked about our addiction to oil, spent most of his speech talking about our addiction to oil and how we need to do everything we can and have a national priority to get away from our addiction to oil. Well, his energy plan is inconsistent with that rhetoric because his energy plan is all about furthering our addiction to oil, cementing it—

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Right.

Mr. ALTMIRE.—in a way that we have never seen before in this country, where everything they want to do has to do with expanding our dependence on oil, making us more dependent.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. And if you think about what, in my estimation, great leaders would have done after 9/11, and you think about what the Lincolns and the Roosevelts and the Kennedys would have done in that particular situation, we had so much political clout in the world after 9/11. President Bush's approval ratings were off the charts. He failed to seize that opportunity to call up the oil companies, sit them down in the Cabinet room and say, boys, the party's over. We're all getting together, it's going to be a public/private partnership, and we're going in the alternative energy realm together as a country, public and private. He didn't do that. He asked everyone to go shopping; that was the big, creative challenge to the country. And that was a missed opportunity that few Presidents ever get, and he got it.

Mr. ALTMIRE. And we would be 7 years down the road of that initiative right now.

You think about the Apollo moon landing and the Manhattan Project, when Americans came together, worked towards a common goal, put our best and brightest and all of our resources on the task, and we got the job done. So we would be 7 years into that right now. We would have made such tremendous progress.

And it wouldn't have just been us, it would be the entire world. The people at Honda and Toyota are putting out hydrogen fuel cell cars and hybrid battery-operated cars. The hybrid car in the 2010 model for Toyota is going to get 90 miles for the gallon. And there are going to be kinks and they're going to be too expensive at first, but we're getting there, we're making progress. Imagine 7 years ago, if we had had a national and worldwide commitment led by the United States of America,

how different things would be today instead of paying \$4 a gallon for gas.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. And when you think about that, and we had T. Boone Pickens in our caucus this week, he was on the Hill talking to both Democrats and Republicans—many people may have seen his commercials about his plan for transferring energy from being oil-based into some of these alternative energy fields, including wind, primarily, for him—but here's a geologist from Oklahoma University who is worth \$4 billion in the oil industry, kind of understands what's going on, telling us "You can't drill your way out of this."

But his main point was, not only that we're importing 70 percent of our oil, but there's a \$700 billion transfer of wealth from the United States into these other countries. And what we're saying is that \$700 billion, that should be put to work here in the United States of America building windmills, building nuclear facilities, moving forward with a lot of these other alternative energy sources that are clean and renewable.

And you add to that what we're spending on the war in Iraq, \$10 to \$12 billion a month in Iraq. This is going to be a trillion dollar war, at the end of the day it's going to cost us \$3 trillion when you factor in the cost of dealing with a lot of the veterans who have come back, who we have an obligation to take care of in order to honor their service. If that money was spent focusing on investments in alternative energy here in the United States 7 years ago, we would be so far down the path. We would have a green country. We would have green energy. We would have control of the lithium batteries that are being made. You would have plug-in cars. This all could have happened in the last 5 or 6 years.

And so we need to get out of this mentality that somehow we're stuck. And I think for public officials to tell us that somehow, when you only have 4 percent of the world's oil reserves, you can somehow drill your way out of this problem is misleading. And Boone Pickens said that, "They mislead the public." This is what he said the other day when he was here, July 23, "They mislead the public." The public thinks we can go and drill and they mislead it, and that we're going to get \$2 a gallon in gas.

Let's have an honest conversation about how we can prevent us from getting into the same situation a decade from now, where you and I—maybe here, maybe not here—that we're not having the same conversation.

And we have an opportunity to do that now. Speaker PELOSI, we've put hundreds of millions of dollars into research and development for these alternative energy sources, and some are starting to come online. But this should have been done 30 years ago, but especially 7 years ago.

Mr. ALTMIRE. The gentleman is correct. We had an energy crisis 35 years

ago where people had to wait in line for their gas, and depending on whether you had an even or odd number ending your license plate, you had to alternate days to even have the right to buy gas. And when that crisis subsided, this country, unfortunately, took a sigh of relief and said, well, I'm glad that's over. Let's keep doing it the way we're doing it, let's keep doing what we're doing. And we are not going to let that happen again.

