

manufacturing has been the backbone of our economy and of our communities, but during the past decade, we've seen many of our jobs being shipped overseas, not because we are not hardworking and not because we are not producing high-quality products but, rather, because of unfair and unbalanced trade deals.

The free enterprise system depends upon working Americans having a competitive workforce and productive employees. These are vital to the success of every business be it large or small.

Congress will soon vote on an economic stimulus package that contains \$500 million for worker and job training assistance. Included in that legislation is a piece that I had the opportunity to write, entitled the "Incumbent Worker Development Act." This legislation will guarantee that States and Federal Governments work together to train our workers.

This is not a time for ideology. This is a time for action, and I encourage all of us to vote for this stimulus package.

REPUBLICANS CLAIM THEY WANT ALL OF THE ABOVE BUT HAVE DONE NOTHING TO LOWER GAS PRICES

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

Mr. SIREs. Mr. Speaker, both Democrats and Republicans have been talking about high gas prices for months. At first, Republicans said we just needed to drill, drill, drill, but then they joined us in saying that a more comprehensive, all-of-the-above proposal was in order. It turns out it was just all talk.

Democrats have been trying to reverse the failed Bush policies of the past, but Republicans keep saying no. We proposed legislation to crack down on price gouging and to curb excess speculation. Republicans said no. We proposed lowering gas prices immediately by tapping the Strategic Petroleum Reserve. Republicans said no. We proposed legislation that would force Big Oil to drill on 68 million acres of land to increase oil production here at home. Republicans again said no.

Yesterday, we passed an all-of-the-above energy package to bring down prices and to invest in America's energy future, but again, Republicans voted no.

Mr. Speaker, it seems like Republicans don't actually want to resolve the crisis. They just want to talk about the crisis.

REPUBLICANS ARE STILL JUST TALKING

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

Mr. ALTMIRE. Mr. Speaker, for 6 years, the Republicans had control of Congress and of the White House, and for 6 years, the American people waited

for them to do something to end our dependence on foreign oil, but despite their constant cry of "drill, baby, drill," the Republicans didn't act on this issue when they had control, and 2 years ago, the American people voted for new leadership in Congress.

Well, yesterday, that new leadership—the Democrats in this House—answered the call by passing a landmark energy bill that triples the available territory for offshore drilling. Let me repeat that. The bill we passed yesterday triples the amount of territory in the Outer Continental Shelf that is available for drilling.

Predictably, many in the minority demonstrated by their votes that they're more interested in having a political issue for the coming election than they are in actually solving the problem. While Democrats have taken decisive action by passing a comprehensive energy bill that includes an unprecedented expansion of offshore drilling, Republicans, as you will hear today, are still just talking.

MCCAIN'S ASSESSMENT OF THE ECONOMY SHOWS THAT HE REALLY IS NOT AN EXPERT ON THE ECONOMY

(Mr. COURTNEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, in December, Senator MCCAIN admitted that he is not an economic expert when he stated "The issue of economics is not something I've understood as well as I should." He went on to say, though, that he had Alan Greenspan's book. Well, clearly, Senator MCCAIN should listen to Greenspan, who called this week's financial news a once-in-a-century type of financial crisis. Unfortunately, Senator MCCAIN was not listening because his response to the catastrophic economic events of this week was "the fundamentals of our economy are strong," and he called for the oldest, lamest Washington trick in the book—the creation of a study commission.

We don't need a commission to know that 600,000 Americans have lost their jobs in the last year, that the median income for working Americans has fallen over \$2,000 a year over the last 8 years. Those are not strong fundamentals.

Mr. Speaker, at a time when every economic expert agrees that our economy is in crisis, we need someone in the White House who is ready and willing to act now to fix it, and clearly, that person is not Senator MCCAIN.

IT IS TIME FOR A CHANGE IN THE POLICIES OF THIS NATION

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

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, this country was really founded upon

sacrifice, investment and opportunity for all, but over the last few years, we've seen the focus being on the wealthiest 1 percent in America to the exclusion of the rest of us, and that House of cards has come tumbling down on Wall Street over the last couple of weeks with the failures of the biggest corporations in America.

