

week. Nobody has seen one yet. It hasn't been scheduled, but these rumors are out there. If we're going to have a vote on a little bit of the above or on some of the above that the majority might produce, why not give a large group of Members in this House who want to do all of the above just a chance to have a debate and to vote on our competing proposal?

That's what we're looking for. We want a fair and open debate. We want a chance to have a vote. Anything less than that, frankly, is unacceptable, and the Republicans in this House will continue to force the Democrat majority to allow a vote on doing all of the above because it is what the American people want. It is what they sent us here to do, and we are not going to leave until it gets done.

LOYAL OPPOSITION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. It's an important time in American history in the opportunities for Americans, and in re-stating the value of our Constitution, and our respect for democracy. Through the long history of America, we've come to know the terms "majority" and "minority" and the words that sometimes fall to our early history and to our relationship with Great Britain—England. We know the words "loyal opposition." This morning, I want to share with my friends in this House how sometimes the loyal opposition can be loyal to a fault.

There are always ways of saying what you would have and should have done, but as I watch the slow process and progress in Iraq, I want to remind my friends on the other side of the aisle, the Republicans, of the lockstep commitment that they made to the administration on a war that, of course, was misdirected. We're all united behind our soldiers, but 4,000 are dead, and of course, it was the important opposition of the Democrats who persisted and said that Afghanistan has to be the focus. That was the genesis of 9/11. That was where the terrorists were. That was where the Taliban was. We insisted day after day after day that to go into Iraq, to create the destabilization, to, in essence, create the havoc of death, to move the Baathists out of Iraq created the years of devastation and the loss of life—4,000-plus dead Americans and tens and tens of thousands of Iraqis.

Of course, I applaud the changes that have been made now. Of course, I recognize the great valor of our soldiers and of the Iraqi soldiers who have managed to overcome through great hardship, but isn't it interesting: As we have the soldiers announced to come home from Iraq, what happens? What the Democrats said should happen. More soldiers are going to Afghanistan. Bloody fights are taking place on the Pakistani and Afghan border. Again, Republicans, loyal to a fault.

Of course, now there is great discussion about drilling. I practice oil and gas law. I come from Texas. I'm not afraid of drilling, but I recognize the American people are smart enough to know that we must have a seamless energy policy. We are like a fruit basket. The fruit basket has a multiple of fruit—some you like, some you don't—but we enjoy it, the seamless energy policy, unlike the loyal opposition that is on one song and one refrain over and over again. There must be alternatives—biofuel. There must be the look-see at what we can do with clean coal. There must be, as T. Boone Pickens has indicated, wind and solar, and yes, you must find a way to organize a drilling program that, in essence, allows States to opt in. Floridians may have a different perspective, New Yorkers and Californians as opposed to Midwesterners. We know that we must become energy independent, but the loyal opposition has one song, one dance, and it won't work.

Then, of course, when you talk about how much affection we have for our veterans, it's the Democrats who fought and fought and fought to get the first GI bill of rights since World War II to give the opportunity to our returning Iraqi veterans more than the yellow ribbons. We want to give them an opportunity for education and home-buying. We want to give them a leg up. I have legislation to declare a national day of honor so that people don't come home when the lights are off, that we welcome our returning soldiers home with a day of honor and celebration in every Hamlet City and everywhere in America. That's what Democrats are thinking out of the box. That's why we want to make a difference, not just the loyal opposition to a fault.

Then, of course, we hear talk of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. It so happens that the collapse came under this administration, and my fear is that, as the government seizes it in the dark of night on the weekend when Members of Congress are not here, what special contractors will get the deal? Who is going to benefit from seizing it? Of course I want to stabilize the housing market. Of course I want the hard-working real estate persons across America to work, but let me say that the Democrats are standing up and are being counted on behalf of the American people on health care, education, energy, and otherwise, our loyalty is to them.

THE HIGHWAY TRUST FUND

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. FLAKE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. FLAKE. This week, the Senate is expected to approve an \$8 billion bailout of the highway trust fund. We already passed that in the House here in July, and at that time, myself and 36 other Members opposed it. At the time, we were backed by both the adminis-

tration and by the Secretary of Transportation.