We are not going to leave this for people like your niece, who was just born that you're talking about. We are going to address the problem now. We're going to take the steps, in a very long-term away, to be thoughtful, and take an approach that's not going to continue our addiction to oil, that's not going to continue our dependence on oil. We're going to move forward in a way that's going to move us away from oil and look at every possible source.

Mr. Pickens, who you have the chart behind you, the gentleman from Ohio, he has his ideas on how to do that. And I don't know if it's going to be windmills—which is what Mr. Pickens advocates. I don't know if it's going to be hydrogen fuel cell or hybrid cars or solar or nuclear or clean burning coal or something we haven't thought of, but let's put everyone we have, all of our resources, the best and brightest, on the job. Let's get it done.

And the mission should be to get us off of oil. That's where we want to go. That's something we didn't do 35 years ago and, unfortunately, we're the worse off for it. It's something we didn't do 7 years ago when we had a national crisis where we could have made that step in the right direction, we didn't do it. But we are here now, and we are not going to let the same mistakes be made this time that were made in the past.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. And when you look at—and you mentioned it earlier—when you look at a lot of the situations that we have to deal with, that hopefully we can fix in time that my nieces and nephews don't have to deal with, but the debt, just in the last few years, \$3 trillion increase in the debt ceiling here to \$10 trillion. So we're borrowing this money because of the irresponsible tax cuts that the Bush administration passed when they got in, giving tax cuts primarily to the wealthiest people in the country who are making billions of dollars a year, benefiting from the system we have, and increasing the pressure with health care and energy costs on the middle class at the same time. And so these increases and the money that we're borrowing is coming from China, is coming from Japan, is coming from OPEC countries.

So when you think about the situation we're in now and you're paying \$4 at the pump because the Bush energy plan, the Bush/Cheney energy plan has been implemented, you're paying \$4 at the pump, and then you realize that

your country is borrowing money for the war and the debt and the tax cuts that are going primarily to the top 1 percent, and that money that you're borrowing is coming from China and oil-producing countries—so they're loaning you the money, and they're getting interest, you're paying them interest on it just like you would do to the bank—and the oil-producing countries are producing more oil and shipping more over here, so we have a \$700 billion transfer of payments over to these oil producing countries. When you think about borrowing money from China, paying them interest on the money, and they take the interest that they make off the money you're borrowing and they invest that into basically state-run operations over there, whether it's steel, or any other kind of manufacturer that they lure over with the money that they get from the Americans to build industrial parks, to build roads and bridges so that companies will move over there, to build Navy ships so that they can have a strong fleet in the Pacific, we're funding all this because of the irresponsible practices.

□ 2045

So we're trying to dig ourselves out of this hole, and we're still getting resistance. Even to the tune of trying to put 70 million barrels of oil on the market, we have trouble getting that passed because our Republican friends, Mr. Speaker, continue to prevent us from doing that.

I yield to my friend.

Mr. ALTMIRE. I will tell you what else is irresponsible. The gentleman from Ohio has a chart behind him that has quotes from T. Boone Pickens about the oil industry and advocates of this ANWR and offshore drilling, "Drill Here, Drill Now," and we have talked about that, and he says, "They mislead the public." That's Mr. Pickens' quote. That's what's irresponsible. It's irresponsible to put forward a policy that is specifically designed to score political points; to, in a very cheap way, take advantage of the American people's exasperation with the fact that gas prices have skyrocketed out of control in recent months.

