

opinion, since they are in effect safe from challenge in November. It shifts the competition from the general election to the primary, where candidates of more extreme views can hope to attract support from passionately ideological voters and exploit the low turnouts typical of those primaries.

Gerrymandered, one-party districts tend to send highly partisan representatives to the House or the legislature, contributing to the gridlock in government that is so distasteful to voters.

These are familiar complaints in academic and journalistic circles. And this week, another count was added to the indictment with a report from the Democratic Leadership Council titled "Gerrymandering the Vote."

It makes the point that these rigged districts have the effect of suppressing the vote.

The numbers are startling. In both 2002 and 2006, voter turnout in districts where the winner received at least 80 percent of the votes struggled to reach 125,000. Turnout in the districts where the margin was 20 percent or less exceeded 200,000.

If there were some other device that was reducing voter turnout by almost 40 percent, you could be sure it would be the chief target for reformers. The ballot anomalies and the "voter suppression" tactics that marked the Florida election of 2000 affected far fewer people than that.

The study by the DLC's Marc Dunkelman found big variations among the states in the competitiveness of their House districts. The average margin in Massachusetts in 2006 was almost 75 percent. Next door in New Hampshire, it was under 5 percent.

Dunkelman calculated the potential turnout increase for individual states, if their district lines were redrawn to emphasize competitiveness. The gains ranged as high as 59 percent for Louisiana and 49 percent for New York. Other states that could experience much higher participation with redrawn districts include West Virginia, Virginia, California, North Carolina, Alabama, New Jersey, Mississippi, Georgia, Hawaii and New Mexico.

Dunkelman estimates that competitive districts might attract 3 million more voters in California and almost 2 million more in New York. Overall, 11 million more Americans might show up at the polls, decreasing our chronically low voting participation rates.

How to change the lines? Two states—Iowa and Washington—have instituted non-partisan or bipartisan redistricting systems, and they have been rewarded with much more competitive House races. So it can be done.

But the politicians are unlikely to do it on their own. Only if the voters demand reform is there a chance it will come.

REPUBLICAN ENERGY POLICY

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

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, we come here tonight to talk about an issue that is clearly the number one issue challenging families all across America, and that is the high cost of energy at the gas pump. In fact, Mr. Speaker, I was just ending what we call a tele-town hall meeting talking with the good folks of the Fifth Congress-

sional District of Texas that I have the privilege of representing in the House of Representatives, and I would say out of, oh, I don't know, 15 or 20 questions that I was able to take, I would say probably three-quarters of them had to do with what is Congress going to do to help bring down the cost of gasoline at the pump.

All across America, Mr. Speaker, families are going to their local convenience stores and they are having to decide, do I buy a gallon of gas, or do I buy an a gallon of milk? I can't afford to do both. At roughly \$4 a gallon, working families in America cannot make ends meet.

You would think on something of this national import that this institution, that this great deliberative body, that the people's House would act. You would think maybe we would act in concert, Mr. Speaker, but at least we would act. Instead, we don't see it, Mr. Speaker. We don't see it. What we see is the Democrat majority saying, well, maybe we can somehow sue our way into lower gas prices. Let's sue OPEC. I don't know what we are going to do, Mr. Speaker. Are we going to send a legion of trial lawyers to the Middle East to sue OPEC? Is that somehow going to solve our problems with the price of gas at the pump?

Well, that didn't work, so they came up with the idea, the Democrats, let's tax the oil companies. Nobody likes them. Well, that is something that was tried in the seventies, and guess what? When you tax something, they will put it in the price and it raises the price to you. What we found in the seventies is that we became even more dependent upon foreign oil when we did that.

Now their latest idea, Mr. Speaker, is let's somehow say we are going to try to outlaw investment. They call it "speculation." I thought in a capitalistic economy investment was a pretty good thing.

But the reason the price is going up is when we see that demand increases and there is no commitment to supply in the U.S., Congress, try as they may, cannot repeal the laws of supply and demand, Mr. Speaker. It can't be done, anymore than we can say that the sun no longer rises in the east.

So Republicans have a different plan. Actually, Republicans have a plan, the American Energy Act. And what we want to do is do all of the above. We want to support renewable energy.

Prior to coming to Congress, I worked for a renewable electricity company. I was very proud of the work that was done in the area of solar energy, in the area of wind power, in the area of biomass. It was an important part of my passion and my professional life, and Republicans support renewables.

We want to do more work in alternative energy, particularly in, for example, coal-to-liquids. We are the Saudi Arabia of coal, Mr. Speaker, but somehow the Democrats won't let us use it. They won't allow the Federal

Government, for example, to enter into long-term supply contracts for these alternative fuels, oil shale, tar sands, coal-to-liquids.

Conservation is a very important part of the mix as well. But, Mr. Speaker, so is producing our oil and gas resources that we have in America. Why can't we produce American energy in America for Americans? And that is what the American Energy Act, supported by Republicans in the House, is all about.

All we ask for, Mr. Speaker, is in the people's House, can't we have a vote? But Speaker PELOSI will not allow a vote. She simply says, no, we are not even going to vote on it. The people don't even have a choice.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, recently the Washington Post, not exactly a bastion of conservative thought, said, "Why not have a vote on offshore drilling?" They recognize that Speaker PELOSI won't even allow a simple up-or-down vote. Let me continue to quote from their op-ed of July 25th: "When they took the majority, House Democrats proclaimed that bills should generally come to the floor under a procedure that allows open, full and fair debate consisting of a full amendment process that grants the minority the right to offer its alternatives."

□ 2115

Why not on drilling, the Washington Post says? Why not on drilling?