The policies of this administration not to regulate and the policies to only borrow and spend are causing this country turmoil, and the hardworking people in the middle are going to have to pick up the pieces. It is time for renewal. It is time for a change. The policies of the Democrats and of BARACK OBAMA are going to change the direction of this Nation and make it stronger and make it the Nation that it can be.

THE TROUBLED STATE OF THE AMERICAN ECONOMY

(Mr. HALL of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HALL of New York. Mr. Speaker, the last few days have clearly demonstrated that the troubled state that our economy is in is more serious than we thought. The Bush administration's mismanagement of the American economy has officially caused a housing crisis to snowball and jeopardize the entire economy.

Lehman Brothers and Merrill Lynch, established companies that survived the Great Depression, have declared bankruptcy or have been sold off to survive. Both companies employ thousands of people from my district, the 19th District of New York, and no one seems to know what will happen to these workers or to their families.

But it's not just Wall Street suffering. Wages have stagnated; expenses continue to rise. American families can no longer afford to buy necessities, much less to invest in the future.

Mr. Speaker, when President Bush took office 8 years ago, he inherited a flourishing economy and a record budget surplus. Now, as he leaves office 8 years later with 8 years of misrule and a lack of oversight, those days are clearly gone.

I hope we make the right choice for our next President and elect BARACK OBAMA, who will understand how to deal with the complexities of our economic situation.

PASSING A COMPREHENSIVE ENERGY BILL

(Mr. WELCH of Vermont asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the House of Representatives passed a comprehensive energy bill, regrettably with almost undivided Republican opposition. That was disappointing because we had a chance to

work together. In fact, this bill incorporated two things—one, a recognition that we need to continue getting the supply of oil to make it from here to there, but second, we needed a sustainable revenue source to invest in R&D and to invest in implementing alternative energy projects. The energy plan of the Republicans, cooked up by Vice President CHENEY in secret, has been very good for the American oil companies, not for the American consumers.

So far this year, oil companies in a down economy have raked in \$44 billion in profits. That's seven times the amount of profits Big Oil brought in when President Bush was first sworn into office.

What has the energy plan done that the President pursues or that our colleagues on the other side pursue? \$4 gasoline. It's costing \$2,500 more to heat your homes.

Mr. President, it's time for us to work together and to get our colleagues in the Senate to pass that bill.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman will address his remarks to the Chair.

NATIONAL CAPITAL SECURITY AND SAFETY ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 1434 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the further consideration of the bill, H.R. 6842.

□ 1028

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the further consideration of the bill (H.R. 6842) to require the District of Columbia to revise its laws regarding the use and possession of firearms as necessary to comply with the requirements of the decision of the Supreme Court in the case of *District of Columbia v. Heller*, in a manner that protects the security interests of the Federal government and the people who work in, reside in, or visit the District of Columbia and does not undermine the efforts of law enforcement, homeland security, and military officials to protect the Nation's capital from crime and terrorism, with Mr. ALTMIRE (Acting Chairman) in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Chairman, first and foremost, I think it is imperative that we understand that the security and safety of our Nation's capitol should be of vital importance to all Americans, not simply the residents of the District of Columbia.

My dear colleague and District of Columbia Representative, Congresswoman ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON along with Congressman HENRY WAXMAN of California, drafted com-

prehensive and sensible firearm legislation which the Childers/Souder amendment not only eviscerates but allows residents and federal officials to places in immense danger.

CHILDERS/SOUDER AMENDMENT

The Childers/Souder Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute completely destroys the sensible Norton/Waxman Home Rule bill.

The dangerous consequences include:

No gun registration to let the police know who has guns and to trace guns used in crimes.

No regulation of guns, only a bare federal statute resulting in one of the most permissive gun laws in the Nation—post 9/11.

No age limit for possession of guns, including military-style weapons.

Permits a person who is voluntarily committed to a mental institution to own a gun the day after he gets out.

Federal law forbids a person to cross State lines to purchase a gun and bring it back, but this makes an exception uniquely for District residents to cross State lines to purchase guns and bring them back from Maryland and Virginia.