For years, Congress has known that the highway trust fund was losing its purchasing power. The Federal law gas tax of 18.4 cents has not been increased since 1993, and high fuel efficiency standards have meant fewer fill-ups. Then, of course, earlier this summer, fewer vacations were taken; fewer miles were driven. That means less money for the highway trust fund, but this concern has gone back for years. In fact, when we did the 2005 highway bill, there were many who stood up and who said we're authorizing more projects, more funding than we will have in the highway trust fund, but what did we do? We didn't take any action to solve the problem. Instead, we more than tripled the number of earmarks in SAFETEA-LU, which was the last highway authorization program that we did in 2005 for the 5-year period that we're now in.

So here we are 3½ years later, just a year before our next reauthorization, and we're out of money to cover the projects that we've authorized, but contrary to the example we've seen throughout this Congress, a bailout shouldn't be the answer to every shortfall. No effort, for example, has been made to rescind any of the 6,300 earmarks that were in the highway trust fund, of course, the most famous of which was the bridge to nowhere. That money was rescinded or at least the authorization to spend on that project was taken away by the Congress, but we've made no effort on any of the other 6,300 earmarks in the bill. We need to do so.

The Secretary of Transportation had indicated earlier this summer that, if we were to take funding from the earmarks that have not yet been funded in the bill, it could relieve the pressure that we now have on the highway trust fund, but we haven't done it. Instead, we're simply saying go ahead and fund all of those transportation museums and all of those projects that have very little or nothing to do with moving people. We're saying go ahead and fund them. We'll just take the money from the Treasury now instead of from the highway trust fund. That is a very, very dangerous precedent to set. Whenever you load up a bill with 6,300 earmarks, the process of logrolling takes effect. That's why you only had, I believe, eight votes against the highway bill back in 2005 and, I think, only three votes against it in the Senate. It's because, if you lard it up enough and if you have enough buy-in, very few people will vote against it or will oppose it.

If you start taking money from the general fund and if you don't have any kind of ceiling that was provided at least by the highway trust fund, then Katy Bar the door when it comes to spending. There's no ceiling. There's no discipline. We can not get in this position where we're robbing from the general fund to fund highway projects delineated by Members of Congress but

earmarked by Members of Congress, because there will simply be no discipline on the process.

So I would urge the President to take the position that we shouldn't take money from the general fund, to veto this legislation when it comes, and I would urge the House as we prepare to reauthorize the highway bill just a year from now to take a different approach—to look at public-private partnerships and other methods—so we simply don't get in the position where we have thousands and thousands and thousands of earmarks that mean we have a bill that we can't fund and where we will again be robbing from the general fund to fund these projects.

HIGH ENERGY PRICES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. SHIMKUS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, it's great to be back in the Chamber with the microphones on and with the lights fully ablaze and with our guests in the gallery and with cameras rolling.

For the past 5 weeks, I along with 135 of my Republican House colleagues have been on the floor, talking to our guests in the Chamber, talking about the number one issue facing America today, which is high energy prices. It was a very good exchange and a chance to not only talk about energy and where we're at and where we need to go in the future but also to visit with many of our guests here in Washington, D.C.

The major premises that we had when we left on the 1st of August are still true today. We have no comprehensive energy plan or policy. Even though gas prices might be stabilizing, they're stabilizing because the economy is going down. Eighty-four thousand jobs have been lost, all directly related to high energy costs. Think of it. In the aviation industry, in the transportation industry and in the automobile industry, those jobs have been lost because of high energy prices. So here is what we've been talking about over the past year.

Here is the problem. The problem is, when President Bush came into office, the price of a barrel of crude oil was \$23. Actually, when I came into office, it was \$10 a barrel. When the Democrats came in in January, it was at \$58. Today—and I update this daily—the price of a barrel of crude oil is \$104.13.

All we're trying to say here from our side of the aisle is this is not a good trend. This is not a direction in which we want to continue if we want to have a thriving economy, one that all of the people of our country can benefit from. I represent rural America. I represent 30 counties of southern Illinois, and it's really those in the rural communities who have to drive long distances to get to work, to get to school, to access health care; there's no public transportation; they're working in the fields; they drive big trucks. They're the ones

who are harmed, I think, exponentially greater than those in major metropolitan areas. So this is not a good trend.