But again, as people are suffering in the small businesses, in the homes, in the coffee shops of East Texas that I represent, maybe they are not suffering in the salons of San Francisco represented by Speaker PELOSI and maybe that is why she doesn't necessarily understand the pain that people are feeling. And that is why it is so critical, Mr. Speaker, so critical that we get an up or down vote in producing some supply.

For all intents and purposes, Mr. Speaker, 85 percent of our offshore resources are illegal to develop. For all intents and purposes, Mr. Speaker, 75 percent of our onshore resources of oil and gas are illegal to develop.

Recently Brazil found a huge offshore find of energy, and the whole Nation celebrated. It seems like, in America, when we find energy it is some kind of point of shame and we want to cover it up and we want to make sure that nobody knows about it and nobody develops it. We appear to be the only industrialized nation in the world that won't develop its own energy. Again, Mr. Speaker, it is all of the above. We have got to do it all to bring down the price of gas at the pump.

So Mr. Speaker, I am very happy that I have been joined by some other colleagues who are real leaders in this institution in trying to create more American energy for Americans, in America, and help those families who are having to commute to work every day, who are trying to help take an elderly parent to the doctor, who are trying in just a couple of weeks taking their kids to school.

I just had a person tell me this weekend that they now are spending 1½ days a week just to pay to commute to work. Out of a five-day work week, they are spending 1½ days just paying to commute so they can get the 3½ days of pay. That is just not right, Mr. Speaker. It is just not right.

And so again, I am glad I am joined by a couple of my colleagues here. And at this time I would be very happy to yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CONAWAY) to get some of his comments.

Mr. CONAWAY. I thank the gentleman for his comments and for hosting our hour tonight.

We have been talking about this issue of energy and America's need for energy and America's supply of energy for quite some time now, and I hope we are making progress with certainly the American people, Mr. Speaker. I don't know that we are making much progress with our colleagues on the other side of the aisle as we continue to talk about American-sourced energy. Whether that is American-sourced oil production, American-sourced natural gas production, American-sourced coal, coal to liquids, American nuclear, American hydro-power, American wind, American solar, American all of the above. And it seems lost on some of my colleagues that there is something inherently bad about American production.

Crude oil as an example is a worldwide commodity that nations around the world produce and nations around the world use. And the price is set in the world market, it is not set here in the United States, and the players in the world market pay for that crude oil and there is a big issue with supply and demand.

There is a relatively thin difference between total world supply and the total world demand. Currently, the supply is just barely in excess of the demand. And when you have got that thin a margin, disruptions or potential disruptions that are threats to producing areas cause the markets to get anxious about the delivery and the ultimate supply of the crude oil. So, consequently, you see a run-up of prices like we have seen recently, you see a decrease in prices.

It makes the price very volatile when the world produces about 86 million barrels a day and uses about 85 million barrels a day, that much of a disruption in any of the major suppliers will cause great anxiety among those folks who have to buy crude oil to run their refineries, those folks who have to buy that product, making sure they have got to it to keep their work in process moving and their production flow going.

Recently, Mr. Speaker, we have had an interesting phrase that has been thrown about that I think trivializes and ignores the true depth of this issue, and that is the Use It Or Lose It bumper sticker that served as the in-depth analysis of the problem that we

face from some of my colleagues across the aisle. They throw out a figure of 68 million acres that is currently under lease by oil and gas companies as somehow being evidence that we are doing all we can to produce American-sourced crude oil and natural gas. We have got a series of questions that I would like them to answer for us about that 68 million since they seem to have come up with the number and know the most about it.

I would like them to analyze that 68 million to tell us how much of that 68 million was leased within the last 2 years. Certainly, no one rationally expects any oil company to be able to go through the bureaucratic exercises that they all have to go through in order to get all of the permissions from some up to 29 Federal agencies that they have to walk the tight ropes to get permission to drill in less than 2 years.

I would also like to know the amount of acreage that is currently in the bureaucratic morass that we put in place for all Federal leases, how of much that acreage is simply waiting on a decision from some bureaucrat deep in the bowels of the Department of Energy, deep in the bowels of EPA, deep in the bowels of Washington, wherever they are, to simply make a yes or no decision on a particular permit. Because I think there is a significant layer of that 68 million acres that is hung up with the bureaucrats waiting on their decision. In some instances it is a good-faith delay on the part of the bureaucrats, but I think in many instances it is just simply business as usual to slow play, to not make expeditious decisions on the applications to drill, the applications to conduct seismic, the applications to access, all those kinds of things that go on.

A third layer, Mr. Speaker, would be those acreage that cannot be developed because they are currently tied up in lawsuits. The experience of many folks who get a Federal lease one day is to be sued by the Sierra Club and others the next day just on general principles, because the environmentalists don't want us exploring on Federal lands, and so they will file frivolous lawsuits in most instances that continue to tie up acres for extended amounts of time, and don't allow these oil companies to move forward with the progress that they would want to.

I think a fourth layer, Mr. Speaker, of the 68 million acres would be those acres on which we are actually conducting drilling operations. There are some 1,800 drilling rigs working in the United States, many of those on Federal leases and offshore, and so there is a significant section I would believe of that 68 million that is actually being worked on and drilled right now that they are trying to determine if crude oil is there in commercial quantities, and we need to know what that is.

And then the final layer, Mr. Speaker, or next to the final layer would be those acres on which drilling has been

conducted, commercial quantities of oil and gas that have been found, and the operator is simply waiting on those final bureaucratic permissions to run the flow lines, to build the roads, to build the infrastructure needed to move the crude oil and natural gas from the wellhead into markets.