Requires a "gun show loophole," which avoids background checks in the nation's capital, i.e., District of Columbia residents can purchase weapons from private individuals and at gun shows without background checks.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

The District of Columbia (the District) is a local self-governing jurisdiction and the seat of the United States Government, with unique Federal responsibilities. It is here that the President, the Vice President, and many cabinet and other Federal officials reside.

Unregulated firearms in the capital would preclude the ability of the District Metropolitan Police Department to track guns through registration and otherwise help ensure that guns do not endanger Federal officials and employees, visiting dignitaries, and other individuals.

REVISION OF DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA FIREARMS LAWS AND DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA V. HELLER

The revised firearm legislation requires the District within 6 months after enactment, to revise its laws governing the possession and use of firearms as necessary to comply with the decision of the Supreme Court in *District of Columbia v. Heller*. It also amends the Firearms Control Regulations Act of 1975 by adding a new section requiring the Mayor and the Council of the District to ensure that the District's firearms laws are consistent with *Heller*.

In *Heller*, the Supreme Court ruled in a 5-4 decision that the Second Amendment to the Constitution protects an individual's right to possess a firearm, irrespective of service in a militia, and to use that arm for traditionally lawful purposes such as self-defense within the home.

The decision in *Heller* affirmed the holding in *Parker v. District of Columbia*, wherein the Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia declared three provisions of the District's Firearms Control Regulation Act to be unconstitutional: D.C. Code §7-2502.02, which generally barred the registration of handguns; §22-4504, which prohibited carrying a pistol without a license, insofar as that provision would prevent a registrant from moving a gun from one room to another within his or her home; and §7-2507.02, which required that all lawfully owned firearms be kept unloaded and disassembled or bound by a trigger lock or similar device.

Addressing the holding in *Parker*, the Supreme Court noted that the District's approach "totally bans handgun possession in the home." The Court then declared that the inherent right of self-defense is central to the Second Amendment right, and that the District's handgun ban amounted to a prohibition of an entire class of arms that has been overwhelmingly utilized by American society for that purpose.

The Court also struck down as unconstitutional the requirement that any lawful firearm in the home be disassembled or bound by a trigger lock, as such a requirement "makes it impossible for citizens to use arms for the core lawful purpose of self-defense."

FIREARMS AND YOUTH

Right here in America according to the Harvard Injury Control Research Center, Harvard School of Public Health approximately 2,500 black youth (aged 15-24) die annually from gun homicide, 950 Hispanic youths and 600 white youth. For gun suicides, it's about 1,600 white youths annually, 300 black youths and 200 Hispanic youths.

Between 20 percent and 50 percent of children in the United States are touched by violence, either as victims or, even more commonly, as witnesses. And sadly for every child killed by a gun, four are injured according to the national estimates of nonfatal firearm-related injuries by the Journal of the American Medical Association.

TEXAS

In the U.S., the leading cause of death for African-Americans ages 15-24 and 25-34 is homicide, with the overwhelming majority (90 percent and 87 percent, respectively) committed with firearms. Homicide is the second leading cause of death for African-Americans ages 10-14, with firearm-related deaths accounting for 70 percent of these deaths.

Every day in Texas someone dies or is severely injured as a result of gun violence. Texans die from suicide, accidents, and crime. In 2004, 2,342 people died from firearm-related injuries in Texas. We hear about these deaths every day: depressed teenagers and spouses taking their own lives, children finding a loaded gun at a friend's house, gun related crime, etc. We hear about it so often; we have become numb to it and feel nothing can be done.

FIREARMS

While we speak of dignitaries, members of Congress, and the executive—the fact is that it is our children that are most at risk. We cannot allow a vague interpretation of the Second Amendment to put our children at risk and move guns on our streets.

It is our young African-American and Hispanic men who are frequently caught up in this system. Among youth ages 15-24, firearms rank as the leading cause of death for African-Americans and the second leading cause of death for whites and Hispanic youth. With over 5,049 federally licensed firearms dealers and pawnbrokers in Texas alone, how many more guns on our streets do we need?

CONCLUSION

Mr. Chairman I urge my colleagues to think about the safe of our children. Is there not already enough violence? For all the firearms in Afghanistan and Iraq is it helping them? Do more guns on our streets make them safer? I think we all know the answer is a resounding "no." I am not asking that we remove all firearms from the hands of every responsible and