So what is the solution? One solution is to bring on more supply. On this chart, we identify some of those supply options that we have in this country that we fail to access, and I had a bigger chart earlier. One that we hear a lot about is the Outer Continental Shelf. We only drill and explore in 15 percent of the Outer Continental Shelf, and we don't want to just up that to, maybe, 30 percent, which are some of the proposals coming from the other side of the aisle. We want to open up the entire Outer Continental Shelf. We want all of the above. We want to open up the eastern gulf. We want to open up the eastern seaboard of the Atlantic. We want to look at what's on our west coast. We want to make sure that there are billions of barrels of oil and the trillions of cubic feet of natural gas we can find and that we can access so we can help bring on more supply, U.S. supply. When we do this, this is U.S. energy and this is U.S. jobs, which is what this country needs.

Another resource that we have is coal. The United States has more coal reserves than any country on Earth today. In Illinois alone, we have 250 years worth of recoverable coal. We should access that for electricity. In Illinois, 70 percent of our electricity is by coal-fired power plants. Nationally, as a whole, 50 percent of all electricity is generated by coal. We can take coal and turn it into liquid fuel, thus competing with gasoline, thus competing with diesel fuel, thus competing with aviation fuel by having a new commodity product to compete with crude oil. We can move to solar and wind. That's part of the solution. That is more supply. We can look at renewable fuels like biodiesel and ethanol—ethanol from corn, ethanol from cellulosic feedstocks.

The big debate here is: What do you do with the Outer Continental Shelf? Here is a bigger chart. All of this red area is off limits by our design here in the House of Representatives. We have said annually for the past 30 years “no” to going after oil and gas in those areas. We are at a crisis time. This debate which will be on this floor is: Do we open up a little bit more or do we open up the whole thing? My position and that of the majority of people in my country is “all of the above.”

THE AMERICAN ENERGY ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. KELLER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. KELLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address the problem of skyrocketing gas prices. When single moms in Orlando, Florida are paying \$80 to fill up their minivans, this is a crisis.

I spent my time in August touring the northern slope of Alaska to learn more about the oil drilling situation as

well as touring the Florida Solar Energy Center in Central Florida where they have the cutting-edge solar energy technology of tomorrow.

The straight talk is we need a comprehensive approach to address this energy crisis. We need more drilling here in America, in both Alaska and offshore. We need more renewable energy like wind and solar. We need more conservation like hybrids and higher fuel efficiency standards for our cars. We need all of the above. That is why I am proud to be the cosponsor of the American Energy Act. It's also why the American people deserve an up-or-down vote in this Congress on the American Energy Act.

Now, those who say “no” to drilling completely ignore the facts. The main component of a price of gasoline is crude oil. Crude oil is a commodity governed by the law of supply and demand. Therefore, we must increase our supply of crude oil and reduce our demand. Well, where is the largest untapped source of crude oil in America? It's in Alaska, in a place called ANWR.

The critics say three things: Don't let us drill in ANWR because it's only a trivial amount of oil. It will ruin the pristine wilderness, and it will hurt the wildlife in that area, particularly the caribou and the polar bears. I went there on a factfinding mission to find out the answers to those questions myself. Let's address each one.

Is it a trivial amount of oil? I learned from our independent experts and employees of the U.S. Department of the Interior that there are 10.4 billion barrels of crude oil under the lands in ANWR. 10.4 billion barrels of oil are enough to provide all of my home State of Florida with its energy needs for 29 years. 10.4 billion barrels of oil are enough to pump 1 million barrels of oil a day every single day for the next 30 years. Does that sound like a trivial amount of oil to you?

The next thing I heard is it will ruin the pristine wilderness area. Well, I stood right here in the only village in ANWR called Kaktovik, and I looked south from the Arctic Ocean, and I didn't see any trees. It's a flat, frozen, barren tundra. It's 30 degrees in the middle of August, and it's 30 below in the winter. I sat there with the head leader from the Eskimo tribe, Mr. Fenton Rexford, and I said, “Where are the trees?” He says, “Well, Congressman, there's not a tree within 100 miles of where the drilling would take place.” So much for the pristine wilderness we hear about.

The next thing we hear is that we'll hurt wildlife. I learned from our fish and wildlife experts that, in reality, there are over 5,000 polar bears in Alaska and 800,000 caribou, and their numbers have increased every year for the past 30 years. In fact, in the current largest oil field in America, Prudhoe Bay, they started drilling in the mid-1970s. At the time, there were 3,000 caribou there. Now caribou have increased tenfold in Prudhoe Bay, and there are