So instead of trying to solve the problem, instead of joining us in voting today to release 70 million barrels of oil into the market immediately, instead of joining us to force the oil companies to use the nearly 90 million acres that are already permitted and leased and ready to go and force them to drill on it right now or we're going to give that lease to somebody who will, instead of joining us in these efforts, they oppose it, and we have been unable to pass them out of the House because of their opposition, when we have almost unanimously on our side supported it. That's what is going on here, and that is why Mr. Pickens talks about the public being misled on this because when your slogan here is "Drill Here, Drill Now" and the only

policy that you're advocating for doesn't create the first drop of oil for at least 10 years, there's a disconnect there and you are misleading the public.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. And from my perspective, I certainly don't want to put the philosophy that got us into the problem that we are in and reaffirm it and continue to go down that road. We only have 4 percent of the world's oil reserves. What don't you get about that picture, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. ALTMIRE. And we use 25 percent oil.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. And we use 25 percent. So we only have 4 percent and we use 25 percent, and we're shipping \$700 billion a year to those countries that are sending their oil over here, and we can't drill enough. Even if we open everything up, we still can't get enough oil to solve the problem. It is simple math and it's disingenuous, Mr. Speaker, to somehow mislead the American public, in the words of T. Boone Pickens, who is an oilman from Texas who is saying the same thing. It is misleading to say that we can drill our way out of this.

There are 68 million acres that the oil companies now have, up to 90 million. They've done the research as to where they wanted to purchase the lease. They think there is oil there. They know there's oil there. Go and drill it and stop the political games of trying to say that somehow some of the American people are against it. Go ahead and drill. But that is not going to solve the problem.

And I know in your district and I know the people that vote for me in my district want me to come down here to solve problems, not to mislead them and score political points.

When I am eating at Vernon's Restaurant about two blocks from me, the best Italian restaurant on the planet, Mr. Speaker, people want to know exactly what we are going to do to solve the problem. And if you explain to them that we don't have enough oil reserves to keep this train going, they're smart enough to realize that they know how the movie ends, and it's not pretty because now we're 10 years from where we are today, gas is at \$8 a gallon, and we are more dependent on oil from the Middle East, and we have done nothing with wind and nuclear and biodiesel; so we are in a worse spot than we are today.

Now, I would love to go to my friends who are at Vernon's Restaurant and say, "If we just keep drilling, we're going to be okay." But that's not the reality. Those aren't the facts. And the facts have got to dictate what public policy is or we are not doing our job for the American people.

Mr. ALTMIRE. And there may be some, Mr. RYAN, who are watching us today among our colleagues who would say, well, what are the facts? You're giving your set of facts and figures. How do I know that what you're saying is true?

I would encourage any of our colleagues who are watching this to go to the Department of Energy's Web site, pull up EIA, the Energy Information Administration, which is where all these figures that we talk about come from. That's President Bush's own Department of Energy that is telling us what numbers we're using today.

And when you hear us talk about the 68 million acres, we are talking about in the Continental United States, areas that are leased, ready to go. The oil companies have in an auction bought those leases. Clearly they think there's oil there. They are paying rent on those leases right now for the right to keep that land. They would not do that if they didn't think there is oil there. But our friends on the other side will still come one by one and parade up and say, well, there's no oil there. Those are dry holes and there's nothing there. They're wrong, but let's just let that go and say, okay, let's talk about the 20 million acres in Alaska that we also talk about where there's a similar, though not identical, circumstance where the Congress has approved the ability of the oil companies to lease and start drilling there. We're not standing in the way. We have opened it up. The oil companies can drill there. It's the Department of the Interior that has dragged their feet in getting these leases out. We want them to have the lease sales and the auctions to get the process going. It's closer to Prudhoe Bay than ANWR; so the pipeline construction wouldn't take as long, and it's estimated that we could pull oil out of this area in 3 to 4 years instead of the 10 years it would take to pull it out of ANWR, which is a little bit further away.

So what's the point of all this? The point of all this is our friends on the other side will say the same thing: There's no oil there. That's not the fruitful area. It's ANWR where the oil is, the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

Well, you might buy that argument except for fact what is the name of this territory that we're talking about in Alaska? The name of the 20 million acres that we are talking about is the National Petroleum Reserve. Now, it would seem to me that if the name of the area is the "National Petroleum Reserve," there's probably some oil there. I think that's a pretty safe guess. So you would have a pretty hard time saying that's the reason why we're not pulling oil out of the ground, because it's not there, in the National Petroleum Reserve.