And then that final layer, Mr. Speaker, would be those acres that companies have looked at, they are still within the primary term, and they are not actively seeking production on those but they have paid the lease bonus on all of those acres as a permission to take that time, the 10 years on Federal offshore leases, to make their decision. And since they paid the piper, they ought to be able to maintain those leases through their primary term. And so to the extent that we voted that down in the last couple of weeks on this use it or lose it thing, I hope we can put it to bed in its final form.

We hear comments from time to time from our colleagues across the aisle that these oil and gas companies are sitting on production and holding it off the market in hopes of, I guess, getting a higher price. That begs the question of: How do oil and gas companies make money? They have onshore hundreds of thousands and millions of dollars invested, offshore billions of dollars invested of their shareholder money and equity capital and in many instances debt that they have invested in these oil and gas leases, and the only way they get any money back, the only way they get a return on those investment dollars is if they produce the crude oil and natural gas that they are exploring or set up to produce.

So there is actually no incentive for them to withhold production from the market in hopes of getting I guess a higher price, because the longer they take to produce the crude oil natural gas and sell it, the longer it takes for them to get their money back on the original investment, the lower the return on investment, and it is just bad business to try to do something like that.

It is an interesting concept that producers would withhold production from the market and that they get accused of doing that, when in fact if you look at the policies of this democratic majority, most or all of their policies do just that. The Democrats withhold American-sourced crude oil, American-sourced natural gas from the market; and particularly with respect to American-sourced crude oil, they are withholding that off of the market, holding that out of the worldwide supply, they are directing contributing to these higher prices that my colleagues are talking about and the higher prices that result in higher gasoline costs, diesel costs, and ultimately home heating costs this fall.

Let me leave you with this one thought, Mr. Speaker. I don't think anybody rationally thinks that we won't be using crude oil in 10 years. So as we look at America's potential for

production of crude oil over the next 10 years, why is it not good enough reason to do that simply to replace barrels of oil that we import from countries like Venezuela, like the Middle East, other places where the countries are at best maybe not our allies or in the instance of Venezuela an avowed opponent, why does it not make sense to replace production that we buy from bad guys with production that is produced here in the United States? Because the American production creates American jobs. American refineries create American jobs. So even if that is the only thing we are able to accomplish with all of this effort is to reduce the number of barrels that we buy from other folks, it helps balance the trade, it will strengthen the dollar. It does a lot of good and, to my view, it does limited, if any, harm to produce American crude oil and natural gas.

So as we conduct this debate, we do it on a lot of levels, but on one level it simply should say: Look, if we are importing crude oil and natural gas from other parts of the world while we have domestic crude oil that could be produced, we are making a foolish decision and a foolish allocation of resources to do that.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to drop the partisan rhetoric, drop the issue of just simply trying to maintain who gets elected in November, and let's deal responsibly with this issue of high crude oil prices and the resulting high gasoline prices that come with that.

So I want to thank my colleague from Texas for allowing me this time to speak.

Mr. HENSARLING. I thank the gentleman for his leadership in this institution, particularly on the piece of legislation that we are working together on in trying to repeal something known as section 526, that disallows the Federal Government from entering into long-term supply contracts for alternative fuels to help jump-start that needed industry.

The gentleman from Texas brought up a number of good points in his comments. And, again, you would think this would not be particularly controversial.

Just last week, the Chairman of the Federal Reserve stated: A one percent increase in supply could lower prices by 10 percent. Now, that is the Chairman of the Federal Reserve. Supply matters. And yet, our friends from the other side of the aisle, the Democrat majority, refuses; not only do they refuse to produce any more American-made oil and gas, not only do they refuse to do that, Mr. Speaker, they won't even let us have a vote.

So, Mr. Speaker, if there is one thing that the American people could do tonight that would help bring down the cost of energy at the pump is go to their computers, go to their telephones, contact their Members of Congress and say, at least let's have a vote. Let's have a vote on the American Energy Act.

Survey after survey after survey shows that three-quarters, 80 percent of Americans want more supply and they want it now. We have to start today, Mr. Speaker. And it is just absolutely ludicrous when families are suffering, like the Gardner family of Dallas, Texas, that I have the pleasure of representing who wrote to me that, "In order to afford to send our youngest to camp, we have had to cancel the family vacation due to the increased cost of fuel."

Family vacations all across America are getting cancelled because the Democrat majority will not allow more American energy to be produced in America. Since they have taken over, the energy policy in this Nation 18 months ago, the cost of gas has gone from roughly \$2.50 a gallon to roughly \$4 a gallon. Now, I am not saying it is all their fault, but they are moving this country in the complete wrong direction.

And now, Mr. Speaker, again I am very pleased that I have been joined by a number of my colleagues who have a lot of expertise on this issue of energy, and one of the great leaders we have on this side of the aisle is the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. SHIMKUS). I yield to him at this time.

□ 2130

Mr. SHIMKUS. I thank my colleague for the time, and I thank Mike Conaway for his great comments. And it is important that we are here tonight, and it is important that we continue to push this issue, especially as we are coming close to the time when we adjourn for what we call our district work period, which is for layman's term it is really the month of August, and it will go to the first week of September. We will be back in our district. Members will be traveling around the world on the congressional delegation tours and events.

But one of the main premises that we are trying to address this week is just stating the position that we should not leave. We should not adjourn and leave Washington until we have at least one vote on increasing supply.

We have been talking about bringing on supply as part, not the totalitarian solution, but as part of the solution, and we have been down here 3 months straight pretty much and continue to drive the message. And in the People's House, the House of Representatives, this is the body that you are supposed to hear the outcry of the citizens. You are supposed to hear the pain and the agony, as my colleague from Texas stated. And you are supposed to transform those cries for help from the citizenry to at least a debate on the floor and hopefully a vote to address these issues.