So we brought to the floor last week a bill that said the Department of Interior is directed to hold the lease auctions, to get the process going. The big oil companies are encouraged and, in fact, more than encouraged. They will either use the land for drilling or they will lose the right and we will give it to somebody who will. And we brought that bill to the floor. And as the gentleman knows, what happened? All those same people who stand over on

the other side and lecture us about the need to increase domestic supply, "Drill Here, Drill Now," they voted against it. Not all but most. The vast majority voted against it. Now, that seems pretty inconsistent to me.

So what's the motivation? Well, I'm not going to speculate on individual Members' motivation. But if your mantra, if your cause celebre is "Drill Here, drill now, increase domestic production, let's get more oil on the market," and when the Congress brings to the floor a bill that does exactly that and sooner than the course of action that you advocate, I think you need to go home and explain to your constituents why you voted against that bill.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I agree. But it's important for us to realize too that we are moving on the energy issues. We are trying to fix it, short term and long term. Short term by releasing the barrels of oil out of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, have a short-term impact, reduce the cost; and then long term, invest in these alternative energy sources with different kinds of cars and incentives and tax credits for renewables and all of these different policies that will help stimulate a lot of the renewable energy fields long term.

We are also trying to do other things along public policy areas that will have an effect for families who are getting hurt today and getting squeezed because of energy and because of health care and because of tuition.

One of the things I would like to talk about that we have been doing, families want their kids to have a better life than they had, and they want their kids to move further on in life than they have. And the key in 2008 for that is an education. And what has happened just a week or so ago, one of the policies that we have implemented is reducing the cost of student loans. The cost of a student loan used to be 6.8 percent, or the interest rate on a student loan used to be about 6.8 percent last year. As of just a few days ago, this went down to 6 percent. And this is going to continue to go down over the course of the next few years to about 3.4 percent for a student loan because when we got in, when the Democrats got in, and Speaker PELOSI has a major priority and a major emphasis on education, this is where we put our resources. This is where we made the investment.

So for my friends, Mr. Speaker, who don't seem to think there is a difference between the two parties, when you go to get a student loan and its .8 percent less this year than it was last year, that's because the Democrats are in and it was a priority for us to reduce the interest rate on a student loan. And when you go next year and it's even lower and when you go the following year and I think by 2010 it's down to 3.4 percent, the average student loan is going to be reduced by about \$4,400. So when you take the \$4,400, you take the increase in the

minimum wage, you look at all of these different little policies that we have, they add up to where families and kids can have a better, more prosperous future than their parents had. But those are the kinds of investments that we're making. And just today the minimum wage went up again because of what the Democrats have done.

There's a clear focus and a clear philosophy of what we are trying to implement here, and that's for middle class families to have success and for them to move forward and have their kids have more opportunity than they had. Whether it's energy or health care or education, that's where we are moving towards to make sure that we can advance that cause.

Mr. ALTMIRE. I thank the gentleman. That is something that we have worked on in this Congress and something that we have a great record of achievement is higher education. When you look at families struggling with the economy and look at the problems that we have with increased health care costs, certainly gas prices like we're talking about, the cost of higher education is right there with the struggles that most middle class families or many middle class families in this country are facing. And this Congress took, in the very early days, a step, a very big step, to help families.

We cut in half the interest rates on student loans from 6.8 percent to 3.4 percent. And as the gentleman indicates, that by itself is going to save the average student borrower in this country \$4,400 over the lifetime of the loan.

But we didn't stop just there. We increased Pell grants to their highest level in history, and we capped at 15 percent of income the amount of discretionary income that the borrower after they graduate will be required to pay, which will help them minimize their debt, prevent them from getting overextended with their debt obligations when they're not making a lot of money right from the start, and avoid some of the problems that we have seen in the credit market now where people's homes have been foreclosed because they got overextended.

Those are real accomplishments on real issues that matter to the American people and matter to American families, and that's something that we have to stand on when we talk about what this Congress has done proactively.

We're talking about gas prices, and something we didn't even mention, which is a major reform, hadn't been done in 30 years, we increased the average miles-per-gallon standards, the fuel efficiency standards, from 24 miles per gallon on average to 35 miles per gallon. The first time it had been raised for American-made cars or cars sold in America in 30-plus years. So that's another real accomplishment of this Congress.