I too did a tele-town hall meeting last night, and an independent trucker called me up. And you know what he was saying. He is saying, I can't make it. I can't make ends meet. I used to be able to make a good income for my

family and provide for them. But now with the doubling of the cost of diesel fuels, I don't know, we need help. And his response, and I think we have been helpful in moving the debate nationally, is we need to bring on more supply.

So I would like to just go back to the basics real quick, where we came from, where we are at and where we are headed. And because my debate has been over a period of months, I have softened the debate as far as the real partisan rancor and just talked about the facts.

So I go back to when President Bush got sworn in. The price of a barrel of crude oil was \$23. Now, when I came in, elected in 1996, came in 1997/1998 we were worried that the price of a barrel of crude oil was so low that it was going to close the margin wells in Southern Illinois. It was down to about \$10 a barrel.

So here we are at \$23. The new majority comes in January 2006. The price of a barrel of crude oil is \$58.31. And today, I think this is correct. If it is not, it is close. \$123.67.

And then the basic of this chart is just to say, you know, the trend line is not good. It doesn't matter if you start in January 2001, it doesn't matter if you start back in January of 1997, January 2001, January 2006, or today, this trend line is not good, and it is not sustainable for the people that we ought to be standing up for on the floor of the House here, and that is the middle income, lower middle income individuals who are disproportionately hurt by high energy prices.

The poor, they are not going to go out to the new car dealer and buy the Toyota Prius. If they are lucky, they are going to scrape some money together, they are going to go to the used car lot, and they are going to get whatever they can afford to get them to work. That is what the poor are going to do.

And when we cause this increase in the price of a barrel of crude oil, which translates into an increase in gasoline costs, we hurt the people that we are trying to protect, which is the poor, the middle class, and in my aspect of my district, rural America.

Rural America is disproportionately harmed greater because in rural America you have to drive many miles to get to your schools. You have to drive many miles to get to your health care. You have to drive many miles to get to your job, and so that is the difficulty.

Now, here is the problem. Here are some solutions. And part of that solution is what my colleague from Texas said, Americans for American energy. American energy translates into American jobs. In a time of low economic development, wouldn't it be great to use our own resources to create American jobs using American energy?

So we have a couple of things here. Of course, parochial interests are always important. We have 250 years worth of recoverable coal in the United

States. We have as much Btu, British thermal units, of coal in the Illinois coal basin as Saudi Arabia has in oil. We use coal; 50 percent of all of our electricity is generated by coal in this country. But we can also use coal to turn it into liquid fuels.

Wouldn't it be great to have a competitor at the pump to gasoline, based upon crude oil, so that there is some competition between the liquid fuels competing for lower prices, better quality, better service?

And we do that by taking a coal field, American jobs, building a coal to liquid refinery, American jobs to build the refinery, American jobs to operate the refinery, a pipeline, American jobs to build the pipeline, to the airports of the world. You can take coal, you can turn it into jet fuel.

Why do we have four budget airlines have gone broke? Why is American Airlines charging \$15 a bag? Why are our airline tickets going up? It is all because of the high price of fuel. And if we incentivize coal using fissure trope technology into jet fuel, we would not have the loss of these aviation jobs that we have today. And that is a trickle-down aspect, because when people are unemployed they are not going to the store. They are not going to go to the movie theater. As my colleague from Texas says, they are going to make decisions whether to go to vacation or send people to camp or just stay at home.

Mr. HENSARLING. Would the gentleman yield on that point?

Mr. SHIMKUS. I would be happy to yield.

Mr. HENSARLING. We know that America has an incredible amount of coal reserves. And the solution, the partial solution the gentleman is suggesting makes imminent sense. What is it that is preventing people in America from doing this now? I will yield to the gentleman.

Mr. SHIMKUS. Well, the answer is it is the extreme environmental left that hates coal. The leader of the other body, Senator REID said, "Coal will kill you." That is his direct quote. And so that is the leadership is saying that coal is bad.

I am here to say that coal is good. It can address our concerns. It could bring on more supply. We can do it cleanly, we can create jobs, and it is part of the solution. Our part of the debate is American energy, all-of-the-above. Part of that all-of-the-above is the great use of a great resource. We have more recoverable coal in this country than any country in the world and we ought to take advantage of it.

Mr. GINGREY. Will the gentleman from Illinois yield on that point for a second? It is my understanding, and correct me if I am wrong, that in this country there are known resources, veins of coal in the amount of 1.5 trillion tons, and it is suspected that there may be that much more that is not for sure. But 1.5 trillion tons of coal. And I think we utilize about 22 billion tons

a year in this electricity generation. So I just want to make the point that there is so much more of this resource, whether it is in West Virginia or Kentucky or in Illinois, and to not utilize it, as the gentleman says, makes no sense at all.

Mr. SHIMKUS. And part of the debate is, you know, we are one of the few major—it doesn't have to be a major country. Most countries, when they see a great resource that they have available, they say, yahoo. We have a strategic advantage because we can create low cost power which will help our manufacturing base, which will help create jobs.

We see a national asset like coal and we say, we have an environmental disaster here. And there is no way we are going to use this. And that is the fallacy, not just in coal, but it really involves any of the fossil fuel arena, whether it is our OCS, or Outer Continental Shelf, whether it is the billions of barrel of oil, the trillions of cubic feet, it is the inability to look at that as a strategic national advantage and look at it like an environmental hazard, by the Democrat leadership, both here in this House and in the other body, that is stopping our ability to take advantage of the resources we have involved in this country.

And the country is now awakened, and they know that we have these resources, and they are really confused as to why we are not taking advantage of them.

Mr. HENSARLING. If the gentleman would yield again, isn't it true that we have several hundred years' worth of coal in our country today? Is that correct? I yield back to the gentleman.

Mr. SHIMKUS. That is correct.

Mr. HENSARLING. And if the gentleman would yield again, I had asked the question earlier, what is preventing us from taking advantage of American resources on American soil?

Isn't it also true that recently the Democrat majority passed legislation known as Section 526, that prevents the Federal Government from entering into long-term energy contracts, something I believe the United States Air Force wanted to do to wean itself away from foreign oil and develop coal to liquids on American soil; but yet our friends on the other side of the aisle, I believe, have prevented our Pentagon or our United States Air Force from doing that. Is that correct?

Mr. SHIMKUS. Well, that is true. Let me just give you a—for every dollar increase in a barrel of crude oil it costs our United States Air Force \$60 million. That is \$60 million of our taxpayers dollars that has to go just to fuel the aviation fleets of our, the defense of our country.

And you mentioned the Democrat majority. I know it is the Democrat leadership. I am hoping, I know I have got a lot of great Democrat friends in those coal areas that are just looking for the right time. We are just here trying to encourage them to seize the

day, seize the moment and help bring supply on.

Mr. BRADY of Texas. If the gentleman from Illinois would yield.

Mr. SHIMKUS. I would be happy to yield.

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Well, isn't it my understanding as well that technology has long existed to turn our vast resources of coal into super clean liquid fuels, the type, because you always think of coal will help lower your utility bills at home, but the truth of the matter is the technology since the 1940s in Germany converted coal to diesel fuel, the type we use in our cars and trucks. And today some of our African countries are using coal, converting it to diesel for almost a third of all their transportation needs.

I recently talked to our major research company, the Woodlands Huntsman, to talk about coal and its conversion and could it be done. And their researchers just laughed. They said, are you kidding? Of course we can do this.

My understanding is the gentleman from Texas, Mr. HENSARLING, has introduced legislation to use the purchasing power of our Air Force, to use the purchasing power of our own government to accelerate that type of research and bring it into the marketplace so we can develop those super clean liquid fuels coming from an abundant resource that will be less dependent on foreign countries for our energy needs.

Mr. SHIMKUS. I have no disagreement with that. We have an all-of-the-above strategy. We have an American energy, you know, meet the American needs. It is all of the above. It is highlighting the great abundance of coal that we have in this country, and taking advantage of it.

We get it. We are going to do it in an environmentally safe and sound way. But we want to bring other commodity products to help make our energy needs. We want to thrust them in a competitive market with other sources of energy so they compete at the pump, so that we have lower prices. It is the American way, and we ought to encourage it.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. If the gentleman will yield, first of all, I thank you for your leadership on the issue, because we all appreciate it, those of us in Republican Study Committee, and the Republican Conference, and I think the American people appreciate the leadership and the insight that you have brought to this issue.

Of course, at Energy and Commerce Committee I have had the opportunity to watch your leadership, even going back as we were working on the 2005 Energy Policy Act.

And I would imagine that some of our constituents who are at home and watching us carry out this colloquy and this discussion here on the floor are thinking, they are talking about coal. Now, I thought coal was a dirty fuel, and I sometimes will hear people talk about carbon emissions and not wanting to use coal because of the

emissions that go into the air and not wanting to use that natural resource.

Now, we all know that there are clean coal technologies that will prevent that. But I think that those who are sharing this discussion with us tonight would appreciate hearing just a little bit about some of the clean coal technologies that would allow the use of this vast supply of coal.

You know, most people refer to the United States as the Saudi Arabia of coal. We have got more than anyone else. And we have good, bright engineers and innovators who are using those skills and gifts to figure out ways to use this coal in an environmentally friendly way. And I would love to hear the gentleman's comments on that.

□ 2145

Mr. SHIMKUS. I will just be brief. And I thank you for the question.

And there was a time when you just grabbed the coal and threw it in and you burned the coal. Pretty dirty, pretty sooty emissions, and that goes back to the advance of the industrial age.

Then they developed crushing and pulverizing the coal and sweeping it up in oxygen to burn it a little more thoroughly. It still has, if you're a climate change person and carbon person, that still you have the carbon emissions.

Now, the carbon emissions are not toxic. It's not like nitrous oxide, it's not like SO₂. It's not like particulate matter. It's not an issue where people are going to point the finger and say, Oh, you're causing a disease by these emissions. Carbon, it's naturally occurring, but there are some people who have problems with that.

So the best way to address that is to go back to technology that was developed in World War II. It's Fischer-Tropsch. Franz Fischer and Hans Tropsch. It's almost like kind of a joke. It's Hans and Franz, Fischer and Tropsch, who developed the technology to take coal, synthetically, and gasify it or turn it into liquid fuel. And when you gasify it and you burn it, you burn it cleanly. And in that extreme, you can pull off the carbon in a more economic manner.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. If the gentleman will yield.

You always make this point so beautifully. And the point is the technologies are there and available and ready to be used that would allow for clean coal usage.

So it really adds to the point that we all make, all-of-the-above: Short, mid-range, and long-range projects. That's what we need to address the energy issue. Making good use, being wise stewards of all of our natural resources, whether it is oil or gas or coal, whether it is switchgrass and waste that we can use for biodiesels and renewables. Whether it is the engineers and their ability to develop new nuclear that is safe and will help power our electric power. Looking at wind, looking at hydroelectric, depending on

what those God-given natural resources are that we have at our disposal to you.

Mr. SHIMKUS. I have got a lot of other colleagues that want to talk. I will finish with my last poster here.

We've talked about the coal-to-liquid. But here is what the current debate here is on the floor. What about the Outer Continental Shelf? We have all of these available locations. We only explore off of 15 percent of our Outer Continental Shelf. That means 85 percent is off limits by a legislative fiat by us.