And we could go on. The gentleman talks about the minimum wage and others. So we are taking steps to help

American families and people struggling in this downturn economy.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. And that's the best thing from our vantage point: Prove to the American people as to what your beliefs are and how it's going to affect their lives. And if you have a couple of jobs and you're making the minimum wage, you got a pay raise twice already in the last year, just over the last year. If you're going to school, there is more grant money available for you to go get an education. There is a lower interest rate on the loan that you're going to take out or your parents may take out to send you to school.

□ 2100

Those are significant investments that Democrats have made into the future of our country so that middle-class people can be successful and take advantage of these tools. We can't do it for anybody. But these are tools that average families will use and implement to move forward.

Two of the things that we can't forget, we have also passed the GI Bill out of the House which will say that if you served this country in Iraq or Afghanistan over the past 3 or 4 years that you will have all expenses paid to go to college. In Ohio, there is a policy now that the Governor has implemented that you can come to Ohio, any veteran around the country, can come to Ohio and have in-State tuition rates if you're a veteran.

And look at what we've done for veterans' health care. The largest investment in the 77-year history of the VA was made by the Democratic Congress when we got in here. A lot of us weren't for the war. And I will be the first to say I wasn't for it. But what we all are for is honoring the service of the veterans who go over there and make the great sacrifice and the sacrifices that their family makes. So we have made that investment into the VA program so that the vets have the benefits that they need. And we're honoring their service by making that investment.

And if you look to the previous 7 years or 6 years, what the President made, Mr. Speaker, and what the Republican Congress made, it was \$14 billion in corporate welfare to the oil companies. It was tax cuts to people who make millions and millions of dollars a year. It was an energy policy that got us \$4 a gallon gas. It was a health care policy that gets 15 or 20 percent increase on your health care. A dramatic difference. And I'm proud to stand up here and talk a little bit about what we've done and what we're going to continue to do, because I feel like we're just getting started. And we have an election coming up now in November. And I think there is an opportunity for us to really move forward.

So, I'm honored again to be with the gentleman from Pennsylvania. And Mr. Speaker, we're going to wrap up. Again, congratulations to my brother and sister-in-law, they're grandparents

to Andrea. And we will yield back the balance of our time.

ENERGY IN AMERICA, NOW AND IN THE FUTURE

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

Mr. LATTA. Mr. Speaker, the American people are demanding action. And that action is about what they know more about than this Congress does. The American people want us to act, because they're hurting at home, at the pump and at work.

My district is the Fifth Congressional District in Ohio. I have, according to the National Manufacturers' Association, a district that is number nine in manufacturing jobs across the entire Congress. And I represent the number one agricultural district in the State of Ohio. My district also has a great distinction in that we have I-75 and the Ohio Turnpike intersecting in northern Wood County. And with that intersection, we have been told that we are within about 60 percent of the United States population in a good hard day's drive. So we rely a lot on transportation. We rely a lot when it comes to having to have energy. And without that energy, we're not going to be working. And without that energy, people are going to be saying that we're paying so much for gasoline. We have to pay so much for home heating oil this winter, more for natural gas, more for when it comes to having to pay for groceries. And not because it's the farmers' fault, because those farmers are out in those fields right now having to pay more for diesel. And the chemicals they put on their yard are petroleum based. The fertilizers are.

So what we have to do is we have to get an energy policy. And we have to get it now. Our national security depends on having a strong economy. And not only do we need a strong economy, but we want to make sure that the folks back home are saving some dollars for their future to be able to make sure that their kids get a good college education that they can help them with. I have in my district a Whirlpool plant in Clyde, Ohio, which is the number one washing machine factory in the world where they produce over 5 million washing machines a year. Twenty percent of those washing machines are exported. That helps balance our trade. We have to make sure we're doing that.

And right now, a lot of people are talking about what's happening with all the energy. Well, the United States consumes between 21 to 24 percent of all the energy in the world. And with that, we were king of the hill for a long time. But the rest of the world is catching up. And they're catching up fast. Look at this chart. Look at 2010. Right now the United States is ahead of the combination of India and China.