If we explore there and when we recover oil and gas, those companies pay royalties to us, and those royalties can go to solar and wind, they can go into renewable fuels. My colleague from Tennessee mentioned cellulosic and the debate on biofuels.

What we want is American-made energy creating American jobs, an all-of-the-above position, so that these energy events compete, and that's what I like about it. They compete for our attention based upon offering lower prices. When you have a one-fuel policy like we have today, you have no competition. You're held hostage to the imported barrel crude oil, and we need to break away from that.

I want to thank my colleague from Texas and make sure that my other colleagues have plenty of time.

Mr. HENSARLING. I thank the gentleman from Illinois. Clearly he is one of the great leaders in this institution in allowing the people to know that American energy developed in America for Americans can make a huge difference.

Now I would like to yield to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. GINGREY) for his comments on that.

Mr. GINGREY. This really gives me an opportunity to segue into what the gentleman from Illinois was just talking about in regard to the American Energy Act and, of course, he started his discussion about coal liquefaction and some of the many things we can do as part of that bill, a comprehensive approach.

But in concluding his remarks, he talked about the fact that we have this resource of natural gas and petroleum off the coast of our country, both east and west coast, Outer Continental Shelf, eastern part of the Gulf of Mexico, that 10 billion barrels of fuel is estimated in ANWR, the Arctic National Wildlife Reserve.

I took an opportunity, Mr. Speaker, today to write a letter, an e-mail, to my constituents in the 11th District of Georgia, northwest Georgia, both the Republicans and Democrats. Now, I won my last election with about 71 percent of the votes. So it's a highly Republican district. But listen to what I said to them and the response that they gave.

"For months now I have spoken on the House floor almost daily in a concerted effort to convince the Democratic leadership to bring forward leg-

islation that would allow us to drill here and drill now so that we could all pay less at the pump. Last week, I joined my House Republican colleagues to introduce the American Energy Act, a comprehensive bill which would increase our domestic energy supply while also harnessing renewable and alternative energy technologies and improving conservation and efficiency. However, as Congress prepares to adjourn for a 5-week recess, Speaker PELOSI continues to prevent a vote on increasing the amount of domestic oil produced in this country from reaching the House floor.

"As I work to represent your interest in Washington, it is vital that I know your feelings on this issue. Would you take a moment to quickly answer the survey question on the right of this page so that I can take your opinions to Speaker PELOSI and the Democratic leadership and let them know how you feel about this crucial issue.

"Sincerely, PHIL GINGREY."

Here is the question: Do you think Congress should adjourn for a 5-week recess even if no vote is taken to allow offshore drilling on our Outer Continental Shelf for oil and natural gas?

Mr. Speaker, so far, with several hundred responses already in, the results are overwhelming: 94 percent do not support Congress adjourning for recess without legislation that would allow increased drilling. 94 percent.

Now, as I say, I won my last election with 71 percent. This tells you that a lot of good, red-blooded, conservative, hardworking Democrats in my district feel the exact same way we do tonight, Mr. Speaker, as we do this hour in this colloquy. And I know that there are a lot of my colleagues on this floor, Mr. Speaker—and you do, too, I would imagine, who, given the opportunity to have a bill to vote to increase our domestic source and end our dependency on these foreign countries that hate us, would gladly vote. And maybe they will stay here with us come Thursday or come Friday, a sit-in, and say, "We are not going home until we have a bill to vote on."

With that, I yield back to my colleague from Texas who is managing the time.

Mr. HENSARLING. I thank the gentleman from Georgia for his leadership on this issue, his leadership on health care issues, his contribution to the Republican Study Committee which is sponsoring this special order, Mr. Speaker.

Again, this is the number one issue, Mr. Speaker, that our constituents write about, call about. They're concerned about. I hear from them every day.

I just recently, Mr. Speaker, heard from the Forist family in Mesquite, Texas, that I have the honor of representing in Congress. And they have a small business. They wrote in.

"My husband is an owner operator and the cost of fuel is \$1600 a WEEK. We're not making a profit. We can't

continue to operate this way. We have now cancelled our life insurance policies, cancelled our cable, scaled down our automobile insurance, and buy the necessities at the grocery store."

Mr. Speaker, I'm getting letters like this every single day, and yet the Democrat majority will not support legislation to produce more American energy in America for Americans.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we agree with the Democrats on many things. We believe that there should be more conservation, and most Republicans have supported the various tax provisions that do that. Mr. Speaker, we agree on renewable energy. I was an officer in a renewable energy company prior to coming to Congress. There are very exciting technologies, and most Republicans have supported those programs.

But where we go in different directions, Mr. Speaker, is that the Democrats want to make illegal the production of energy in 85 percent of our offshore resources and, effectively, 75 percent. They don't believe that producing more oil and natural gas has anything to do with the cost of price at the pump. They're trying to repeal the laws of economics.

Well, in fact, Mr. Speaker, what the Speaker of the House has said recently, "This call for drilling in areas that are protected is a hoax. It's an absolute hoax on the part of the Republicans and this administration." Speaker NANCY PELOSI

Well, Mr. Speaker, for those who are listening to this special order, they may have a different opinion. Public opinion policy shows that 85 percent of Americans want to produce more American energy in America for Americans. Maybe they may want to call 202-224-3121 and register their opinion with the Speaker of the House.

Now, again, I don't know how they feel about the high cost of energy in the salons of San Francisco, but I can tell you in the small businesses and the farms and ranches of the Fifth District of Texas, those people are hurting.

And now, Mr. Speaker, I would like to yield time to another great Member of this institution who has been a leader on the issue as well, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BRADY).

Mr. BRADY of Texas. I thank the gentleman from Texas, Mr. HENSARLING, for his leadership on this issue and his legislation, including leadership in the American Energy Act just introduced last week to try to force this Congress to finally get serious about taking responsibility for our own energy needs in this country.

I have been in Congress a while, but one of the best decisions my wife and I made was not to move to Washington. We live at home in Texas with our two young boys, six and nine years old. I commute to work each week here in Washington. We do that so I can stay closer to the families and neighborhoods in Texas that I represent.

Flying up today to Washington, I just was glancing at some of the headlines

in our local papers. They read like this: Fuel costs forcing county to rethink current budget; county gives food banks a break at gas because they're getting fewer and fewer volunteers who just can't afford those high prices; trash companies increase rates to cover fuel costs so families will pay more for their trash pick up; fuel costs cause schools to raise food prices. So our children and the parents of children will be paying more for school lunches because of energy costs.

I just met with a number of our law enforcement agencies, our constables and Sheriffs and police forces, and they are not cutting their emergency response but they are cutting back on their community policing. They're patrolling within our neighborhoods to try and stretch their fuel budgets. Frankly, their fuel budgets are gone for the year. Small businesses, so many are telling me that they are working essentially for nothing these days.

What has this Congress done about it? Nothing really but gimmicks. I call it the Democrats' Jed Clampett Energy Plan. They shoot at a bunch of targets and hope that energy is going to come bubbling up from the ground just like old Jed found.

And look at the gimmicks they proposed. Democrats in Congress have said, "Let us sue OPEC and we will lower your gas prices." Well, has anyone seen their gas prices lowered? They said, "Let's force companies to use it or lose it," which frankly, every independent geological group in America just started laughing at. Did you see your gas prices go down?

They said, "Let's stop filling the Strategic Petroleum Reserve," our nest egg for a rainy day in energy. Did your prices go down? Last week they said, "Well, it's drawn some of that down." Of course, gas prices aren't going down significantly, certainly not because of these gimmicks.

The truth of the matter is as the speaker tonight, Mr. SHIMKUS, the gentlemen from Texas, Mr. HENSARLING and Mr. GOHMERT, have talked about is that three-legged stool of energy: more conservation, because we can all be more efficient in our homes in our daily use; bring those renewables on line—renewable energy not from food but from non-food sources; and then, of course, the third leg, we've had votes on conservation and we've done it. We have had votes on renewable energy, and we are achieving it. We've just not had a single vote on more exploration, more American-made energy.

Now, I think the first goal America should set is that we are going to take responsibility for two-thirds of our daily energy needs. Today we rely upon the rest of the world for that. We ought to take more responsibility for what we need here in America, and to do that is what the speakers in the Republican party are talking about tonight, all-of-the-above.

□ 2200

Let's explore offshore and those deep ocean waters that hold so much poten-

tial, proven reserves for us. Let's tap responsibly into ANWR. Let's convert coal to super clean liquid fuels, and let's tap the oil shale in America. Let's begin creating more American-made energy and more American-made jobs because, at the end of the day, even a hillbilly isn't going to buy the thought that we can just gimmick our way out of this problem, not with families and with small businesses paying what they do today. We've got an abundant supply of energy. We need more supply in America. We need to take more responsibility for our own energy needs. The good news is that we're capable of it.

So all we ask, and all of us tonight are asking one thing of our Speaker. Just give us a vote. Just let the will of the American people prevail. Let the little guy in the door for once. Give him a voice, Mr. Speaker. Tell the special interest lobby to stand aside. Let the little guy's voice be heard. He doesn't have lobbyists. He probably hasn't made campaign contributions to you. He's just paying the freight on energy prices he can't afford and that his family can't afford anymore. We need to let that voice be heard.

Before we leave in August, give us a vote, just a single vote. Let the American public's and let the little guy's voices be heard in Congress again so we can develop more American-made energy here in America. That will lower prices.

With that, I yield back.

Mr. HENSARLING. I thank the gentleman for yielding and for helping remind this body—and I think everybody in this body agrees—that we need more conservation. Everybody in this body believes that we should have more renewable energy and that it's the key to our children's future. Where we depart with the Democrat majority, Mr. Speaker, is we believe that, when 50 percent of our proven resources—petroleum resources—in Alaska are illegal to develop, there's a problem, that when 85 percent of our offshore resources are illegal to develop, there's a problem.

We have decades and decades and decades of American energy laying untapped that we could bring to the market to help bring down the cost of energy. Yet the Speaker of the House, NANCY PELOSI, has said, as this quote shows, that she believes that it's all a hoax. The American people, I believe, Mr. Speaker, disagree, and perhaps they might be interested in calling (202) 224-3121 and in just saying, "Speaker PELOSI, at least allow a vote. As, supposedly, the most Democratic institution in the history of mankind, at least allow the voices of the people to be heard, and let there be a vote."

In speaking of voices to be heard, Mr. Speaker, as one of the great voices in this institution, I want to yield now to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BURGESS).

Mr. BURGESS. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

You know, it seems like, this late at night, all that's left are gentlemen from Texas, but I'm happy to be here as part of this august group.

The gentleman from Georgia mentioned that we're about to go home on a 5-week vacation. You know, I'd like to say it has been a tough summer and that we've been working away on our appropriations bills, but the fact is we'll have our very first appropriations bill on the floor of the House tomorrow, the Military Construction bill. I'm glad to see it. I'm glad we're going to have it, but we're actually not going to have an open amendment process, and part of the reason is that the Democratic leadership is afraid to have the open amendment process for fear that we'll actually bring up something that might expand the availability of energy in this country.

So, Mr. Speaker, there are not a lot of bright spots out there when it comes to energy. We've got record high prices. We've got alternative energy sources that aren't quite ready for prime time. Our refining capacity is limited because we haven't built a refinery since 1976. Supplies are tight, and there's an enormous demand. It paints a fairly grim picture, but dwelling on the negative is not the American way. Exploring the possibilities and capitalizing on realities, that's the American way.

So, today, as we are in a very tough energy environment, let's act like Americans. Let's make lemonade out of lemons. We can start by seizing the opportunity to find and produce home-made American energy. We've heard a lot about exploring and drilling for American sources of energy hands down. Hands down, Americans agree on this point. I did two town halls over the weekend—one in Keller, Texas and one in Frisco, Texas. There was unanimous opinion that we need to be producing more American energy domestically.

Polls show that the vast majority of Americans favor offshore drilling for oil and natural gas and, in fact, even in ANWR. In my districts back in Tarrant, Denton and Cooke Counties, the numbers are sky high. Without question, if we want to produce American energy, we should drill domestically.

You know, we need to refine domestically also, and we can start by providing our Nation's largest energy consumer, the military, with the infrastructure to do just that. As one of the Nation's largest energy consumers, the United States Department of Defense is straining under record high prices. We heard Mr. SHIMKUS from Illinois address this just a moment ago.

In 2007, with operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, the United States Armed Services consumed 16 gallons of fuel per soldier per day, about \$3 million worth of fuel. That's a lot of gas, but it's not just regular gasoline. All military planes, vehicles and heavy equipment use avgas, or jet petroleum, to avoid carrying different fuel grades or

to avoid accidentally putting the wrong kind of fuel in the equipment. It's a specialized fuel that's produced in the same refineries that produce fuel for commercial sale.

Right now, global refineries are operating at very tight capacity. This, in turn, limits the quantities of gasoline and other products that they can produce. The squeeze impacts the consumers, and it impacts the military as the cost of refining compromises 10 to 20 percent of the price we pay at the pump. It means taxpayers are hit with higher costs twice, and it also leaves supplies vulnerable to disruptions ranging from terrorist attacks to political unrest to—oh, by the way, did we mention it's hurricane season?

Then there's the question of importing refined products rather than producing them here in America. Because domestic refining capacity has declined as industry operates with lower inventories of crude oil and of gasoline in order to cut their costs, these constraints mean a greater proportion of gasoline demand has to be met with imported goods, with imported goods. We hear it over and over again. We're buying the supplies from people who in the world don't exactly like us. We are funding both sides on the war on terror.

Four out of five of the top suppliers for military fuel are, in fact, foreign suppliers. This poses a serious threat to our national economy and to our national security, and it has to be stopped. Investing in critical infrastructure and protecting the Nation are some of the Federal Government's top responsibilities.

So, tomorrow, on the Military Construction appropriations bill—and we will finally be hearing our first Appropriations bill here on the House floor—I plan to offer an amendment, the Joint Defense Energy Production amendment. It provides Federal funding for the construction and for the design of one refinery for each branch of the military, combining these two critical roles for the public good.

Prices are high and so is demand. Let's try to solve both sides of the energy equation. The amendment would provide \$400 million to build refineries that would produce the specialized types and grades of fuel that are used by each branch of the Service for their equipment. The refineries will be located on existing or on former bases under the control of the Department of Defense, and they will represent the first refineries built in the United States of America in 31 years.

Again, let me stress this is a win-win for America. These military-specific refineries could produce and protect specialized military fuels from capacity limitations that squeeze supply and that increase prices for almost everyone. They would free up commercial refining capacity and would ensure that we're not forced to outsource a significant portion of our refining needs to foreign countries. Additionally, they

would help ensure a supply chain that would help protect from supply chain disruptions whether from manmade or from natural disasters like those we've experienced in the past.

There's a military saying: Bullets don't fly without supply. The Air Force is not going to have a fleet of plug-in hybrid fighter jets, and our Navy is not going to be relying on a solar-powered, wind-blown vessel. They need a stable and secure fuel supply, plain and simple. Our national defense and our economic security are simply too important to risk on shortages of refinery capacity or on natural disasters. We have the Strategic Petroleum Reserve. We have a strategic oil supply, but what good is that if there is no way to strategically refine that supply?

So, tomorrow, I hope other Members will join me in supporting the Joint Defense Energy Production amendment that I plan on offering on the Military Construction appropriations bill tomorrow. It's high time we got to our appropriations bills, and it's highly appropriate that, particularly on the Military Construction bill, we offer amendments to increase the energy supply for our Nation's military.

I'll yield back to the gentleman from Texas, and I appreciate the time.

Mr. HENSARLING. I thank the gentleman from Texas. I appreciate his leadership. I look forward to voting on his amendment.

Again, Mr. Speaker, it's a very simple matter. If you believe in more American energy in America for Americans, you will tell Speaker PELOSI: Allow there to be a vote on the American Energy Act.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I thank my fellow colleagues from the Republican Study Committee for participating in this Special Order.

I yield back the balance of my time.

ENERGY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the privilege and the honor to address you on the floor of the United States House of Representatives.

This is one of these evenings that is a hot and sultry night here in Washington, D.C. It strikes me as the kind of day that actually was in August when the first hearings happened out here in Washington that were addressing the global warming issue. They had a Dr. Hansen—he happens to be from my hometown—who testified before that first hearing. The temperature was, oh, approaching 100 degrees; the humidity was, oh, approaching 100 degrees, and it wasn't an air-conditioned office about 20 or more years ago, maybe 25 years ago. It wasn't an air-conditioned hearing room, I should say, committee room.

As the first testimony unfolded, Mr. Speaker, about global warming, it was